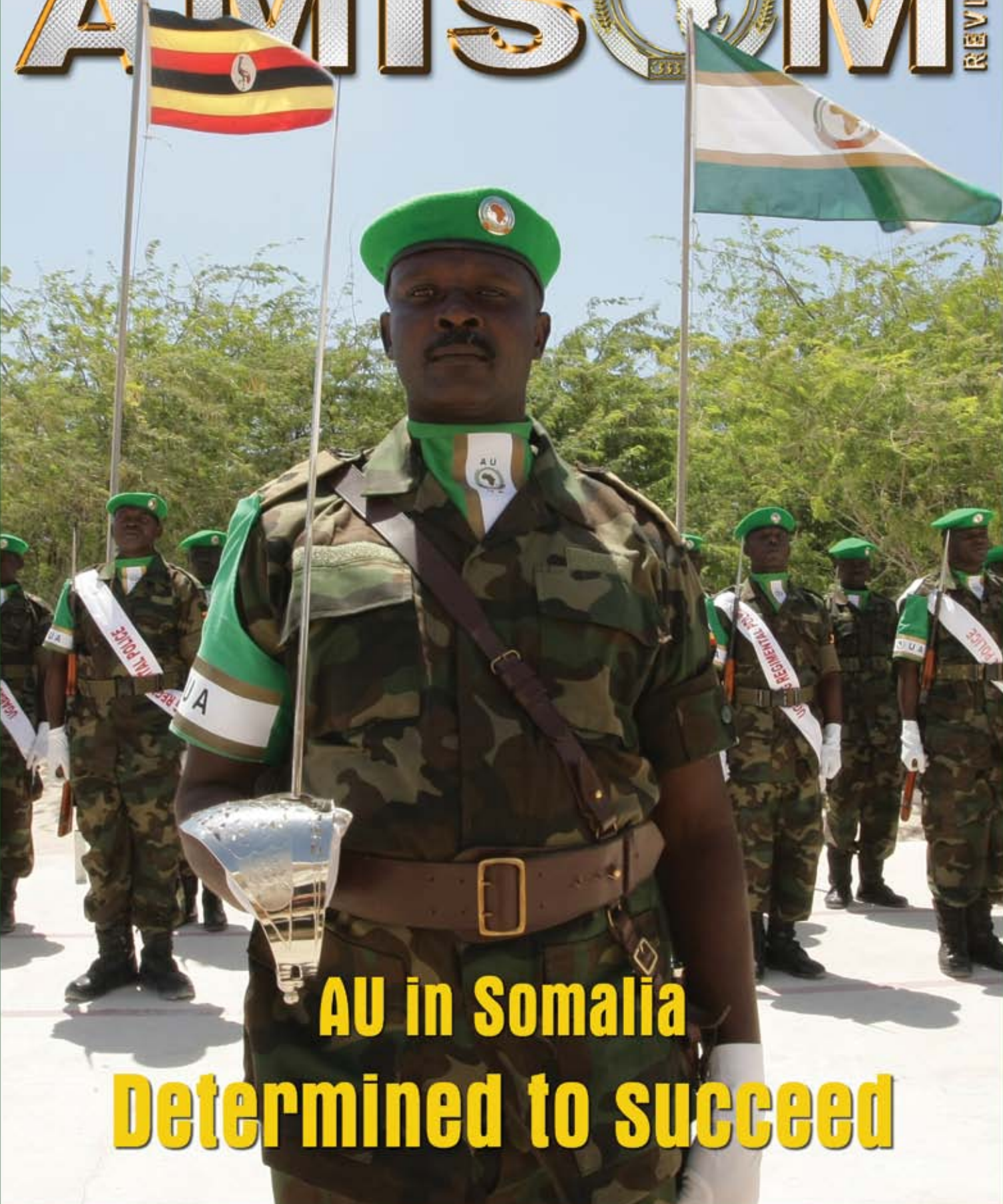


# AMISOM



REVIEW



**AU in Somalia  
Determined to succeed**

# Building on Success

*AMISOM forces and the Transitional Federal Government are making gains in Somalia, but many challenges lie ahead.*

By Amb. Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and AMISOM Head of Mission

I am delighted to introduce the first issue of the AMISOM Review, a quarterly magazine about our efforts in Somalia and related issues. This magazine puts in print many of the stories from our bi-monthly electronic newsletter, the AMISOM Bulletin, and presents feature articles by our ace in-house reporter Guled Mohamed. We hope readers find the magazine and the newsletter to be an informative record of the political, economic and humanitarian efforts undertaken by all stakeholders to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Somalia -- as well as an update on the work of our valiant peacekeepers on the ground.

AMISOM was created by a decision of the AU Peace and Security Council during its 69th Meeting held in Addis Ababa on 19 January 2007, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1725 of 6 December 2006.

Our mandate is simple, and our mission is noble and challenging. The African Union is in Somalia to conduct peace and security operations leading to a stabilisation of the situation in the country. Our task, among other things, is to work with all stakeholders to support dialogue and reconciliation between the people of Somalia; provide protection to the Transitional Federal Government and key infrastructure to enable it carry out its functions; and facilitate humanitarian operations, including the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Our vision is that one day, hopefully very soon, Somalia shall be a nation at peace with itself and its neighbours.

We look forward to the day when the men, women and children of Somalia shall feel safe and secure to pursue

their daily activities and work to rebuild their beautiful country. The children of Somalia deserve to go to and from school in peace and security. The women of Somalia should be able to work and care for their families without much anxiety. The men of Somalia should not have to fear for their lives and those of their loved ones when they leave home for business or simply to go to the Mosque and pray.

The conflict in Somalia has lasted too long. After two previously unsuccessful international peacekeeping endeavours in Somalia, the African Union, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, have decided that enough is enough! We cannot and we will not give up. We will not idly stand by and watch the people of Somalia continue to suffer. As part of their commitment to help find African solutions to Africa's

problems, and recognising that peace and security are prerequisites for economic and human development in today's fast-changing global community, African leaders have firmly resolved to help restore peace in Somalia. This time around, failure is not an option. We will persevere until the job is done.

I would like to seize this opportunity to salute the courage of our peacekeepers, the commitment of the troop contribution countries and the support of our partners, donors and the international community. For the sake of the suffering women and children of Somalia and on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Dr. Jean Ping, I call on all parties to give peace a chance. The solution to Somalia's problems ultimately rests in the hands of the people of Somalia.





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Managing Editor: Gaffel G. Nkolokosa  
Spokesperson: Major Barigye Ba-Hoku  
Field Reports: Lt Col Adolphe Manirakiza / Capt Chris Magezi  
P.O Box 20182 – 00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Website: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)

Photos: Stuart Price  
Design/Layout: Zvezdan Djukanovic  
Editorial Assistance: AU/UN Information Support Team  
Phone: +254 202 713 755 /56 /58 Fax: +254 202 713 766  
Email: [amisomhom@gmail.com](mailto:amisomhom@gmail.com)

## ■ Mogadishu Visit

High-level delegations from the African Union and United Nations visited Mogadishu in January to assess the situation in Somalia and hold consultations with the country's leadership. The delegation included AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC) and AMISOM Head of Mission, Ambassador Boubacar Diarra and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.



## ■ Pax Africa

The African Union launched the Year of Peace and Security in Africa. At a special ceremony during the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra regrets that far too many African countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict with deadly consequences.

## ■ Year One

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia celebrated its first anniversary in office in February. At a State House ceremony in Mogadishu, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed highlighted the progress made by his government, notably the re-establishment of the Somali Security Forces, and lauded the progress made in attracting support from the international community.



## ■ International Appeal

Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke issued an appeal to the international community to make Somalia a priority in the year 2010. In an article published in January by the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune, the prime minister challenged the popular perception of Somalia as the ultimate failed state and praised the Somali people for their resilience.

## ■ Extremist Allies

Somali armed opposition groups in February announced the formation of an alliance with the al-Qaeda global terrorist network. The aim of the alliance is to establish an Islamist state in Somalia and fight jihad across East Africa. Reacting to this development, AMISOM Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha called on the international community to act immediately to help Somalia fight violent extremism.

## ■ No-Fly Zone

The African Union renewed its call for the United Nations to im-

pose a no-fly zone over Somalia and blockade the country's seaports in order to prevent the entry of foreign fighters and the supply of logistical support to

armed opposition groups. The appeal came from the AU Peace and Security Council during its 217th session held in Addis Ababa on 25 February.





### ■ Law and Order

The first batch of AMISOM police instructors began a two-week training course in February at the Kenya Wildlife Training Centre. Addressing the trainers from Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria and Sierra Leon, the Deputy Special Representative of the AU Commission (DSRCC) for Somalia Hon. Wafula Wamunyinyi said the decision to deploy police trainers in Somalia is part of the AU's responsibility to support the people of Somalia in their quest for peace and development.

### ■ Outside Influence

The United Nations issued a strong call for an end to external meddling in Somali affairs. In a statement released in Nairobi on 1 March, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah warned that external interference perpetuates political instability and encourages illegal fishing, piracy and other criminal activities in Somalia.



### ■ Women's Issues

AMISOM peacekeepers celebrated International Women's

Day on 8 March in a colourful ceremony at Force Headquarters in Mogadishu, attended by officials from the TFG and the Coalition for Grassroots Women's Organisations (COGWO), a Mogadishu-based NGO. Speaking at the event, Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha condemned parental discrimination against daughters in education, early marriage and other challenges to the full emancipation of African women.

### ■ Presidential Diplomacy

President Sheikh Sharif paid a four-day official visit to Great Britain on 8-11 March, meeting high officials in London. Officials from Somalia and the United Kingdom agreed that Somalia is important to regional stability and prosperity in East Africa as well as the security of the United Kingdom and other countries around the world. In meetings with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other British government officials, the Somali president received pledges of greater UK political and financial support to the TFG.

### ■ Brothers in Arms

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia signed a cooperation agreement with Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a on 15 March in Addis Ababa, during a ceremony chaired by AU Commission Chairperson Dr. Jean Ping. The agreement broadens the Djibouti Peace Process by welcoming Ahlu Sunna into the TFG. The AU, UN, EU and other international organisations and partners commend both parties for reaching the agreement.

### ■ Unified Support

The 17th meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia (ICG) was held under the chairmanship of UN Special Representative for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah from 21-22 April 2010 in Cairo, Egypt. An ICG communiqué issued at the end of the meeting stressed the need for unity among members of Somalia's Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). The Government of Spain has offered to host the 18th meeting of the International Contact Group in September 2010.



## In Figures

# 6,000

Approximate number of AMISOM peacekeepers currently on the ground in Somalia

# 14,800

Approximate number of AMISOM peacekeepers who have served in Somalia since the mission began

# 6,461

Number of Somali government soldiers trained by AMISOM

# 22

Amount of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) disarmed or recovered by AMISOM forces

# 3,787

Amount of unexploded ordinance destroyed by AMISOM peacekeepers

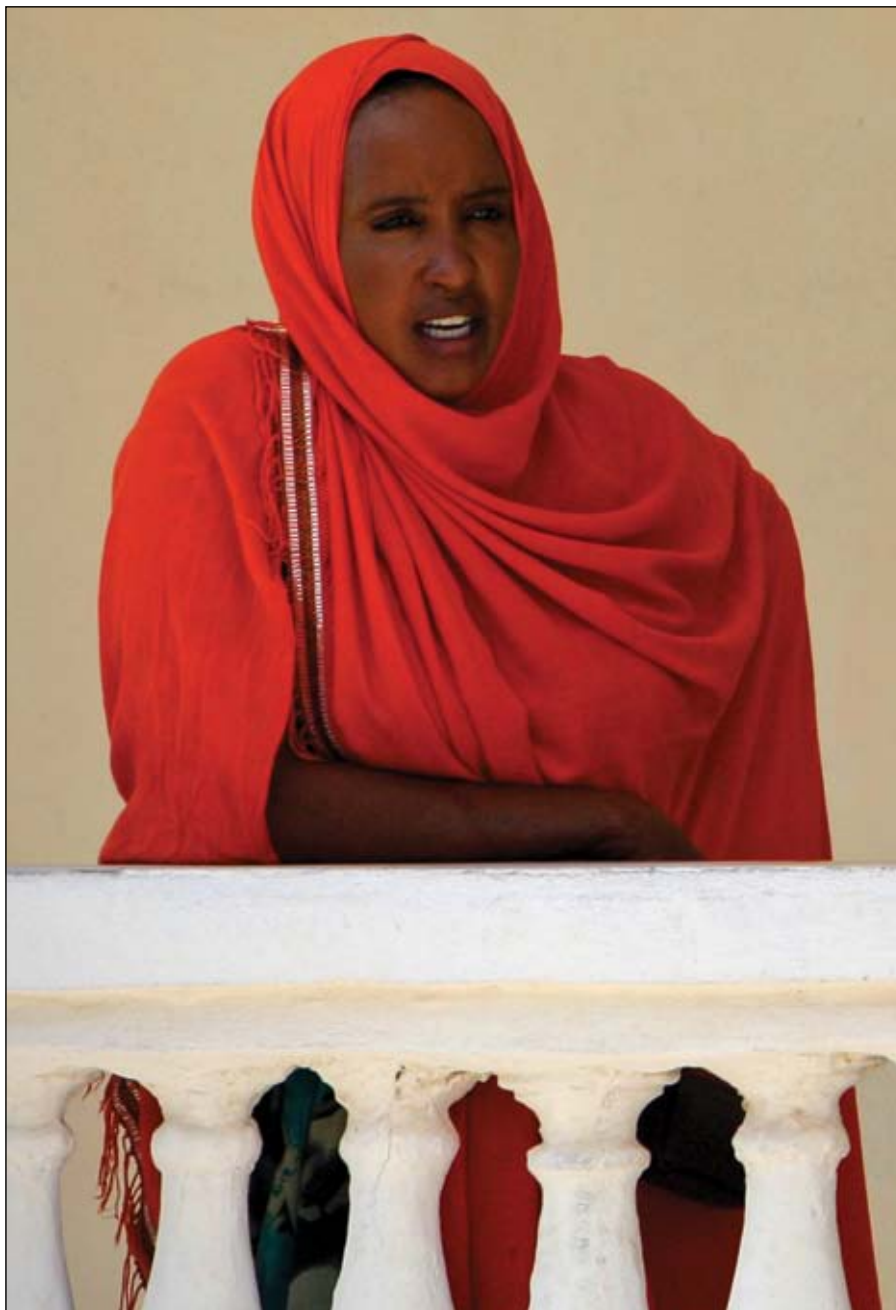
# 2,000

Estimated number of Somalis treated per week at AMISOM's two hospitals in Mogadishu

# 60,000

Rough amount of litres of safe drinking water provided per day by AMISOM to residents of Mogadishu

# AU launches Year of Peace in Africa



The African Union has designated 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security in Africa. At its Special Session held on 31 August 2009 in Tripoli, Libya, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided to declare 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security on the continent. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Lamamra Ramtane officially launched activities to mark The Year of Peace and Security during the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February 2010.

Addressing the continent's leaders, Ramtane said, "2010 will be a year of many challenges. While in the past few years, the number of violent conflicts has been significantly reduced, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, far too many African countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict with its attendant deadly consequences." He observed with regret that armed conflicts in Africa still kill thousands of people every year, create humanitarian disasters, wipe out the livelihoods of ordinary people and make sustainable economic development impossible. The more profound legacy of violent conflict on the continent, he added, was the destruction of hope for a better future for millions of Africans.

During the ceremony, a symbolic flame of peace was handed over to the newly elected chairperson of the African Union, President Bingu Wa Mutharika of Malawi, by Presiding Officer of the AU Economic and Social Council Akere Muna of Cameroon. Muna urged the assembly to leave no stone unturned to make peace happen, adding that the people of Africa cannot expect less from their leaders.

Accepting the flame on behalf of the assembly, President Mutharika pledged to give



Giving Somalis hope for a peaceful future, an AMISOM peacekeeper interacts with civilians in Mogadishu

greater visibility to ongoing and past efforts by the AU and to speed up the implementation of commitments made by African countries to various AU instruments relating to peace and security. President Mutharika also highlighted the link between institutional efforts to promote peace and security with grassroots campaigns being undertaken on the ground by ordinary communities, and he called for the mobilization of resources throughout the continent to support peace and security initiatives.

According to the Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace, a document adopted by African leaders in August 2009, the Year of Peace and Security is an opportunity for African peoples, leaders and institutions to review current efforts at peace on the continent in partnership with the international community. The goal is to strengthen such efforts and, where appropriate, launch new initiatives for the promotion of peace and security.

While celebrating the achievements of the past decade, the programme for the Year of Peace and Security will seek to build on them to address ongoing challenges. The objective of the Year of Peace is to give added momentum to peace and security efforts on the continent, give greater visibility to ongoing and past efforts by the AU on the ground, speed-up the implementation of commitments made by member states in various relevant AU's instruments and harmonize efforts at all levels to promote peace and security.

To that effect, the AU Peace and Security Directorate intends to initiate a number of activities. Some of these are symbolic, outreach

activities aimed at communicating and mobilizing the African public throughout the year. Others will consist of initiatives and efforts by relevant AU policy organs to speed up the resolution of existing conflicts and crises and consolidate peace where it has been achieved.

Ramtane said the overarching message for all the activities that will be carried out and the advocacy programme is to “make peace happen.” This message highlights the need to mobilize all stakeholders, with a view to encouraging them to take ownership of this initiative and commit to actions that will make possible the achievement of peace.

Chairperson of the AU Commission Dr. Jean Ping has pledged the commitment of the African Union to intensify its efforts in the area of peace and security. He has also appealed to African Governments, peoples, media, civil society organizations and other

stakeholders to take advantage of the Year of Peace and Security to rededicate themselves to the realization of the objective of a continent free of conflict.

In Somalia, where a decades-old conflict continues to test the AU's resolve to achieve a conflict-free continent, the Transitional Federal Government has urged the international community to make Somalia a priority this year. Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke recently expressed optimism that 2010 will be the year of new hope for peace in the horn of Africa. The Year of Peace and Security in Africa coincides with the third anniversary of the deployment of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia. ■



# Strategy Session

## AU reviews situation in Somalia

Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra,  
AU Commissioner for Peace and Security

Defence Ministers of AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and AMISOM partners met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 17 February 2010 under the auspices of the

African Union. The meeting was chaired by AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Amb. Ramtane Lamamra and focused on reviewing the situation in Somalia. Besides TCC Defence Ministers from Burundi and Uganda, participants included the minister of defence of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and representatives from the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States, the European Union as well as envoys from Djibouti, Gabon and Nigeria.

Malawi, in its capacity as current chair of the African Union, also attended the meeting.

Participants were briefed on the latest developments in Somalia, with particular regard to the political and security situation. They discussed the status of capacity building and training programmes, equipment and sustenance of the Somali security forces and the related challenges posed to AMISOM in that effort. In that context, participants welcomed the ongoing process aimed at broadening the basis of support for the Djibouti Agreement and promoting inclusiveness in the national peace and reconciliation process, with special focus on the enhancement of the TFG's strategic relationship with Ahlu Sunnah Waljama'a, an armed group now fighting alongside the Somali government against extremists.

The role of AMISOM in the ongoing training and reintegration programmes for Somali security forces was at the top of the agenda as well. Participants called on the international community to adequately support the sustenance and retention of the force, in particular by providing the necessary logistical and other resources required to make the Jazeera training camp fully operational. The Somali government was urged to ensure that the trained forces are ready to assume primary responsibility for, and be able to effectively cope with, the prevailing security challenges in Somalia. It was observed that the operational requirements for AMISOM to enhance its performance, in view of the added responsibility of training and mentoring the Somali security forces, needed to be urgently addressed so that the mission's capabilities develop in step

with changing needs.

Participants welcomed the steps proposed by the European Union to establish a training mission for Somalia security forces. This was viewed as a concrete step forward in support of the stabilisation of the security situation in Somalia and recognition of the important role AMISOM already plays on the ground. It was recommended that the envisaged European Union training mission should be part of a wider programme that also ensures the payment of the salaries of the new forces in order to retain troops. The EU was urged to work out details of the programme with AMISOM.

Regarding the status of contributions received from the Brussels Pledging Conference, participants noted with appreciation the contribution made by the European Union in the amount of Euro 30 million, this being the first tranche of its Euro 60 million pledged to AMISOM. Participants further applauded the reimbursement for non-lethal Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) for the period from January to December 2009 and the payment of troops' allowances up to December 2009. However, conference goers called on partners and donors to make more reimbursements and disburse funds pledged both for AMISOM and for the rebuilding of the Somali security forces.

The meeting underscored the need to continue supporting the efforts of AMISOM troops by raising their allowances to the same level as UN peacekeepers and pointed to the necessity for a more effective follow-up on administrative issues, particularly with respect to reimbursement for equipment, investigations on cases of accidents and transportation for personnel. On the UN Logistical Support Package being provided by the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA), participants noted the progress made and called for expedited action to enhance AMISOM's capacity, particularly in the areas of infrastructure construction, medical and media services.

Before adjourning, participants seized the opportunity to renew their appreciation to the Troop Contributing Countries for their commitment to peace in Somalia. Other African countries, especially those that have made troop pledges, were encouraged to speedily deploy their contingents in order to enable AMISOM to reach its authorized strength. ■





Civilians in Mogadishu

# No-Fly Zone

## AU renews calls on the UN to guard Somali airspace, ports

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) has renewed its call on the UN Security Council to act quickly on a standing request for the establishment of a no-fly zone in Somalia and the blockade of the country's sea ports to prevent foreign militants and supplies for extremists from entering the country. Meeting at its 217th session held on 25 February 2010 at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the AU officials noted the continued deterioration of the situation in Somalia and pointed out that this was proof of the increasing internationalization of the conflict. In that regard, the AUPSC highlighted the central role the UN Security Council has in the maintenance of international peace and security and called on the body to move more aggressively on decisions related to Somalia. Apart from the issue of a no-fly zone, such decisions include support to the peace efforts in Somalia and the long-term reconstruction of the country.

During the meeting, the AUPSC received an update on the overall situation in Somalia by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) of the African Union for Somalia Amb. Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, as well as updates by representatives from IGAD, the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The AU council reiterated its support to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and commended the contributions of AU member states to the TFG. It appealed for more support to the government of Somalia, including military and capacity building, to enable the TFG to neutralize the armed elements carrying out regular attacks.

The AUPSC further reiterated its strong condemnation of the continuing acts of violence and terrorism by al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam in defiance of the peace overtures of the TFG and the international community. The AU council expressed deep concern at the humanitarian situation in Somalia and demanded that armed opposition groups comply with international humanitarian law and ensure unrestricted humanitarian access and assistance to needy civilians in areas under their control.

The AU council also welcomed the signing of an agreement between the TFG and

Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ) and noted that this was an important step by the TFG in broadening the scope of dialogue and

reconciliation in line with the principles and objectives of the Djibouti process. The council also reiterated its call to all the Somali parties who have not yet done so to join the peace process without any precondition and any further delay.

The AUPSC also offered a special word of appreciation to AU countries contributing police forces to Somalia and welcomed the recent commissioning of eight battalions

of the Somali security forces as part of the AMISOM training support to the TFG. The AUPSC called upon the government of Somalia to ensure the effective deployment of these battalions in order for them to assume responsibility in providing security for the TFG and the residents of Mogadishu in particular.

The council also welcomed the steps taken by the AMISOM Police Component to effectively support the rebuilding of the Somalia police force through training and mentoring. In that regard, the successful completion of the induction course for AMISOM police trainers and mentors from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda

was noted.

The AUPSC further encouraged AMISOM to continue to play a coordinating role in the overall capacity building efforts in Somalia and called on the international community to ensure the sustenance and retention of the Somali security forces.

With regard to troop contributions to AMISOM, the council reiterated its appreciation to the two countries contributing the most forces, namely Burundi and Uganda, for their unflinching commitment as demonstrated by their continued and increased deployment of soldiers and other resources. African Union member states that have pledged troops to AMISOM were urged by the council to make good on their commitments so that AMISOM forces could reach their full strength. The council further called on other AU member states to provide troops and other support to AMISOM and in general deepen their commitment to the cause of Somalia. The AUPSC expressed deep appreciation to all countries and institutions providing support to AMISOM but noted that such support remained below what was required on the ground. The need for a much greater mobilisation of the international community to end the conflict in Somalia was, therefore, emphasized. ■



# UN calls for end to external meddling in Somali affairs

The United Nations Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah

**U**N Special Representative for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah urged foreign governments to refrain from meddling in the internal affairs of Somalia. The UN Envoy blamed most of Somalia's problems on external political interference in a statement issued in Nairobi on 1 March 2010 coinciding with the first anniversary of the premiership of Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke.

"I would like to take the opportunity of this first anniversary of the cabinet to call, once more, on Somalis to continue their support to the president and the national leadership," Ould-Abdallah said. The envoy reminded all parties of their political, social, religious and moral obligation to rehabilitate the image and the good name of Somalia and called on foreign governments to refrain from meddling in Somali affairs. "Today, external political interference perpetuates instability and encourages illegal fishing, as well as piracy and other criminal economic activities."

The UN envoy went on to commend the leadership of the Transitional Federal Government and the country's parliament, headed by Speaker Sheik Aden Mohamed Nor Madobe, for demonstrating to the people of Somalia and the entire region over the last 12 months strong, united leadership in addressing Somalia's numerous problems.

"On this occasion, I would like to sincerely congratulate and encourage them to continue their united and cohesive leadership," Ould-Abdallah said. "The success of their resilience and their strength is also that of the cabinet, the parliament and the security forces. Civil society and the business community have also shown true patriotism during this period. Despite enormous difficulties, including lack of political experience, security threats, absence of regular payments and many other challenges, the national leadership of Somalia has maintained its cohesion and shown a coherent approach in reaching out to their political opponents."

The Somali government, parliament and security forces, Ould-Abdallah observed, had worked hard to promote the respect and dignity of their country and its people, noting that the government had developed a national budget, rehabilitated a number of institutions and infrastructure, negotiated with political opponents and kept the door open to all Somalis who favour dialogue over violence. He also congratulated the leadership in Puntland and Somaliland.

The UN envoy seized the opportunity to thank the government of Turkey for its positive role in supporting political stability as well as reconstruction and development in Somalia, adding that Turkey's constructive role had the strong support of the government of Somalia, the United Nations and all true friends of peace in Somalia. ■



By Guled Mohamed



The AMISOM hospital is treating more than two dozen Somali women suffering from fistula, a condition that leaves many females shunned

# Health and Hope

In general, women who develop fistulas are often abandoned by their husbands, rejected by their communities and forced to live in isolation because of the condition's telltale symptom, a persistent odor of urine and excrement. Mothers who have endured long labors are particularly prone to fistula, which causes incontinence owing to torn tissue around the birth canal. But the AMISOM hospital is currently offering treatment to more than 30 women who can now hope to have a normal life again.

Thirty-seven Somali women have recently undergone surgery for fistula at AMISOM facilities. Donations from the Somali diaspora plus support from the Coalition of Grassroots Women Organizations (COGWO) have helped make the operations possible. Health officials suspect that hundreds of Somali women may be suffering in silence with fistula, despite the treatment available at the AMISOM hospital. While difficult childbirth is normally the main cause of fistula, the condition can also stem from sexual assault and female genital mutilation, a common practice in Somalia. Maka Adan Maalim, 29, endured fistula for 15 years in her hometown of Baidoa after labor complications left her firstborn child dead.

"During my first birth I developed fistula and unfortunately lost my baby," Maalim said. "My husband divorced me because I smelt from urine and feces. I silently suffered this problem for 15 years until I heard about this facility in November last year. I am now very happy and ready to go home to my mother after successful operations. I can never thank AMISOM and COGWO enough."

Maalim also offered advice to other Somali women with similar problems, saying they should seek help at the AMISOM facilities like she did.

"This is a very depressing and disturbing condition," she said, speaking from her bed at the AMISOM hospital. "Please be strong even if you are divorced and come to AMISOM and COGWO for assistance. This condition is manageable. Please don't suffer in silence like I did."

Col. Dr. James Kyengo, the head of AMISOM medical facilities, said that fistula could be a manageable ailment for women in Somalia like it is in other countries with a little more support from donors and well wishers.

"Although donors and NGO's support the fistula programme, we still need more assistance as the number of women needing treatment keeps rising," Kyengo said.

The stigma surrounding fistula leaves many women trying to hide their condition. COGWO has hired elderly women as field data collectors who search cities and villages for women eligible for treatment, which is free at AMISOM facilities.

"Most of these women are poor and divorced, leaving them depressed and deeply disturbed by the condition," said Zahra Mohamed, the chief executive officer of COGWO. "It takes them several months to heal and regain their beauty and confidence. Now that they are healthy some of them have already started receiving phone calls from the same men who neglected them." ■



# High-level AU/UN delegati



## on visits Mogadishu

The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia and AMISOM Head of Mission Amb. Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah recently visited Mogadishu. The purpose of the visit was to hold discussions with senior members of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. The delegation was received by Somalia President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. On behalf of the government and people of Somalia, the president expressed gratitude to the African Union, the United Nations and the entire International Community for their continued support and assistance.

During the visit the president, Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke and Speaker of Parliament Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nor Madobe took note of the recent earthquake in Haiti, conveying their condolences to the families of victims and expressing regret over the heavy losses incurred by the United Nations in that natural disaster. The Somali leaders and their guests also discussed a wide range of other issues related to Somalia, including current priorities and ongoing activities in the area of infrastructure development. The AU/UN delegation also visited AMISOM headquarters, where they were briefed on the activities of the peacekeeping troops by the Force Commander Maj. General Nathan Mugisha of Uganda. ■



AMISOM marks its third anniversary in Somalia

# Year Three

On 6 March 2007, some 350 Ugandan troops landed in Mogadishu as the first batch of peacekeepers for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Within a few days, Uganda completed a deployment of over 1,700 troops that constituted the first AU contingent in Somalia since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. Burundi followed, and by January 2008 it had also completed its deployment.

The mission has since gradually grown over the last three years, and today AMISOM forces number around 6,000. AMISOM is mandated to provide support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their efforts to stabilise the country and further dialogue and reconciliation. Additionally, AMISOM is required to facilitate humanitarian assistance and contribute to creating conditions conducive for reconstruction and development. Under the circumstances, the undermanned and under-funded mission has done well in serving the people, protecting the interim Somali government, securing the Mogadishu international airport, seaport and the presidential palace complex. Both the airport and seaport are major economic lifelines for the interim government and continue to offer services to the population.

AMISOM at the same time provides about 60,000 litres of safe drinking water per day to hundreds of neighbouring families and offers free medical services, including surgery, to thousands of Somalis. AMISOM now runs two hospitals – one in the main base near the airport and the second at the

former Somali National University in north-west Mogadishu. Both facilities receive and treat more than 2,000 patients per week. Though the facilities are too ill-equipped to give optimal service to the civilian population, they nonetheless offer the most sought medical services in Somalia. Patients come from as far as Bosasso in the semiautonomous region of Puntland. AMISOM medical staff do not discriminate among patients. Everyone, including wounded fighters from opposition groups, is welcome and treated. According to Chief Medical Officer Col. Dr. James Kiyengo the most common ailments treated at AMISOM facilities include malaria, malnutrition, hepatitis, tumors and gun shot wounds.

Somalis are grateful for the health services they receive from AMISOM. Nur Haji Muridi, a 40-year-old father of five, traveled from Bosasso, about 1,000 km north of Mogadishu, to save his foot after it was pierced by a nail in a garage. “I will always be grateful to AMISOM for saving my foot from amputation,” he said. “I went to three hospitals in Mogadishu and was told that my foot was rotten. The AMISOM doctors operated on it and saved me. It’s a miracle, and I will always be thankful to them.”

Suldana Mohamed, 60, is a mother of six and a grandmother to about a dozen children. She too expressed gratitude to Dr. Juvenal Nibogora, a Burundian physician who removed a tumor of hers. “May God bless you doctor,” she said. “I am feeling much better. I didn’t even feel pain during the op-

eration. Your hands are blessed by the many poor people you assist.”

At the main AMISOM base adjacent to the Mogadishu airport, the Ugandan contingent commander, Col. Tumusiime Katsigazi, assured the people of Somalia that AMISOM will never abandon them. “We have to bring in more medical facilities to improve our capacity to assist the people,” he said. “We will continue offering our services to the people until the security situation is normalized and the population can get treatment elsewhere.”

As expected, the first three years of AMISOM in Somalia have not been easy. The mission has paid a heavy price in its endeavour to restore peace in a country that has not had a central government since the 1991 ouster of former President Mohamed Siad Barre. More than 70 AMISOM peacekeepers have lost their lives, and dozens more have been injured in attacks by Islamist militants determined to topple the Transitional Federal Government that AMISOM is mandated to support. AMISOM Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha deeply regrets the loss of life and suffering both in AMISOM and among the civilian population and hopes that the conflict in Somalia will soon come to an end. In a speech marking the occasion, Mugisha said: “As we commemorate the third anniversary of the deployment of AMISOM, let us all work together to enable the people of Somalia to bring this hemorrhage to an end, before it becomes a tragedy for the world.” ■



AMISOM Police trainers pose for group photo with DSRCC Wamunyinyi

## Training begins for AMISOM police instructors

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) launched a two-week induction course for 34 police officers who are expected to start training and mentoring members of the Somali Police Force. The Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (DSRCC) for Somalia Hon. Wafula Wamunyinyi officially opened the course on Friday, 19 February 2010 at the Kenya Wildlife Training Centre.

The course has attracted police trainers from Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Addressing the inductees, DSRCC Wamunyinyi said, "I have no doubt in my mind that the officers assembled here today have the professional competence to deliver on our mandate in Somalia."

The police trainers were selected last year following an assessment by an AU/UN selection team which traveled to the four countries to conduct an evaluation of the officers in line to serve in AMISOM. More than 600 candidates were selected and put in a database for possible deployment. The AU/UN selection team was led by AMISOM Police Commissioner Hudson Benzu.

Wamunyinyi said the induction course for the police trainers is part of the African Union's responsibility to support the people of Somalia, who for the past two decades have not seen peace or development in their country. He also thanked the government of Kenya for offering its Wildlife Training Centre to for use by AMISOM. ■



Somali women and children



## Mogadishu residents







**appreciate AMISOM hospital**



Six years ago many of the Burundian soldiers now serving together in Somalia were enemies in the battle for control of their country. But a lasting peace agreement signed in 2004 has allowed the onetime foes to form a unity force of some 2,600 AMISOM peacekeepers standing shoulder to shoulder in Somalia now. This is what genuine reconciliation can bring in a war-torn country. Welcome to the story of hope and reconciliation -- the Burundi style -- as a living example to the Somali people.

Brig. Gen. Niyongabo Prime is the commander of the Burundian AMISOM peacekeeping contingent in Somalia. But in a previous life Prime was a Burundian rebel, a member of an oppositionist party called the Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy, or simply CNDD-FDD, led by Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza. Prime's deputy, Col. Ndayishimiye Joseph, was a member of the Burundi National Armed Force, the same government Prime and his CNDD-FDD rebel group battled around the country during the ten-year civil war. Both men are today leading two battalions of Burundian peacekeepers, many of whom were also former enemies themselves.

"My deputy and I were enemies during the Burundi civil war. Now we are working together, there is no problem between us," the soft-spoken Prime said in the Siyad Barre Military academy in western Mogadishu, the main base for the Burundi peacekeepers. "When we were fighting each other in Burundi we did not have foreign fighters within our ranks. That made it easy for us to reconcile. Am not sure the al-Shabab can now talk to the government mainly because of the influence of foreign militants who are fugitives and don't want any peace at all. This is the problem in Somalia at the moment."

Sitting alongside Prime, Joseph pointed to members of the current Somali government as an example of how reconciliation can work in Somalia despite difficulties.

"Inda'ade, the former defence chief of the Islamic Courts forces and Gobale, who was also a senior commander, are a good example for the rest," Joseph said. "They reconciled with their enemies and are now in government."

Inda'ade also known, as Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Siyad, is Somalia's current minister of state for defense. The bearded Inda'ade, who has survived several assassination attempts by al-Shabab, echoed Joseph's comment.

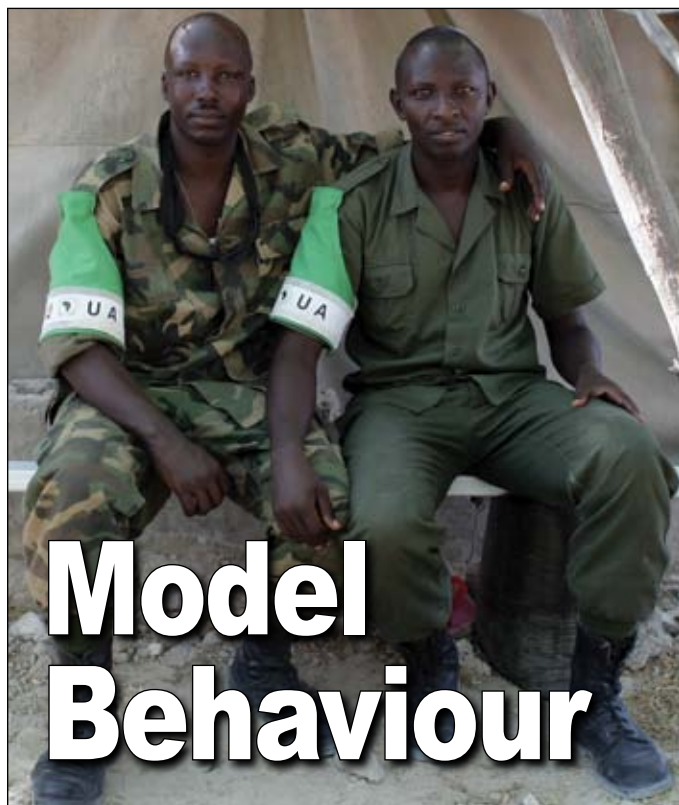
"I was an al-Shabab commander, I know their mentality," Inda'ade said. "They want to control the whole world. This is not a problem for Somalia only. Instead of the rest of the world waiting for al-Shabab bullets and bombs to ignite in their respective countries we should extinguish it here in Somalia where it's possible to tame them. The government needs support in order to eliminate their threat."

Prime agrees. He often advises the Somali government to shore up public support and believes that al-Shabab and other insurgents waging attacks against the TFG and AMISOM forces are weak enough to be defeated if international help is forthcoming.

"It's up to the world to decide whether they want the fugitives they have chased in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen to continue getting a safe haven in Somalia," Prime said. "This country needs just a little remedy. I urge our African brothers to seriously consider helping Somalia before these terrorists come to their doorsteps." ■



Burundian troops in Somalia are offering stories of peace and reconciliation based on their own country's experience with war



# The Case for a Stronger AMISOM

*Somalia is a central front in the global fight against extremism*

By AMISOM Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha

On 5 February 2010, Somali extremists announced that they were forming an alliance with al-Qaeda to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and fight a jihad across East Africa. This statement crystallizes what is at stake in a country that has been ripped apart by war for two decades. Make no mistake about it. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is not engaged in an obscure little domestic conflict in some unimportant nation that has no bearing on the rest of the world. On the contrary, the struggle for peace in Somalia represents a central front in the international fight against the global terrorist network al-Qaeda.

If the international community fails to acknowledge this and act accordingly, the consequences could be dire. Given more time, the extremists will evolve into a tougher, more resilient force. Veterans from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere in the world are providing local Somali fighters with funding and deadly new skills. The world needs to know that it cannot stand idly by and allow extremism and its al-Qaeda support to become entrenched in the region. This type of terrorism is like a virus. Unless dealt with decisively, with all possible resources, it spreads quickly. That is why it is vitally important to defeat the extremists who hide behind the perverted banner of religion and offer nothing but repression, violence and bloodshed to the people of Somalia and the entire region. Extremism has nothing to do with Islam and everything to do with indiscriminate murder and carnage.

I am gratified by the progress AMISOM has made since the mission started in 2007. AMISOM is now able to provide a wide range of services in Somalia. First and at the broadest strategic level, we provide the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed with the room and breathing space to function as an emerging administration, a key process on the road back to normalcy for Somalia. At the military level, we intend to create a secure environment by providing training support for a new Somali military force that will soon hold the key to security -- the foundation for a future of stability and development in Somalia. Everyone recognizes that the future of Somalia ultimately is in the hands of the people of Somalia.

The gains we have made have not been without pain and sacrifice. Since our deployment three years ago, more than seventy brave AMISOM soldiers have lost their lives in Somalia, and dozens more have been wounded. Unlike the extremists, we have the highest regard for human life and

mourn each life lost. And yet we are eager to keep up the fight. Over the next year, I look forward to seeing AMISOM troop levels increase significantly from our current status as we continue this difficult struggle alongside the Somali government. I particularly welcome the imminent arrival of new battle groups. With additional troops from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti and other Troop Contributing Countries, we will evolve into a more robust African peacekeeping force.

For too long, and despite pledges from a number of our African partner countries, we have been dependent on Uganda and Burundi. A more robust deployment would enable us to enhance the struggle for peace by empowering the TFG forces to reduce the space for manoeuvre available to the

extremists. We aim to create a secure environment and reduce the climate of fear that is pervasive in areas where the extremists operate. Meanwhile, the training we provide to the Somali forces will enhance their functional capability and enable them to prevail over the extremists.

The United Nations has stated that it will not deploy a UN peacekeeping force in Somalia until the fighting stops. The disturbing question is: who

will create this desirable situation? Who will stop the fighting? There is no alternative to AMISOM. Therefore,

AMISOM must be properly resourced. There is need to make the mission attractive to potential Troop Contributing Countries and boost troop morale by increasing their allowances to the UN scale while ensuring that the funds are disbursed in a timely manner. Pledges will not be enough to reverse the status quo on the ground. There should be a timely fulfillment of those pledges if we want the situation on the ground to change. The longer the international community takes to match resources to rhetoric, the more difficult it becomes to reverse the negative developments.

During the recent African Union summit in Addis Ababa, I was pleased to hear Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero express his admiration for AMISOM's work. More importantly, he appreciated that the current levels of international support are insufficient. "If we do not support the Transitional Government more, Somalia could become a place that would destroy humanity," Zapatero said. His words were well chosen. Somalia has been suffering its own tragedy for almost 20 years. As we commemorate the third anniversary of the deployment of AMISOM, let us all work together to enable people of Somalia to bring this haemorrhage to an end, before it becomes a tragedy for the world. ■





**A**s part of its mandate to support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, African Union peacekeepers will help train troops for the TFG. The training will take place at locations in Mogadishu. During a recent visit to the Somali capital, AMISOM Bulletin correspondent Hassan Barise accompanied AMISOM Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha on a visit to the training camps. Barely catching his breath during the nearly five kilometre brisk walk, our reporter squeezed in a short interview with Mugisha, who highlighted the excellent relations that exist between the African Union peacekeeping force and the residents of Mogadishu. Here are excerpts from the conversation.

**Q: Currently, you have a little over 5,000 AMISOM troops in Mogadishu and they are still inadequate. What difference would an extra 2,000 troops you expect to train for the TFG make?**

A: A big difference. AMISOM has already achieved some success with our limited resources. So, 2,000 more TFG troops would boost our efforts to protect the population and ensure that when they wake up every morning, they can go about their daily activities without fear and contribute to the fight for peace in Somalia.

**Q: How optimistic are you that you can achieve the goal of restoring peace in Somalia with 5,000 AMISOM peacekeepers and 2,000 TFG troops?**

A: It is a gradual process; peace cannot be achieved in a day just as Rome was not built in a day. We have to identify the good Somalis - the positive-thinking Somalis - and encourage them to join the TFG in fighting for peace, while trying to convince those still out there in the bush to come to the negotiating table. We shall endeavour to convince them to lay down their arms and negotiate.

**Q: AMISOM has been deployed for over two years in Somalia, with limited success. What has changed on the ground that would cause you to hope that better results are now achievable?**

A: In the first place, there were supposed to be 8,000 AMISOM troops from the beginning. But we have been operating with a little more than half of our required strength. The situation has been gradually changing and even the initial estimate of our required troop levels may already be obsolete. Having said that, I must emphasise that despite our limited troop numbers we have achieved a lot. We have secured certain areas where life is normal and people can go about their daily activities without fear or intimidation. The airport and the seaport are operating normally. The

Government is in place and performing its duties. So, I can assure you that with additional troops, the situation will continue to improve.

**Q: What do you see as the main obstacles to achieving your goals?**

A: First, we need to be clear about our mandate: contrary to what some may think or say, we are not here to fight. We are here to help create a conducive environment for dialogue among Somalis. We are here to support all peace-loving Somalis to reconcile and forge a way forward. There is no military solution to this conflict; only a political solution, that is, dialogue and negotiations can achieve a lasting solution to the conflict in Somalia. Somalis must sit around a table and resolve their differences. The solution will not come from without; it will only come from Somalis themselves.

**Q: AMISOM peacekeepers have repeatedly come under attack from the extremists and you have retaliated, sometimes causing civilian casualties. Don't you think you have at times overreacted and used disproportionate force in retaliation against attacks on AMISOM and the TFG?**

A: I do not think that our popularity with the population has suffered as a result of some of the incidents that have occurred. We have a very good relationship with the people and that was demonstrated during a recent incident in which we promptly and courageously reacted to a fire fight that broke out at a petrol station. We were able to join the population and fight off the attackers. That would not have been possible if we did not have close cooperation with the population.

We have always come to the rescue of the people. We have a very good relationship with them. We share our food, water and medicines with the local population. For instance, over 60,000 people - Somali civilians - have received free treatment at the AMISOM health centre and many more continue to come to us and we are glad to share the few resources we have. Therefore, I can say that we have achieved many successes despite our minimal troop numbers and limited resources. We should be able to achieve even more success with an increase in our troop numbers. ■

# Partners in Peace

## *Why Burundi's commitment to AMISOM remains strong despite challenges*

By AMISOM Deputy Force Commander Cyprien Hakiza of Burundi

I have been in AMISOM since 31 August 2009. I was supposed to take on the position of deputy force commander after spending a transition period with the outgoing deputy force commander, who was set to leave at the end of October 2009. Tragically, less than three weeks after my arrival, we suffered a serious terrorist attack on 17 September 2009 in which the deputy force commander and over 15 other peacekeepers were killed. I was called upon to immediately take over after that. So, my assumption of duty was rushed and occurred under tragic circumstances.

When I took over, we were all mourning the loss of our colleagues. Everyone was hurting -- both the peacekeepers and the Somali civilians and authorities. But we quickly recovered from the shock and became more determined to not allow the terrorists to succeed in intimidating us and holding the Somali people hostage. Six months after the attack and three years since AMISOM was deployed, the morale of our troops is good.

We came to this mission knowing that it was not going to be a picnic. We knew it was a challenging mission in which the unexpected could and would happen. So when tragedy struck, we quickly regained our composure and got back to work. The troops are doing their job well, and we hope that the situation will continue to improve on the ground.

The first challenge we face is the very nature of the warfare in Somalia. The violence our peacekeepers encounter on the ground is insurgent attacks. This is not a traditional battle theatre, the kind of conventional warfare for which most soldiers are trained and prepared. It is unconventional, asymmetric warfare. The insurgents use roadside bombs, car bombs, suicide attacks, etc. This is guerrilla warfare, and our peacekeepers have been doing a commendable job trying to figure out the tactics, strategies, methods and weapons of the insurgents. It is a constantly changing scenario. As soon as we find out what the insurgents are up to, they change their tactics and we have to adjust.

The second major problem is that we do not have adequate resources. We are lacking in both equipment and manpower. Our troop numbers are inadequate and we need more equipment both qualitatively and quantitatively. We need maritime resources – patrol boats and combat vessels to secure the Mogadishu port and assist the Somali government in controlling the shores and territorial waters of Somalia. That could also help reduce the problem of piracy off the coasts of Somalia. We also need air equipment, for instance helicopter ambulances, to quickly evacuate injured persons with minimal risk.

The third problem we face is language. We don't speak Somali. In order to communicate with the Somali authorities

when we meet with them, they bring interpreters. Unfortunately, some of these translators might have sympathies for the insurgents, and our decisions are frequently leaked to the terrorists. It is quite a challenge, and we are exploring various options to solve this problem, including the possibility of recruiting translators from other Somali-speaking communities in neighbouring countries.

The fourth problem we have faced in the past is that of our allowances. We are pleased that all arrears of our peacekeepers' allowances have been paid up to December 2009. Prior to that, the troops were owed several months of unpaid allowances, and that was not good for troop morale. Now we hope that thanks to the African Union, our regional partners and the international community that we shall avoid putting our troops back in a similar situation.

For any responsible government in any self-respecting country, the decision to deploy troops in a mission like this is a big one. You must have very good reasons. Burundi suffered many years of war and political violence beginning in 1993. The violence in our country created too many casualties and displaced a lot of people. It caused much suffering to many of our citizens. Much infrastructure was destroyed. Our recovery was not guaranteed, and we could not take it for granted. The African Union, the United Nations, our neighbouring countries and the international community helped us to come together, sit around a table, talk to each other, reach a peace agreement and implement it. We held successful democratic elections and elected a government that represents the will of our people. All that could not have been achieved on our own. We needed and benefited from the assistance of others.

Today, Burundi enjoys peace. The decision to send troops to help restore peace in Somalia is our modest way of paying back our debt to our neighbours and the international community. We in Burundi cannot sit back and watch our Somali brothers and sisters continue to suffer, because we have been there and we know what they are going through from our own experience. We owe it to ourselves and to our neighbours to help bring peace to Somalia -- just as others helped us in our time of need.

Another reason why Burundi joined this peacekeeping effort was to answer the call of the African Union – this is an AU mission. The African Union had appealed to African countries to mobilise to help find African solutions to African problems. Since Burundi is an AU member state, we decided to respond positively to that call. Also, Burundi joined an African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia because a long history of extraordinarily close relations exists between the two countries. Since 1972, for instance, many Burundian military officers have been trained in Somali military academies.

Since our deployment, we have lost more than 30 Burundian peacekeepers in this mission. Most of our fallen heroes lost their lives in terrorist attacks. Twelve Burundian peacekeepers were killed in the February 2009 attack and another 12 died in the September 2009 bombings, including, as I earlier indicated, my predecessor. But Burundi will not be intimidated. We shall not be discouraged because the mission – peace in Somalia – is too important. After both attacks and our losses, people back at home were hurt and some were understandably angry and started wondering if our presence in Somalia was worth all the sacrifices. However, the majority of the Burundian people know why we are here. They understand our mission and are fully supportive of the government's deci-

Centre in our field hospital is Burundian – Dr. Evariste Nitunga. The centre is one of the few fistula repair facilities in Africa, and its services are in very high demand here in Somalia.

For good reason, Burundi is proud of the work its troops are doing within the African Union peacekeeping Mission in Somalia, and we are determined to continue doing our best to help our Somali brothers and sisters find the kind of peace we in Burundi enjoy today. More important than Burundi's participation, however, is the overarching goal of restoring peace in Somalia. Despite the peculiarities and challenges of this mission, the goal of peace in Somalia can be achieved. The most important and most encouraging fact is that the great majority of the Somali people seem willing and determined to



sion to send Burundian peacekeepers to help restore peace in Somalia.

The Burundian contingent consists of about 2,650 peacekeepers who are generally deployed for about a year before being rotated back home. Our contingent includes all trades and skills, because when you deploy troops in a theatre like this, you must ensure that they are self-sufficient. We are also here to help the population in different areas of need, for instance healthcare. We receive and treat hundreds of patients every day at our field hospital here in Mogadishu. We distribute water to the population. We also assist in de-mining roads, etc. Obviously, we have cooks, mechanics and other specialists to help in all these tasks. For instance, one of the two AMISOM doctors who currently head the Fistula Repair

end this war. They deserve support and assistance, and the international community cannot afford to let them down. The time to catch the ball on the rebound and seize the momentum is now. If this opportunity is lost, the international community might have to use more force and marshal more resources to save Somalia from total collapse and the entire region from dangerous chaos.

Three years since AMISOM was first deployed, some critics wonder what the African Union Mission in Somalia has achieved and whether peace in Somalia is a hopeless cause. The mission is indeed in need of manpower, funds and other resources. Its roughly 6,000 troops need everything from patrol boats to ambulance helicopters. Despite these challenges, Burundi is not discouraged. ■



# PROFILES

## Portraits of our brave men and women on duty



**F**irst Class Private Anita Harerimana serves in the 5th Battalion, 2nd Regiment of AMISOM's Burundian Contingent. Upon her deployment in October 2009, Anita's unit was assigned to secure the Siad Barre Academy in Mogadishu, a frequent target of insurgent mortar attacks launched from the former Somali Ministry of Defence. Anita is not intimidated by these and other attacks. She says her rigorous mental and physical training in the Burundian National Defence Force have adequately prepared her for any peacekeeping assignments in Somalia. Her role as an AMISOM peacekeeper, she says, offers her an opportunity to help restore peace and security in a fellow African country, and she is prepared, if need be, to make the ultimate sacrifice. Her motto is 'service and honour to Burundi and Africa.'

Anita's warm smile and youthful looks belie the determined soldier her comrades know her to be. Before joining the Burundian army in May 2009, Anita had spent five years in the jungle as a guer-

rilla fighter with the National Front for the Liberation of Burundi (FNL), a rebel group that unsuccessfully fought the Burundian government for over ten years. Despite her toughness, Anita still gets homesick like other soldiers. She misses her friends, parents and siblings and frequently talks to them by phone. Family and friends mean a lot to this peacekeeper, who regularly draws inspiration from their love, support and encouragement.

Besides the environmental and professional challenges of soldiering, Anita says she and her fellow female peacekeepers in AMISOM do not have any particular problems. Their commanding officers have made sure that their living and work conditions are appropriate for female soldiers. And Anita considers herself fortunate to have been granted the opportunity to serve her country and Africa in this mission and enjoys the experience of working with AMISOM peacekeepers from other countries like Uganda. ■



# Transitional Government celebrates first anniversary





January 2010 marked one year since the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia was formed as a broad-based government of national unity. The anniversary was celebrated on Friday, 29 January 2010 in Mogadishu, in an event attended by President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, Speaker of Parliament Sheik Aden Mohamed Nor Madobe and a host of other officials from the government and parliament. Speaking on the occasion, President Ahmed highlighted the achievements of the Transitional Federal Institutions. He noted that great strides had been made in re-establishing the Somali security forces and lauded the progress made in attracting the support of the international community.

“In the past year, we have been very busy building the foundations of the Somali state,” said the president. “This year, our plans are to be as self-sufficient as we can and to start providing essential services to our people, such as education and health, and rehabilitating the infrastructure.”

The event was briefly interrupted by a terrorist attack. Two mortars were fired into the area where the celebrations were taking place, killing one Somali civilian and an AMISOM peacekeeper from Uganda. Another peacekeeper was wounded. Despite the attack, the ceremony continued as planned, with both the speakers and the audience undaunted. The president immediately condemned the attack, which he said highlighted the complete moral bankruptcy of the extremists, who recently pledged allegiance to the al-Qaeda global terrorist network.

“Our thoughts are first of all with the families of those who lost their lives today,” the president said. He described the incident as a classic example of what those behind the attack represent and the reason why more and more people are supporting the transitional Federal Government in its efforts to restore law and order and national unity to Somalia.

“On this, the first anniversary of a new government and a new beginning for the country, I call on all Somalis to join us on the path towards peace,” he added.

The President thanked troop-contributing countries to the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia for their sacrifice and urged the international community to make good on its commitments to Somalia. During the ceremony, the president conferred the country’s highest honour posthumously on four ministers, two members of parliament and two senior military officers killed in the line of duty. The event also included poetry readings, singing, traditional Somali dance and a series of comic sketches performed by the famous Waberi band. ■

Somali Government Forces raise the national flag during a ceremony in January 2010 to mark the first anniversary of the Transitional Federal Government



# Peace Accord

## Somali government signs pact with Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia has signed a power-sharing agreement with the Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ) group. The Framework for Cooperation Agreement was formally signed on 15 March 2010, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during a ceremony overseen by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Dr. Jean Ping. Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke attended the event as did ASWJ spiritual leader Shaykh Mahmud Shaykh Hasan Farah.

The signing occurred after lengthy negotiations and broad consultations between the Somali government and Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, a coalition of Sufi clansmen who have taken up arms against extremists in Somalia. The agreement provides for cooperation between both parties in the quest for a peaceful resolution of the Somali conflict. It formally brings Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a into the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia by offering the group some cabinet positions, ambassadorships and other high-level appointments.

In a statement released to the media following the signing ceremony, the African Union described the agreement as "clear testimony to the TFG's strong and continuous commitment to reach out to those still outside the Djibouti peace process, with a view to broadening the scope of reconciliation among Somali interlocutors."

The African Union recognises that implementing the agreement will be challenging. Implementation will require the strong determination and will of both parties to ensure that the spirit and the letter of the agreement are upheld in a manner that guarantees the overall benefits envisaged. A key benefit of the agreement would be the enhancement of the security situation in Somalia, which would enable the Somali government to expand its presence across the country in order to deliver peace dividends, including social services, to the population. In that regard, the AU Commission has reiterated its support to the Somali Government and pledged its commitment to help the TFG implement its peace and security agenda as well as other tasks aimed at restoring the country to normalcy.

The AU has further reiterated its call to on all opposition groups to renounce violence and join the peace process, especially armed factions like Hizbul Islam and al-Shabab. The African Union views the signing of this agreement as "a clear manifestation of the desire of the Somali people to end the long-running crisis in their country. It also translates to a hope for the Horn of Africa and, indeed, the continent and the world community." Therefore, the AU Commission has welcomed the invaluable support of the regional organisation IGAD, the United Nations and other partners in ensuring the agreement's full implementation. ■

# International Support

## UN and EU welcome TFG accord with Sufi faction



The United Nations and the European Union have welcomed the signing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 15 March 2010 of a Framework for Cooperation Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a.

In a statement issued in Nairobi on 15 March 2010, the UN Special Representative for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah commended the TFG and Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a for forging a pact in the spirit of the Djibouti peace process.

"I congratulate the signatories for reaching an agreement in the interest of the Somali people and the nation, in the interest of their dignity and towards peace in the region," Ould-Abdallah said. "The agreement is a success for both parties and demonstrates that things can, and are changing in Somalia."

The Ould-Abdallah reiterated his belief that Somalia is moving from a failed state to a fragile state and stressed his conviction that

more rapprochement between Somalis would soon follow as old obstacles to stability in Somalia slowly crumble. He expressed appreciation to the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union, Norway, the United States, IGAD member states and especially the organisation's Ethiopian Chair for their role in securing the agreement. "In thanking all the parties and those who assisted, I invite all the friends of Somalia to adapt to an emerging reality-- the rebirth of the Somali State." The UN envoy added.

Similarly, the High Representative of the European Union Commission and Commission Vice President Catherine Ashton welcomed the agreement as an important step towards broadening the reconciliation process in Somalia in support of the Djibouti peace accord. Ashton called on all parties to implement the agreement and promised EU support. She thanked the African Union, IGAD, the United Nations and all who helped make the agreement possible. ■

# No Failed State

## *Why Somalia is stronger than many realize*

By Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed.

*A version of this article was originally published in the Guardian in April, when President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed made an official visit to the United Kingdom.*

A little over a year ago, I was elected president of a country that many consider the most dangerous in the world. Over the last 20 years, Somalia has been synonymous with war and displacement. Now terrorism and piracy have been added to this list – and they threaten death and destruction far beyond our borders. Let me begin by emphasizing that however bad the situation looks, Somalia is not the “failed” state of popular imagination.

Somalis are resilient and committed to peace and sickened by the nihilistic violence of the extremists who recently announced an alliance with al-Qaida to wreak havoc across East Africa. There is nothing Somali about the violence afflicting our country. The extremists are waging war against our Somali flag, our Somali values and our religion. Witness their values: they blew up a graduation ceremony on 3 December last year, killing young Somali doctors, graduates and four government ministers. They are preventing the UN World Food Programme from providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of Somalis in desperate need. It seems these extremists will stop at nothing.

They could be defeated relatively easily, however, if the international community were to adjust its thinking in two critical ways. First, concerned nations must abandon the defeatist notion that Somalia’s problems are insuperable, because this becomes a self-fulfilling expectation. Second, the international community must rid itself of the dangerous delusion that Somalia has no relevance to the rest of the world.

The African Union Mission in Somalia is under-resourced. With the exception of Uganda and Burundi, countries have promised troops but haven’t delivered. The Transitional Federal Government has trained several thousand soldiers, brave men and women ready to take on and expel al-Qaeda from Somalia. The Brit-

ish government has done much to assist us, and we are grateful, but more support from other members of the international community is needed. If we could establish a larger, well-trained army, we could make a real difference in the fight against the extremists.

Piracy off the Somali coast is a major challenge. I am appalled that the British sailors Paul and Rachel Chandler are being held hostage. I would like to add my voice to those of the British Somali community and the elders in Somalia calling for the Chandlers’

freedom. Their captivity is un-Islamic and un-Somali.

We have already trained 1,500 men as part of a professional Somali coastguard who may prevent such incidents in the future, but we do not have the boats and other equipment to protect Somali waters properly.

The TFG is committed to working with the international community to combat terrorism and promote regional security. As a result of a desire for national reconciliation, we have created a functioning coalition government made up of yesterday’s enemies. We are committed to transparency, which is why we’ve hired PricewaterhouseCoopers to ensure the accountability of donor funds. The Central Bank of Somalia and Radio Mogadishu are now up and running. The constitution is under review. We have built bridges with our

diaspora communities. Foreign embassies are now operating in Mogadishu, and Somalia has close to 30 diplomatic missions worldwide. This progress is evidence that Somalia is not a “failed” state, and it is proof that something can be done. However, the extremists threaten to undo this progress and pose danger not only to Somalia but the wider world.

The international community has a duty to match the resolve of the Somali people with robust support. Doing that now will be a great deal less expensive than doing it later. Somalia has suffered this tragedy for decades. Let us prevent it from becoming a wider one. ■



# President Sheikh Sharif concludes visit to UK



On the invitation of the government of the United Kingdom, the President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed visited Great Britain from 8-11 March 2010. During the visit the president met with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest. President Sharif also met with Foreign Secretary David Miliband, Home Secretary Alan Johnson, International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander, Foreign Office Minister for Africa Baroness Kinnock and Communities Minister Shahid Malik.

A joint statement released to the media at the end of the visit indicated that the trip provided an opportunity for the British government to hear about the TFG's efforts to enhance peace and stability in Somalia and for open and frank discussions on various issues of mutual concern. The visit also offered an opportunity for the United Kingdom to confirm its support to the government of Somalia and commitment to the Djibouti peace process. According to the statement, the ongoing British support to the TFG and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) demonstrates the United Kingdom's commitment to Somalia.

Both governments agreed that a peaceful and stable Somalia is vital to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people, who face an ever worsening humanitarian crisis. Somalia's stability, both parties observed, is important to regional stability and prosperity in East Africa as well as the security of the United Kingdom and other countries across the world. They noted that unrest and lawlessness in Somalia had created the conditions for terrorism to flourish, seen most recently in al-Shabab's declaration of allegiance with al-Qaeda.

The British prime minister and the Somali president discussed recent progress on governance and highlighted the need to continue outreach and reconciliation efforts to all groups supporting peace in Somalia. Prime Minister Brown also thanked the Somali president for his government's assistance in trying to secure the safe release of Paul and Rachel Chandler, two British nationals held by pirates in Somalia since October 2009.

During President Sharif's meetings with the foreign secretary and the minister for Africa, both sides agreed that continued support to the TFG and the Djibouti process should remain at the core of the international community's strategy to achieve long term sta-

bility in Somalia. The Foreign Secretary Miliband promised that the United Kingdom would continue to work closely with the TFG, the United Nations and other international partners to deliver a cohesive and focused programme of support to Somalia. UK officials pledged an additional £7.5 million to support humanitarian activities in Somalia as part of the president's visit. Also, the British development secretary announced a £5.8 million programme to help promote peace and stability in the region by supporting reconciliation and local peace building initiatives between clans and communities. In total, the initiatives bring British humanitarian spending on Somalia for 2009/10 to £19 million, with overall spending at £30.5 million.

An important part of the President's visit was his meetings with the Somali diaspora in the United Kingdom. At meetings in London and Birmingham, President Sharif informed Somalis in the United Kingdom of the efforts and progress his government was making towards peace and prosperity for the Somali people. He answered concerns by Somalis abroad and sought to dispel some of the negative propaganda spread by the violent opposition groups about the TFG, AMISOM and the international community. ■

# A Year for Action

## *Why the international community should make Somalia a priority in 2010*

By Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke

*A version of this article appeared in the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune 19 January 2010.*

Last December, a Somali man who had lived in Denmark dressed himself in women's clothes, positioned himself at a graduation ceremony in Mogadishu and then blew himself up. He killed 22 people, including three government ministers and many young medical graduates and professors, who had hoped to dedicate their lives to the alleviation of suffering in Somalia.

The terrible events of that day reverberated around the world. Somali doctors, information technology and engineering graduates, alongside their families, began the morning full of hope and pride, yet many were not to see the sun set that day. They were among the brightest and the best of Somalia, and so were the ministers who lost their lives.

But as the recent events in Aarhus, Denmark, Mogadishu and over the skies of Detroit on Christmas show, the current situation in Somalia and across the Gulf of Aden in Yemen not only threatens the lives of Somalis but also people beyond its borders.

However, Somalia is not the ultimate failed state of popular perception. Its people are resilient and manage to survive in conditions that are probably well beyond the imagination of

most readers. In Mogadishu, a city of two million, people carry on, despite the fighting, the shelling, the displacement. Over 100 Somali-led reconciliation processes have taken place at local and regional levels since 1991 — and they've proved the basis for stability in Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug state in central Somalia.

While Somali reconciliation and mediation efforts will be the key to sustainable peace and stability, the international community — including the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union, the Arab League, the European Union and the United Nations — has an important role to play. As 2010 unfolds, our collective vision should be to see the beginnings of a secure, stable and prosper-

ous Somalia, at peace with itself and its neighbors, where its citizens can go about their lives in safety and provide for their families with confidence and dignity. Let us strive for a resurgent, tolerant society, built on respect for traditional Somali cultural and religious values.

The Transitional Federal Government, as its name suggests, is a temporary structure for developing the environment necessary to achieve this objective. It is a transitional mechanism that will enable the people to

decide for themselves how they want to be governed, free from outside interference and coercion.

The transitional government's principle purpose is to prepare the way for the establishment of legitimate and accountable public institutions. (We have already taken the initiative and hired Price Waterhouse Coopers to ensure the accountability of international donor funds.) These institutions will form the basis of a stable, representative government that can begin to alleviate the trauma of the last 20 years.

We will achieve this by building professional, representative security forces; creating transparent and accountable public institutions based on the principles of civic responsibility and good governance; devel-

oping a fair and impartial judicial system; and increasing economic opportunity through investment, training, health and education.

Given the complex and extremely difficult circumstances that recent events have so graphically illustrated, achieving all this will be an extraordinary challenge. It will require the combined effort of the whole Somali people, as well as assistance from outside. Only in partnership with all Somalis and the support of the international community will success be possible. It will take time, determination and patience but it can be done. Let us all take up this challenge. Let 2010 be the start of something new. ■





# Cause for Celebration

## Mogadishu Marks Women's Day

Despite the perpetual threat of suicide bombings, mortar attacks and sniper fire posed by extremists opposition groups, International Women's Day took on an air of celebration 8 March 2010 at Camp Halane in Mogadishu, the main base of AMISOM's Ugandan contingent and the mission's headquarters. Festivities at the AMISOM base were complementary to the main Women's Day celebration held at the presidential palace in downtown Mogadishu. Following a theme of gender equality and social progress, Women's Day activities at AMISOM force headquarters were led by female peacekeepers, representatives from the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs and leaders of the Coalition of Grassroots Women Organizations (COGWO), an umbrella group of Somali Women's organisa-

tions based in Mogadishu. A host of activists and elders from the city also joined.

Speaking at the event, AMISOM Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nathan Mugisha observed with regret that in many parts of Africa conflict, poverty and other factors continue to undermine the positive contribution of women to the development of their societies. Mugisha pointed to the practice of female genital mutilation, parental discrimination against daughters in education, early marriage and other hardships women across Africa often face. Meanwhile, Asha Omar, a top adviser in the Somali government on gender affairs, condemned the rising spate of suicide bombings against innocent people in Somalia. She voiced regret that war and anarchy had rendered Somali women more vulnerable to abuse. At the same time Omar thanked

AMISOM peacekeepers for their efforts and sacrifice to help bring peace to Somalia.

As part of the event, Mugisha formally received two containers of medical items donated to COGWO by Somalis in the diaspora. The donated items were meant for use in the Fistula Repair Centre at the AMISOM medical facilities in Mogadishu. Elsewhere in the capital city, women activists organised a peaceful march that went past the Bakara Market, the National Theatre and onto the presidential palace, among other landmarks in the city. Marchers strongly condemned the perpetrators of violence operating from within extremist groups in the country. Al-Shabaab was singled out for special criticism for its practice of forcefully recruiting underage children, thus exposing the youngsters to bodily harm, criminal activity and drug abuse. ■



*A Somali woman dressed in her country's flag*