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Message from the Acting Police Commissioner

Welcome to our final AMISOM Police quarterly newsletter for the year 2018.

During the last quarter of the year, AMISOM Police continued implementing the SPF institutional restructuring plan through various strategic engagements with the Somali Police Force both at the federal and state levels. The engagements were critical in developing capacity of the force in various aspects. First and foremost, recruitment and training of police officers continued in earnest with the youngest federal member state, Hirshabelle, being the main focus, where 200 recruits commenced a three-month intensive programme. The 200 recruits comprise the first batch of 800 young men and women earmarked for training at the Jowhar Training Academy. Training of police recruits are also planned for South West and Jubbaland States.

Apart from training, Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA), aimed at gauging the skill levels and capability level of regional forces, commenced in Puntland. The exercise has been generally successful and the report to be presented to the Federal Government of Somalia. In addition, with the help of our partners, AMISOM Police refurbished and constructed new police stations in Mogadishu and Jubbaland State to help bring policing services closer to the people. In Belet Weyne, a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a new police station was also held. There are plans to construct and refurbish more stations in other federal member states. These are quick impact projects that will adequately improve the working conditions of Somali Police Force to take over policing responsibilities.

Lastly preparations are far advanced for the deployment of the first set of IPOs to Dhobley to build the capacity of Jubbaland State Police Force (JSPF) through advising, training, mentoring and operational support.

To this end, I would like to thank our dedicated officers for the good work and wish them a happy and prosperous new year.

Thank you and happy reading!

CP Christine Alalo
AMISOM joins Somalia in marking SPF’s 75th Anniversary

AMISOM officials led by the Deputy Head of Mission, Simon Mulongo, joined the people of Somalia in marking the 75th anniversary of the Somali Police Force.

The colourful event, held at the Banadir Sports Stadium, was also attended by President Mohammed Abdullahi Farmajo and other senior government officials. Officers from different units showcased their policing skills and also displayed the modern equipment used in maintaining law and order in various parts of the country. President Farmajo thanked AMISOM and other partners for their contribution in helping Somalia establish a functioning police force after the collapse of country’s key institutions during the civil war. Aupol officers attended a similar event at the sectors.

Journalists from Police Contributing Countries visit Somalia

A group of journalists from Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) visited Somalia to familiarize themselves with the critical role played by AMISOM Police in the country’s stabilization process. The journalists from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zambia not only had the opportunity to cover activities of their respective contingents but also interact with the AU Mission’s senior leadership.

The journalists also travelled to Belet Weyne, Jawhar and Kismayo and witnessed individual Police Officers (IPOs) and Formed Police Unit (FPU) personnel at work. Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, Christine Alalo, urged the Ghanaian government to deploy FPU personnel to augment the strength of existing units. She praised PCCs for their invaluable contribution towards the realisation of Amisom's mandate.

AMISOM Police assists SPF secure South West Presidential election

AMISOM Police officers in Baidoa supported their Somali Police counterparts in securing the South West Presidential election. The officers secured the voting centre and other key installations ensuring the election was conducted in a peaceful environment, free from violence. The election was won by the former energy minister, Abdulaziz Hassan Mohamed.

AMISOM receives new IPOs

Fifty-three Individual Police Officers (IPOs) were deployed to Somalia in the last quarter of 2018.

The IPOs from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia were taken through the mandatory induction training and sent to various parts of the country to advice, train, and mentor Somali Police officers. Some of the officers were posted to AMISOM headquarters to perform administrative duties.

Speaking during the induction training, Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, Christine Alalo, urged the officers to work hard to enable the AU Mission achieve its set goals and objectives.
AMISOM Police roots for community policing in Jubbaland State

AMISOM Police organized series of meetings in Kismayo to educate residents and the police on the importance of community policing in securing neighbourhoods. The outreach programme, held at Caterpillar Police Station, was attended by both AMISOM and Somali Police Force (SPF) officers. AMISOM Community Policing Advisor, Bernard Azagisnaba, urged security officers to develop good relations with the residents and encourage information sharing. Some of the topics discussed during the meetings were professionalism in the police force, human rights law and transparency and accountability in the security force and countering violence extremism.

AU Peace and Security Council delegation visits Somalia

A 27-member delegation from the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) visited Somalia to assess the political and security situation in the country and also check the progress made in transitioning of national security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali National Security Forces. The delegation held discussions with the top officials of the federal government and South West State. AMISOM Police officers provided security to the delegation by securing routes and buildings used by the AU team during their stay in Somalia.

Construction of new police station in Belet Weyne commences

Construction of a new police station in Belet Weyne’s Dabakayo area has commenced. The project, funded by the Danish government, was initiated by AMISOM Police as part of its capacity building programme for the Somalia Police Force. The building of the station is expected to improve police visibility in Howl-Wadaag village and its surrounding areas, thus improving security. Deputy Governor of Hiraan Region, Abdirahim Muhumud Tokoy, and HirShabelle State Police Commissioner, Col Isaaq Ali Abdi, thanked AMISOM for supporting federal member states’ efforts to improve security in the regions.

AMISOM gender officer and PIO sensitizes IDPs on SGBV

AMISOM Police Gender Officer, Inspector Racheal Malambo, Public Information Officer, SP Freeman Tettey, and a team of journalists from Ghana and Nigeria visited Alrahma camp located in Mogadishu’s Dharkenley district to sensitize internally displaced persons (IDPs) on the dangers of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Ms. Malambo discussed the complexities of SGBV and the preventive measures that need to be undertaken to check the rising cases. The gender officer urged victims to report cases of SGBV to police officers to tackle the vice.
The first phase of recruitment of police officers in HirShabelle State commenced in November with the screening and vetting of at least 200 recruits in the administrative capital of Jowhar.

The AMISOM Police spearheaded the recruitment drive in collaboration with the Somali Police Force (SPF), ahead of commencement of the intensive training.

Drawn from two regions that make HirShabelle State – the Middle Shabelle and Hiiraan regions – the recruits were selected by traditional elders, politicians and other stakeholders.

“Strong HirShabelle State Police Force under the command and control of its commanders will immensely contribute to the safety and security of the state’s population,” said Col. Hassan Dhicisow, HirShabelle State Police Commissioner.

The recruits are undergoing a three-month basic policing course, to skill them on critical aspects of policing.

The training will focus on critical issues, such as the International Human Rights Law, the International Humanitarian Law and general human rights issues; including due diligence policing.

Ahmed Abdulle, a trainee, said the training will be useful in preparing him for policing duties. “I intend to serve my people with discipline and honor and contribute greatly in the maintenance of law and order,” he remarked.

ACP Leon Ngulube, the Acting AMISOM Police Training Coordinator, said the intensive training will produce police capable of providing safety and security in the regional state.

AMISOM Police is facilitating the training with support from implementing partners - the European Union and the UK Department for International Development, DFID through Joint Police Programme (JPP).

The AU Mission hopes to recruit a total of 800 police officers in HirShabelle State alone, as part of the transitioning of the security responsibility to the Somali security forces.
AMISOM police newsletter

Reforms and Restructuring

AMISOM completes refurbishment works at Yaqshid Police Station in Mogadishu

AMISOM Police carried extensive rehabilitation works at a run-down police station in Mogadishu as part of its efforts to build the capacity and equip the Somali Police Force.

Following weeks of reconstruction, Yaqshid Police Station was handed over in December, after an inspection tour by senior officials of the Somali Police Force and AMISOM Police.

The Deputy Police Commissioner of the Somali Police Force, Brigadier General Zakia Hussein Ahmed, said the new-look station would provide a decent working environment for Somali police officers and AMISOM’s police officers who collocate at the station for mentoring activities.

“I am very happy with the close collaboration between the AMISOM and the Somali police officers,” remarked Ms. Hussein. She lauded AMISOM for helping transform the Somali Police Force into a professional police outfit.

Other than training and mentoring Somali Police officers, AMISOM Police has also been involved in the construction and rehabilitation of some of the police stations destroyed during the civil war, with the aim of providing their local counterparts with an improved working environment.

The training, mentorship and rebuilding of the work-stations guarantees the Somali Police Force a smooth transition when the AU Police finally exits the country. “AMISOM is here as African brothers and sisters, to support you (Somali police officers) to build capacity and develop best practices,” noted the Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, Christine Alalo.

Funded by the Japanese government, the renovation works were carried out in the accommodation block, administration offices, Occurrence Book section, prayer hall and prison cells.

“First, this station is comparable to any that you will find across many African democracies and most importantly it will improve policing services provided to Yaqshid residents,” noted the station’s Police Commander, Major Bashir Yussuf Foole. He also disclosed that prior to renovation, the roofs were leaking, ceilings and doors broken.

AMISOM hands over newly constructed police station to Jubbaland authorities

As part of initiatives to improve security in the federal member states, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) handed over a newly constructed police station to Jubbaland State authorities. The Dalhis Police Station, constructed in Farjano district, was handed over to the Deputy President of Jubbaland State, Mohamud Sayid Aden, by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, at a ceremony witnessed by local elders and officials from AMISOM and Jubbaland administration.

The police station will enable the administration facilitate strategic police engagement activities and also provide space for the implementation of police mentorship programmes. Constructed by AMISOM, it includes a gender office which will cater for gender related crimes.

“As the African Union, we understand too well that supporting Jubbaland State to build its state institutions, including supporting the Police is important to bringing lasting peace and stability to Jubbaland and Somalia,” noted Ambassador Madeira. Jubbaland’s deputy president acknowledged the importance of having functional police stations in the port city.

“It is historic that a police station which was operating under a tree, now has a roof with fully functional offices,” Mr. Aden remarked. He was flanked by the Jubbaland Police Commissioner, Ahmednasir Guleed. Constructed by AMISOM with funding from the Danish government, Dalhis Police Station is the second police facility to be handed over to Jubbaland authorities by AMISOM this year.

“It was important and very necessary to have a police station that would serve this community and also the IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons),” explained Ms. Christine Alalo, the Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner. The construction of the police station followed a needs assessment done in 2016, which found it essential to secure the local community that consists of mainly Somali returnees from Kenya.

In June, AMISOM handed over another facility - Caterpillar Police Station – also in Kismayo town to Jubbaland authorities, after a complete refurbishment.
AMISOM Police hands over refurbished Police Station to Somali Police authorities

Residents of Dayniile district in Somalia’s capital of Mogadishu can now enjoy better policing services closer to their homes, following the renovation of a hitherto dilapidated district police headquarters.

The fully refurbished police building, rehabilitated with the support of the Japanese government, through AMISOM Police and the Civil Affairs Unit, was formally handed over to the Somali police authorities during the month of October.

“We must exit (Somalia), when we have uplifted the Somali Police to a certain level of independence - in terms of capacity building and in terms of infrastructure and logistics,” said Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, Christine Alalo, during the handover ceremony.

She reiterated AMISOM’s commitment to training and equipping the police force with necessary skills, to enable them improve service delivery in the country. Dayniile Police Station was identified for renovation by Individual Police Officers from AMISOM, who collocate with their Somali counterparts, in various police stations across the capital, to carry out a mentorship programme.

Before its renovation, the station lacked decent sanitary facilities and office space. The refurbishment has created a humane working environment for police officers stationed at the facility.

Deputy Commissioner of the Somali Police Force, Brigadier General Zakia Hussein Ahmed, expressed gratitude to AMISOM for going beyond its primary duty, to help the Somali Police Force.

“Thank you our partners AMISOM Police, not only for the help you have accorded to us, but also in every aspect of our policing and the way you are assisting us; and the way we are working together,” said the Deputy Police Commissioner.

The police station was also fitted with solar panels to provide electricity. Additionally, CP Alalo donated 3,000 pocket notebooks to the police officers to help in keeping records of incidents while in the field. The notebooks will be shared across police stations in the capital.
As part of efforts to implement institutional reforms, the Somali Police Force (SPF) trained 28 senior-level officers, on Strategic Planning and Management in October.

The course, first of its kind for SPF was facilitated by AMISOM Police and local experts. It was part of the organizational and structural changes being undertaken within the institution, to improve efficiency and performance.

“With this training, the officers acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes, that are necessary for them to be able to rise to the occasion and professionally carry out their duties in accordance with the expectations of the Somali population, with due diligence to and observance of human rights,” said Christine Alalo, the Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, at the conclusion of the ten-day course, in Mogadishu.

As a leadership tool, strategic management can be instrumental in fostering a culture of excellence and enhancing professionalism in a workforce, and in turn, maximize performance and output. AMISOM hopes, that the training will improve collaboration between various departments of the SPF.

“We have learnt vital leadership skills that we didn’t know before. This training is a must for every senior officer,” said Lt. Col. Fadumo Hassan Mohamed, the SPF head of community policing, who was one of the trainees.

Participants learnt how to develop a strategic vision and mission for the police force, principles of management, strategic planning and leadership, among other topics.
AMISOM Police officers undergo training on managing vehicle checkpoints

One hundred police officers from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) underwent a short course on managing vehicle checkpoints.

The objective of the training was to mitigate potential terrorist threats at checkpoints, using swift responsive mechanisms. The officers are expected to in turn impart the knowledge and skills learnt, on their Somali counterparts.

“There are many checkpoints in Mogadishu and Al-Shabaab militants know where they are, so they are able to dodge them,” explained Jacques de Wet, an IED mentor with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)’s contractor – Dynasafe Minetech Limited.

De Wet said the training focused on the processes and steps to be taken to set up vehicle checkpoints, during a specified time. “If you have 5 teams, up to 20 different locations will be covered,” de Wet noted.

The six-day course was the second phase of the vehicle checkpoint course, targeting the Formed Police Units in Mogadishu and the federal member states.

“We also carried out various practicals; we set up checkpoints and collapsed and set up more checkpoints; and we know the right procedures that we have to take and how to do proper vehicle checkpoints,” said Sergeant Walter Orji, one of the participants.

The Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, Ms. Christine Alalo, who officiated the closing ceremony of the workshop, challenged participants to apply the knowledge gained, to improve the security in Mogadishu and the regional cities.

“You are supposed to transfer the knowledge you have acquired to your Somali Police counterparts to prepare them to take over responsibility of securing the country,” she emphasized.

The training was facilitated by UNMAS, as part of its continuous efforts to build the capacity of the security forces, to fight the indiscriminate use of Improvised Explosive Devices, which remain Al-Shabaab’s weapon of choice.

SPF trained on countering terrorism

AMISOM Police organized a one-week Counter Terrorism Course for the Somali Police Force in November.

The Training of Trainers (TOT) course held at General Kaahiye Police Academy in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, was aimed at equipping the SPF officers with the requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills on counter terrorism.

The officers from Criminal Investigations Department and Operations Unit are expected to offer the same training to their counterparts to ensure the police force applies best practices in the fight against terrorism.

Speaking at the training, Somali Police Force (SPF) Director of Training, Brig. Gen Hassan Alasow Mohamed, urged the participants to put into good use the knowledge acquired and be ready to take up the responsibility of training their colleagues when AMISOM exits.

Brig. Gen. Alasow thanked AMISOM Police’s Training Unit for organizing the TOT course, saying it will help professionalize the police force.

His sentiments were echoed by the Acting AMISOM Police Training and Development Coordinator, ACP Leon Mweemba Ngulube, who advised the participants to share the knowledge acquired with their counterparts who did not have the opportunity to attend the course.

ACP Ngulube reiterated that AMISOM Police will continue helping the federal and state governments to establish a strong police force capable of securing Somalia.
Christine Alalo, the Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner hands over keys to Brig. Gen. Zakia Hussein, the Deputy Police Commissioner of Somali Police Force (SPF) during a ceremony at which AMISOM handed over the renovated Daynile police station to SPF in Mogadishu.

Prospective HirShabelle State Police recruits go through screening at Jowhar Training Academy. A total of 200 recruits are undergoing basic police training facilitated by Police officers serving under Amisom and their SPF counterparts, in Jowhar, Somalia.

The newly constructed Dalhis Police Station that was handed over to the Jubbaland State Police. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) supported the construction of the police station located in Farjano district, Kismayo.

Christine Alalo, the acting AMISOM Police Commissioner, pins a medal to an AMISOM police officer during a medal award ceremony for Individual Police Officers (IPO’s), serving under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Mogadishu.

Prospective HirShabelle State Police recruits go through parade drills during training in Jowhar, Somalia.

Christine Alalo, the Acting AMISOM Police Commissioner hands over documents to Brig. Gen. Zakia Hussein, the Deputy Police Commissioner of Somali Police Force (SPF) during a ceremony at which AMISOM handed over the renovated Yaqshid police station to SPF in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Christine Alalo, the Deputy Police Commissioner of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) hands a certificate to a Somali Police Force (SPF) officer at the end of a 10-Day strategic planning and management training for SPF heads of directorates and units.

Christine Alalo, the Deputy Police Commissioner of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) hands a certificate to a Somali Police Force (SPF) officer during a ceremony at which AMISOM handed over the renovated Yaqshid police station to SPF in Mogadishu.
Inspector Musau; the female mamba driver working to bring back peace in Somalia

Peacekeeping is not for the faint hearted, given the enormous challenges and risks associated with the job. However, the risks have not deterred, Inspector Janet Musau, one of the few licensed female mamba (armored personnel carrier) drivers, from serving in Somalia. She speaks about her role as a female peacekeeper and her passion to see Somalia achieve lasting peace and security.

Briefly tell us about yourself?
I am police officer in the Kenya Police Service (KPS), now serving under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as an Individual Police Officer (IPO) and I hold a Diploma in Information Technology. I joined the KPS in 2006, where I have been to date.

What inspired you to join police service?
I had personal interest to be a police officer. My colleagues and neighbours, who were police officers, inspired me to join the police force. I was deployed to this Mission on March 7, 2018 as part of a contingent of seven IPO’s from Kenya.

Why peacekeeping in particular?
I had always wanted to serve this Mission (AMISOM). Additionally, I knew serving on this Mission is good for my career growth and at the same time gives me the opportunity to serve humanity, in a different setting from home and contribute to peace in Somalia and Africa in general.

Briefly explain your work as an Individual Police Officer
As an IPO my work is to mentor the Somali Police officers, and I do this together with my colleagues. We work as a team. We are divided into four Team Sites and we collocate at various police stations where we mentor our Somali colleagues. For instance I am attached to Shibis Police Station where I collocate every day.

Where and when did you learn to drive a mamba?
I came to the Mission when I already knew how to drive. However, upon arrival we were taken through a training course on how to drive a mamba. I had the passion to drive a mamba and that is how I learned. I challenged myself. I had this feeling that if a man can drive a mamba, so can I.

How did you feel when you got behind the wheel of a mamba for the first time?
I was nervous, especially when driving in Mogadishu city given that a mamba is a big vehicle and must be driven with a lot of caution. I am now used to it. It is like any other vehicle but what makes driving a mamba a challenge is the traffic jam in the city and the way other motorists drive.

Do female police officers have a role to play in peacekeeping missions?
Female police officers have a huge role to play in peacekeeping and should be encouraged to serve in peacekeeping missions, especially here in Somalia. People find women more accessible and approachable. Additionally, female police officers are better suited to handle issues of gender and sexual-based violence, including issues relating to children.

Should the number of female police peacekeepers be increased?
Yes. There is need to increase the number of female police officers serving in the AU Mission, given that they can do what men do. And in a country like Somalia where there are few women serving in the police force, an increase in number of female police officers serving in the AU Mission will inspire Somali women to join the police force.

Thank you!