



Kenya Should Get Out of Somalia and Negotiate With Al Shabaab

By Abdullahi Boru Halakhe



Kenya's military should leave Somalia. The 2011 intervention was billed as quick and short, but instead, it has metastasised into an almost decade-long occupation.

Kenya should depart Somalia for three specific reasons. One, the military campaign designed to “destroy” and “defeat” Al Shabaab, and keep Kenya and Kenyans safe has instead increased the group's attacks on Kenya and Kenyans. Two, the need for a more robust domestic counterterrorism response to Al Shabaab's attacks has led to egregious violations of human rights, and in the process, torpedoed the nascent police reform project. Three, the intervention also upended Kenya's relations with Ethiopia, a vital partner in the Horn of Africa. It eviscerated soft power with Somalia, severely hamstringing Kenya's diplomatic leverage in the region.

I. Operation Lindi Nchi

Kenya's military intervention in Somalia took many Horn watchers and me by surprise because this was the first time Kenya undertook an independent military operation outside the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation. Intriguingly, the government provided little public information regarding Operation Linda Nchi (Operation Defend the Country).

But to any discerning person with a passing interest in the Horn of Africa's history and politics,

Kenya's strategy, operation, the tactic, and geopolitical goal of the mission was at best foggy.

I was a young Horn of Africa analyst when the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) crossed the border and entered Somalia in November 2011. To make sense of the intervention, I sought the views of three individuals. The first was the then military spokesperson, Major Emmanuel Chirchir. I sat down with him, not to understand the precise reason for the intervention, but to tap into the thought process that preceded it and the exit strategy.

The meeting left me deeply worried. The useful major failed to provide coherent answers to my questions. Later, his press briefings and Twitter engagements fortified my worries. His meetings descended into a series of amateur performances. In one incident, Major Chirchir shared these photos on his Twitter handle.



Posts from Major Chirchir's Twitter account.

The Associated Press published these photos, which were later [published in the Daily Mail](#) on Dec. 15, 2009. Major Chirchir was roundly pilloried for using the report to criticise Al Shabaab. This confirmed that public information management, a critical component of any military campaign, was being done on the fly, or not taken seriously. The lack of general information and ill-thought out communications campaign remained features of the army.

The second person whose insight I sought was Bethwel Kiplagat. The late ambassador was Kenya's envoy during the 30-months marathon Somalia peace process in Kenya from 2003 to 2005. I was keen to glean any insight he could share. Kenya had to intervene to stop Al Shabaab because they posed a security threat to Kenya, Kiplagat told me. He said the political process could not go ahead if Al Shabaab threatened the fragile government in Mogadishu.

Next, I looked for Retired General Lazarus Sumebiyo, the IGAD's special envoy for the South Sudan Peace Process. The general told me that entering Somalia was the "dumbest thing" the government

could have done; shorter, well-calibrated strikes targeting Al Shabaab, rather than a protracted ground intervention, could have done the job better. He alluded that the invasion marked a deviation from Kenya's policy of regional diplomacy that has served the country so well in the past.

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Almost a decade into the intervention, the "dumbest thing" continues with no end in sight. Instead of defeating and destroying Al Shabaab, the campaign has ruptured relations with Ethiopia, for decades, the nation's most significant partner in the region.

II. Botched Military Campaign

Major Chirchir's failure to answer some of the fundamental questions spoke to a much larger problem with the intervention: the military intervention was never approved by the National Assembly as required by the Constitution. Article 95(6) of the Constitution states: "The National Assembly approves declarations of war and extensions of states of emergency." The Somalia intervention was announced by the Minister for Internal Affairs, George Saitoti, instead of the Minister for Defence, Yusuf Haji.

As a measure of how little strategic thinking went into the military campaign, the intervention was launched in October, a rainy season in Somalia, like in other countries in the Horn and East Africa region. Immediately after the attack started, most of the mechanised units got stuck in mud.

Asymmetrical warfare

History is littered with significant and powerful armies humbled in battlefields by weaker opponents, especially in low-intensity conflicts. Fighting an unconventional militant group using a conventional method was always bound to fail in the long run. Al Shabaab has time on its side while a traditional army must go by the clock. They can outwait any traditional command, and forgetting this basic principle comes with a steep cost. But the Kenyan military seems to have learned little from their Somalia experience. The KDF has also maintained a domestic military operation against Al Shabaab in Lamu's [Boni Forest](#). This operation, like the operation in Somalia, has predictably stalled.

The Kenyan military's initial media briefing was full of the bravado indicative of a short military campaign. It did not take long for assumed quick victory to recede from view; by June, less than eight months after the intervention, Kenya's military '[rehatted](#)' by joining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Resigned cynicism has long replaced the early days of jingoism. The campaign has faded into background noise except for occasional media mention when the military suffers casualties. Its low priority in the collective Kenyan consciousness has insulated the leadership, including Parliament, from any form of accountability.

Although Kenya's military intervention was during retired President Mwai Kibaki's reign, President Uhuru Kenyatta has been an enthusiastic supporter. President Kenyatta, speaking about the intervention, said, "And in pursuance of this objective and that of the international community, our troops will continue being part of AMISOM until such time that our objective has been achieved." However, there is little ground to suggest AMISOM, first deployed on 9 January 2007, is anywhere near achieving its goal. In military campaigns, an open-ended campaign without clear military and

political goals invariably leads to mission creep.

III. Kenya and Terrorism

Kenya has been a target of international [terrorist groups](#), but the attacks focused primarily on Western interests in Kenya because of the country's perceived close alliance [with the West](#). The first major terrorist attack on Kenyan soil occurred on [New Year's Eve in 1980](#), retribution for Kenya's assistance to [Israeli Defence Forces in Operation Entebbe](#). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [bombed the Norfolk Hotel](#), an upscale hotel frequented by foreign diplomats and in the past by the occasional head of state, such as Winston Churchill and Teddy Roosevelt. Most of the twenty fatalities and nearly 100 injured were not Kenyan.

On August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda in East Africa attacked the United States embassy in Nairobi, killing 213 and injuring more than 4,000 people. A simultaneous attack on the United States embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killed [11 and wounded more than 100](#). Somalia's connections to Al Qaeda were instrumental in planning and carrying out these attacks.

Four years later, on December 28, 2002, Al Qaeda in East Africa attacked the Paradise Hotel, an Israeli-owned hotel in Kikambala, Kenya, killing 15 and injuring 80. The same day, the group attempted but failed to bring [down Arkia Airline's](#) flight 582 from Mombasa's Moi International Airport to Tel Aviv.

Domestic blowback

Following Kenya's intervention in Somalia, Al Shabaab launched an unprecedented number of attacks on Kenyan soil, with most of their attacks focused on Kenyan interests and Kenyan citizens. These attacks occurred throughout the country, forming an arc across Northern Kenya, the Kenyan coast, and Nairobi. The violent response visited upon local communities in the name of counterterrorism complicated the problem.

The region has always been susceptible to spillovers from Somalia's internal conflicts due to the long shared borders with Kenya and Ethiopia. Kenya's ethnic Somali and other Muslim minorities experience festering contemporary disenfranchisement and historical marginalisation. The marginalisation is despite the decentralisation of power and resources in 2010 under the new constitution. Al-Shabaab took full advantage of Kenya's vulnerabilities and porous border to tap into these grievances.

Al Shabaab also started attacking international aid workers, government officials, and military targets, while fueling tensions by specifically [killing non-Muslim civilians](#). The most significant Al Shabaab attack to date in Kenya occurred on April 2, 2015, in Garissa County when shooters stormed [Garissa University](#). During the attack, 147 Kenyans, mostly students, died and 79 were wounded. Five hundred people escaped the attacks, which witnesses say singled out [Christians before shooting](#).



Kenyan Defence Forces serving under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) man their position at El-Adde in the southwestern Gedo region of Somalia on January 22, 2016. AMISOM Photo/ Abdisalan Omar

Inside Somalia, the KDF was not safe either. On the morning of January 15, 2016, Al Shabaab fighters attacked and overran an AMISOM forward operating base garrisoned by KDF troops from the [9th Rifle Battalion](#) in the Battle of El Adde. By the end of the day, an estimated 141 Kenyan soldiers were dead. That figure would make the single most considerable loss for Kenya's military [since independence](#). Slightly over one year after the El Adde attack, on 27 January 2017, Al Shabaab took KDF's military base briefly before being [dislodged](#). In both incidents, the Kenyan government did not release the exact number of casualties; instead it played catch-up while disputing figures released by Al Shabaab.

Domestic attacks spurred the government to launch a strong response. Unfortunately, the choice of action came at a critical transitional moment. After decades of human rights violations, the Kenya police were finally undergoing structural transformation buttressed by provisions in the 2010 Constitution.

IV. Police Reform and Counterterrorism

As a response to deteriorating internal security, Kenya instituted a raft of legal, policy, and administrative moves. Parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), established a new Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU), and launched counterterrorism operations across [Eastleigh](#), [coastal Kenya](#), and North- Eastern, all areas where Al Shabaab is active. These operations led to egregious human rights violations, disregard for due process of law, and resulted in extrajudicial executions and disappearances of suspected Al Shabaab members.

Several [human rights organisations](#) and the [media](#) have documented these violations. It is not just suspected Al Shabaab members who were targeted, human rights groups documenting government agencies' violations were also targeted through legal and bureaucratic suffocation that paralysed their daily operations. This included closing their offices, taking away their computers, using Kenya Revenue Authorities to question their tax compliance, and [freezing their bank accounts](#).

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However, the Kenya Police's human rights violations documented by the [media](#) and human rights organisations within the context of counterterrorism operations are not an exception but rather a continuation of an established trajectory. The Kenya Police has a documented history of [human rights violations and impunity](#). The Executive's appointment of senior police leadership without oversight from the state's arms before the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution made the Kenya Police malleable to the Executive's demands. It conferred the impunity to [intimidate political opponents](#).

There have been sustained efforts to reform the police in the past. The latest followed the eruption of violence following the 2007-2008 national elections. As part of the mediation process, the African Union (AU), under the auspices of a Panel of Eminent African Personalities, established a mediation team led by the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. As part of the diagnosis, the panel advocated that the government undertake security sector and other reforms to rein in the police.

As part of the mediation, the panel formed the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), also known as the Waki Commission (named after the chairman of the commission, Justice Philip Waki). According to the [Waki's Commission](#), a total of 1,133 people died as a result of post-election violence, and gunshots accounted for 962 casualties and 405 deaths. This represented 35.7% of the fatalities, making gunshot the single most frequent cause of deaths during the post-election violence.

The Waki Commission recommended that "the Parties shall initiate urgent and comprehensive reform of the Kenya Police and the Administration Police. A panel of policing experts shall undertake such reforms".

President Mwai Kibaki, in May 2009, established the National Task Force on Police Reform, also known as the Ransley Task Force (named after the chair of the commission, Justice Philip [Ransley](#)).

Chapter 14 of the 2010 Constitution further codified police reforms. The reforms sought to create a "visible" change to the police leadership in three ways. The law established: (1) the position of Inspector General of the Police (IGP) who is appointed by the President with Parliament's approval; (2) a civilian oversight mechanism through the Independent Policing Authority (IPOA) and National Police Service Commission (NPSC); and, (3) bring the administration police and the regular police under a single IGP and two separate Deputy IGPs - the latter designed to enhance a clear line of command, control, and communications.

Collectively, these changes meant greater independence of the police from the Executive. But the invasion and the insurgents' response to it created an environment that was not conducive for implementing the reforms. The need for a robust domestic response against Al Shabaab's attacks on Kenyan soil saw the Kenya Police commit multiple human rights violations, including extrajudicial

executions during counterterrorism operations in Muslim majority regions inside Kenya. The Police resorted to the tried and tested [collective responsibility](#) and intimidation methods in the form of [extrajudicial](#) killings and [enforced disappearances](#).

These violations were enabled via the loosening of legal safeguards against police violations. The upshot of the Kenyan police's human rights violations was not only derailing the police reforms but was also providing Al Shabaab with propaganda material that they used to recruit further.

Those supporting the police's response advance three main arguments.

One, terrorism is an extraordinary crime, and thus requires an exceptional response. This argument privileges security over liberty, creating a false, if not simplistic, choice. While not perfect, the Prevention of Terrorism Act provides a legal framework within which to fight terrorism. Additionally, there is no empirical evidence that policing that violates human rights leads to a decline in crime. On the contrary, it engenders distrust in the police among the affected community, thus making policing more difficult.

The second argument is the "a few rotten apples" theory - that there are only a few police officers committing human rights violations. The problem with this argument is that even if a few police officers engage in human rights violations, it is still too many. According to an online portal that tracks police violations by human rights groups, since 2007, Kenya Police have killed [689 people](#). These are figures that human rights groups have verified since the police do not keep the data. These figures could be higher because some cases go unreported.

Such statistics only provide a glimpse, and while helpful in understanding the depth of the crisis, miss the human element. Those who disproportionately bear the brunt of the police's violations are young men living in slums in Kenya's major urban areas.

The third defence is that whenever accused of violating human rights, the police ask, "Don't the police also have human rights? Why don't the human rights groups advocate for the police's human rights as well?" This is a valid argument; however, the two issues are not mutually exclusive. One can advocate for police's human rights while simultaneously asking for police's accountability.

V. From Counterterrorism to Countering Violence Extremism

The police's human rights violations are part of the reason behind the move away from counterterrorism to broader policies for countering violent extremism (CVE). CVE is anchored in a global shift in counterterrorism.

Policy trends in the West have a way of becoming mainstream and fashionable elsewhere because Western countries provide much of the funding to support research for policies that then end up being tested in a local setting like Kenya. Even when these policies are discredited in Western countries where they originate, they end up being adopted and accepted uncritically in the Global South.

Hence, Kenya and other countries pivot to CVE away from counterterrorism. This is in line with the global shift in the discourse regarding the utility of counterterrorism as a tool for fighting the rising tide of domestic terrorism, displacing the conventional focus on threats emanating from far-off countries. CVE is one such trend that has grown into a cottage industry that has generated new CVE "experts" overnight.

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While CVE initially emerged as a response to counterproductive consequences of counterterrorism, it has morphed into a banality hollowed out of its utility, meaning, and potency in time.

The remarkable aspect of CVE's "trendiness" is that the diagnoses are hardly original, but rather, repackage a laundry list of solutions, some of which are borrowed from Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). One of the overarching aspects of the CVE is the Danish or the Aarhus Model.

The Danish Model

Prevention of terrorism became a top item in Denmark's political agenda in 2005 in the wake of the murder of Dutch filmmaker [Theo van Gogh in 2004](#), the train bomb attacks in Madrid in [2004](#), and the bomb attacks in London in 2005. This, combined with the [Danish daily Jyllands-Posten's](#) printing of twelve cartoons of Prophet Muhammad wearing a turban shaped like a bomb, lit a fuse.

Kwale, Lamu and Mombasa counties' CVE plans were heavily borrowed from the [Danish Aarhus Model](#), named after the Aarhus region. The model was developed when in 2009, the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs was given European Union approval for a three-year pilot project on de-radicalisation. The project was launched in cooperation with the municipalities of [Copenhagen and Aarhus](#), East Jutland Police District, and the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET).

The model also works at three levels: a) General - this level is principally about raising awareness through public information programmes; b) Specific - this level involves those who have been identified as individuals or groups who are planning to travel to join extremist groups; and c) Targeted - this intervention is designed for individuals and groups who are considered "imminent risk". Activities at this level involve exit and mentoring programmes.

Further, the [Danish CVE plan](#) is a multi-agency affair involving the Danish Security and Intelligence Service Centre for Prevention, Ministry of Immigration, Integration, and Housing, and the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration. The Danish approach draws on decades of experience with similar collaboration with other areas and benefits from existing structures and initiatives developed for other purposes than specifically preventing extremism and radicalisation.

However, adopting the model wholesale without considering the local peculiarities of Kenya misses the point that what works for Denmark does not necessarily work for Lamu, Kwale, and Mombasa. The biggest challenge in adopting the model in Kenya is that there is no national legal-policy framework regarding disengagement and reintegration of returnees, a third element of the Aarhus model.

VI. Amnesty for Al Shabaab

Following the Al-Shabaab attacks on Garissa University in which 147 people died, Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary, Joseph Nkaissery, declared an amnesty for members of the group aiming to return to Kenya. According to Nkaissery, the amnesty was to "encourage those disillusioned with the group that wanted [to come back](#)".

Under the amnesty, the returnees would receive protection, as well as rehabilitation and [counseling](#). The programme claimed that it would support training and alternative livelihood methods through work with different [governmental ministries](#).

In 2015, the amnesty was announced initially for an initial [ten-day period](#). It was later extended by [two weeks](#). In May 2015, the government stated that 85 youths had so far surrendered under the amnesty programme and that “the government had put an elaborate comprehensive integration programme to absorb those who [had surrendered](#). A year and a half later, in October 2016, the government made the [amnesty indefinite](#).

Reports claim that anywhere from 700 to 1,000 fighters have returned [from Somalia](#), but the amnesty has not had any impact in terms of rehabilitation, and that these alleged programmes were non-existent. Consequently, the counties have increased their involvement (an appropriate development), as the state response has been inadequate, and left mainly to civil society, but without government support. The mistrust of returnees from within the communities is an equally significant problem, along with livelihood issues.

Sound diagnosis

Because of the diversity of the stakeholders involved and consulted, the county CVE plans provide a sound analysis of what predisposes young men and women to radicalisation and eventually joining violent extremist groups. The fact that discussions regarding the development of CVE plans were spearheaded by local civil society organisations also enhanced taking on board nuanced local realities. This also engendered legitimacy and trust from the communities.

The two aspects that have not been fully fleshed out in most of the plans are, first, the source of money in implementing the policies (for instance, the Mombasa County Action Plan budgeted for KSh430,223,000 for January- December 2018). However, the available funds were Sh128,000,600, or only 29.77 per cent of the allocation. Second, the importance of women, while mentioned, has not been addressed in detail.

Fighting violent extremism is an extremely challenging undertaking, but uncritically exporting solutions without customising them for local realities does not help. Besides, in the [UK](#) and the [US](#), CVE has been discredited because it was primarily used as a surveillance tool on communities on an industrial scale.

VII. Geopolitics of the Horn of Africa

Besides failing to keep Kenyans safe and rendering police reform stillborn, Kenya’s intervention in Somalia damaged the country’s regional diplomatic clout and leverage, especially with Ethiopia, a key ally in the Horn of Africa. The Kenyatta government’s management of relations with Somalia has been even more problematic.

Despite being in a region bedeviled with constant conflict due to Cold War proxy relationships, Kenya remained unscathed by the Cold War’s vagaries. This enduring legacy survived despite the fact that Kenya, effectively an ally of the US, is surrounded by Ethiopia and Somalia, who were clients of the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and Cuba at different times.

Kenya’s president, Daniel Arap Moi, aware of the challenges of being sucked into any conflict, firewalled Kenya from being mired in regional conflicts by remaining ideologically ambivalent, at least in public. Kenya remained neither a friend nor a foe of any of these countries. Moi was making a virtue out of necessity considering his tenuous hold on power domestically.

Moi instead made Kenya a site for peace negotiations amongst warring groups in the region. Kenya was the venue for peace negotiations between the warring parties in South Sudan and Somalia. The Nairobi Agreement, a peace deal between the Ugandan government of Tito Okello and the National Resistance Army (NRA), a rebel group led by Yoweri Museveni, was signed in Nairobi in December 1985. Kenya carried the culture of hosting peace talks even after the end of the Cold War. The Sudan and South Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Kenya.

Moi also appointed competent foreign affairs ministers, such as Dr. Robert Ouko, Dr. Bonaya Godana, and Dr. Zachary Onyoka, just to mention a few. Post-Moi, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not distinguished itself in conducting Kenya's diplomacy.

Somalia

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia was formed in 2004 in Nairobi after many months of negotiations. The TFG was the 14th attempt at creating a functioning government in Somalia since the collapse of Muhammad Siad Barre's government in 1991. Formed late in 2004, the TFG governed from Kenya until June 2005. The late Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat led the negotiations.

Despite the Kenyan government's treatment of Kenyan Somalis as a second-class citizens, bilateral relations between Kenya and Somalia were warm and cordial. Currently, relations between Kenya and Somalia are arguably the lowest in decades.

At the heart of the Kenya-Ethiopia-Somalia dispute is the question of who will control the semi-autonomous region of Jubaland. The central player in that dispute is Mohamed Madobe, the President of Jubaland. His militia, the Ras Kamboni Brigade, fought alongside the Kenya Defence Forces when Kenya intervened in Somalia.



THE
ELEPHANT



Kenyan soldiers serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) inspect a destroyed vehicle belonging to Al Qaeda-affiliated extremist group Al Shabaab at Kismayo Airport in southern Somalia, 22 August, 2013. AU-UN IST Photo / Ramadaan Mohamed.

When Kenya first intervened in Somalia in 2011, Ethiopia withdrew from Somalia since intervening unilaterally in 2006 to stop the ascent of the Union of Islamic Courts. But Kenya's intervention was in Jubaland, a region predominantly occupied by the Ogaden, who have been fighting the Ethiopian government for decades in Ethiopia's Ogaden region. There was no way Ethiopia could countenance that happening without them having a say. Besides, being Somalia's breadbasket, the port of Kismaayo is also in Jubaland.

Since the collapse of Siad Barre in 1991, Ethiopia and Kenya maintained a united policy. But Kenya's intervention changed that. While both countries are in Somalia with the primary purpose of defeating Al Shabaab, they are both now pursuing a different route. Ahmed Abiy's coming to power in April 2018 gave this a further ascent. Until that point, Ethiopia principally supported the semi-autonomous regions under the guise of decentralisation. To many Somalis, Ethiopia was not interested in the emergence of a central government in Somalia. Since Abiy became the Prime Minister, Addis and Mogadishu have grown closer, shifting decades-long Ethiopia policy, and leaving Kenya and Ethiopia at loggerheads.

These differences were on full display during the Jubaland presidential election when Kenya supported [Madobe, and Mogadishu and Ethiopia](#) supported the opposition candidate. The Kenya-Ethiopia's dispute continues to stymie AMISOM operations. The only actor benefiting from such open hostility is Al Shabaab.

The maritime dispute

For decades, Somalia regarded Kenya as a neutral arbiter, unlike Ethiopia, where long-standing resentments against Somalia have endured. Kenya's military intervention in Somalia and its meddling in the country's internal affairs have ruined Kenya-Somalia relations.

The 150,000 sq.km maritime dispute with Somalia exacerbated the conflict. The disagreement, which came to the surface in 2004, could have been resolved amicably had officials at the [Kenya International Boundaries Office \(KIBO\)](#) taken the negotiations seriously. During the negotiations, Kenyan officials regarded their Somalia counterparts with disrespect, assuming that as a "failed state", Somalia cannot negotiate on an equal footing. Kenyan officials [also failed to show](#) up for a meeting with Somalia without explanation. The case eventually ended up at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Instead of correcting earlier mistakes, Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officers dug in their heels. It started engaging in reactionary moves like denying Somali diplomats [entry visas and reintroducing flight stopovers](#) in Wajir, thus substituting petulance for diplomacy.

VIII. The political settlement with Al Shabaab

Since 2011, Al Shabaab has been dislodged from many of its territorial strongholds, thanks to the 22,000-strong AMISOM troops and the Somali National Army. Yet Al Shabaab continues to control parts of south-central Somalia. Under President Donald Trump, the United States has also significantly increased [drone attacks](#).

More significant is the fact that, according to AMISOM's [Transition Plan](#), AMISOM will be winding down in Somalia in December 2021. The departure is despite a lack of demonstrable improvement in the Somalia National Army's capacity to take over. If Al Shabaab continues to pose security threats inside and outside Somalia despite these investments, what will that mean after AMISOM leaves Somalia?

One of the significant and fatal gaps in addressing the Somalia crisis is the singular and disproportionate focus of using the terrorism lens. "We do not negotiate with terrorists" became the overarching slogan, becoming almost an article of faith, foreclosing any model of thinking, planning, and programming to address the crisis in Somalia.

Expanding the focus of analysis and therefore suggesting potential solutions to include other models would help to negotiate a post-AMISOM reality. That should be helpful even if AMISOM stays in Somalia because there cannot be a never-ending mission. It must have an end date.

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Conflicts end either through total defeat, a stalemate, or a negotiated political settlement. In Somalia's case, the complete collapse of Al Shabaab is highly unlikely. The group has developed a sophisticated mechanism of continuing to generate revenue, including taxation and recruitment, and continues to operate as an urban/rural guerrilla outfit capable of launching violent attacks with lethal outcomes. As a result, Somalia and Al Shabaab are engaged in a "mutually destructive stalemate".

Kenya negotiated the Somalia process that eventually led to the Transitional National Government's formation, the first government formed since the collapse of the Somalia government in 1991. It took

several attempts of delicate negotiations. Kenya also played a significant role in resolving decades of civil conflict in Sudan that led to the formation of South Sudan. While negotiating with Al Shabaab is entirely different from the Sudan and Somalia negotiations, quite frankly, the only reasonable way of ending the present crisis is by a political settlement leading to Al Shabaab being part of the future Somalia government.

Some senior Al Shabaab figures would consider negotiating with the TFG if offered positions, while others would want to have their names removed from the UN and US terror lists. Still others, eager to rejoin society, seek general amnesty, and many would like to be resettled in a third country. All these incentives are a price not too high for peace in a country shattered by a civil war since 1991.

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