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BACKGROUND GUIDE

Security Council

Osgood Center for International Studies



A wide view of the Security Council Chamber as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (on screen) of Ukraine, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Ukraine. UN Photo/Loey Felipe
Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115632>

After the world suffered two world wars, one of the greatest achievements in global history was the creation of the United Nations (UN) as an intergovernmental organization with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, creating the conditions conducive to economic and social development, and advancing universal respect for human rights. The Security Council became one of the six principal organs of the UN; it was given the primary responsibility of preserving international peace and security. This changed globally the perception of wars, domestic conflicts, and regional threats from localized matters to international concerns and meant that world leaders and member states are required to act collectively. The parallel development of international principles and regional standards later reinforced this call for universal accountability.

The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946 at Church House in London. After its first meeting, the Council relocated to its permanent residence at the UN Headquarters in New York City. At that time, five permanent members and six non-permanent members were part of the Council. In 1965, the number of non-permanent members increased to 10 and discussions regarding a change in configuration took place frequently. As the body's structure has remained largely unchanged, debate has arisen over the Security Council's efficacy and authority as a mediator on issues of international security. Matters such as the situation in Ukraine, the Syrian Civil War, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons program have posed particular challenges to the Security Council.

Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to peacekeeping missions, political processes, as well as the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises. However, with the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Security Council has begun to increasingly focus on the intersection between sustainability, peace, and security. Some important crosscutting issues the Council is currently addressing include human rights and the protection of civilians for conflict prevention and sustainable development; Women, Peace, and Security; and the prevention of conflict and sustaining peace.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

In the United Nations system, the Security Council has an exclusive power: it is the only body with the power to adopt legally binding resolutions. The decisions of the Security Council are formal expressions of the will of this body responsible of maintaining international security and peace. More importantly, the Members of the United Nations, according to article 25 of the Charter, “agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.”

The Security Council has multiple tools at its disposal to address issues on the body’s agenda. For example, the President of the Security Council may issue press statements or presidential statements to communicate the Council’s position. Although these are not legally binding, such statements are used to bring attention to important issues and to recommend solutions to ongoing conflicts. In addition, the Security Council can achieve its goals through various mechanisms, which have evolved in its history. It can propose peaceful settlements of disputes by diverse means, including mediation processes, negotiations, peacekeeping operations, and calls for ceasefires. The Security Council can also impose sanctions to the Member states, and ultimately, as a last resort, its members can authorize the use of military force. The traditional role of the Security Council in implementing strategies to tackle issues related to disarmament, political development, peacekeeping, humanitarian crises, and to the protection human rights has also changed and has been revitalized.

The Security Council is a body of 15 members. There are five members which have permanent membership: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Along with the five permanent members, 10 non-permanent members serve in the Security Council. The General Assembly annually elects by a two-thirds the 10 non-permanent members for a two-year term. Security Council elections are held six months before the term starts in June. This change allows Member States sufficient time to prepare for their new role.

Currently, Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates are the non-permanent members for the 2022-2023 term.





A wide view of an installation ceremony of the national flags of the countries of the newly elected non-permanent members to serve on the U.N. Security Council for the term 2022-23 is held at the United Nations headquarters building in New York City, January 5, 2022. Credit: U.N. Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Consistent with the Council's mandate, the essential factor for eligibility is a member state's contribution "to the maintenance of international peace and security" reflected on the potential states' financial or troop contributions to peacekeeping efforts or its leadership roles on regional security. Another aspect considered is the "equitable geographical distribution". To promote geographical inclusion, since 1965 the Council includes 3 seats for the Group of African States (GAFS); two seats for the Asia-Pacific Group, one for the Group of Eastern European States (EGG); one for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC); two for the Group of Western European and Other States (WEOG). Each group has its own electoral norms. An Arab seat alternates between the African and Asian blocs by informal agreement. Turkey and Israel, which has never served on the council, caucus with WEOG.



States participate in a highly competitive process to be elected for the non-permanent seats on the Security Council; this includes long campaigns and statements of interests. Once states are elected to serve on the Security Council, they are expected to represent regional interests; these states are usually influential at the international level and demonstrate leadership in specific areas of interest to their respective foreign policy regional agendas. Each member of the Security Council can be represented at all meetings. In the Provisional Rules of Procedure, Rule 13 allows for Members to be represented by an accredited representative," such as a Head of Government.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security and to act whenever peace and security are threatened. The Council's authority is particularly relevant with respect to the UN's four primary purposes, as specified in the Charter: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among nations; cooperating in solving international problems; and promoting respect for human rights. The Security Council's capabilities are highlighted in Chapters V–VIII. Chapter V establishes the structure, membership, functions, and powers of the Security Council. Chapters VI and VII of the Charter specifically concern the Security Council and the range of actions that can be taken when settling disputes. Chapter VI of the Charter by itself aims to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as negotiation and judicial settlement. Chapter VII explores further actions the Council can take when responding to threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression. This chapter also authorizes the Security Council to implement provisional measures aimed to de-escalate the situation. Chapter VIII of the Charter allows the Security Council to call upon other regional agencies or arrangements to enforce appropriate operations and intervene if necessary.

Under Article 41 of the Charter, the Council can call upon UN Member States to enact economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or end violence. Some of these measures include arms embargos, enforcing disarmament, or calling upon international criminal mechanisms to become active. Regarding diplomatic tools, the Council is mandated to investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to aggression between states, with other non-state groups, or within states' territories. The Council may also take military action against a state or other entity threatening international peace and security and may further decide on the deployment of troops or observers.



Bangladeshi peacekeepers offer hope to villagers in Northern Mali

Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/bangladeshi-peacekeepers-offer-hope-to-villagers-northern-mali>

The Council may also decide upon the deployment of new UN peacekeeping missions to be led by the Department of Peace Operations. The Security Council creates a peacekeeping operation by adopting a resolution that outlines the mandate and size of a particular mission, and UN peacekeepers are assigned to appropriate regions to address conflicts. The Council also cooperates with several international and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to implement its decisions.

Voting

Every Member State of the Security Council has one vote. Votes on all matters require a majority of nine Member States. However, if one of the five permanent members of the Security Council votes “no” on a matter of substance, such as a draft resolution, it does not pass. This is known as “*veto power*.”

In the 1950s, Security Council Member States made frequent use of their veto power, but its usage declined in the 1960s—rising again in the 1970s and 1980s. Recently, the use of the veto power has raised new criticisms in the international community and has sparked discussions about the power structures within the UN system.



Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya casts the lone dissenting vote in the United Nations Security Council, February 25, 2022. Two days into Russia's attack on Ukraine, a majority of U.N. Security Council members voted to demand that Moscow withdraw. But one thing stood in their way: a veto by Russia itself. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File) Source: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-united-nations-general-assembly-business-europe-states-3e1560d3b38bc0110d65fe388a6ea4ad/gallery/296ab8d924914eb806b9e6015def312>



Security Council members, from left, Britain's Ambassador to the UN Barbara Woodward; US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield; Albania's UN Ambassador Ferit Hoxha; and Brazil's Ambassador to the UN Ronaldo Costa Filho, vote in the United Nations Security Council, February 25, 2022. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig) Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/russia-vetoes-un-security-council-resolution-demanding-it-withdraw-from-ukraine/>

Since 1993, the General Assembly deliberated several proposals to reform the Security Council. Key challenges to reforming the Security Council are its membership, transparency and working methods, and the veto power of the permanent five Member States. In 2018, delegates within the UN General Assembly called for expanding the number of permanent members and abolishing the permanent member's use of veto power.

Conclusion

The Security Council is one of the main bodies of the UN that ensures international peace and security, overseeing the admission of new members to the UN General Assembly, and changes to the UN Charter. The Council also has a unique and impactful mandate to set norms and govern state actions, as all Member States are required to comply with the Security Council's legally binding decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter, the only UN body to have legally binding decisions. The Council is the only UN body that can create legally binding decisions. Although the Security Council is first and foremost the primary UN entity responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda signaled the increasing need to also discuss the linkages between peace and security, and issues of human security and development. The Council has begun looking at the intersection between the SDGs and international peace and security, namely through discussion and debates on climate change. The Security Council also continues to address regional and country issues, as well as thematic issues, such as climate change, terrorism, and gender.

The Security Council's Role in Somalia

Historical Context

Since 1991 the UN has had a long engagement with Somalia to support Somalis and their government to advance peace and security. The collapse of the dictatorial President Siad Barre in 1991 triggered conflict between supporters of Interim President Ali Mahdi Mohamed and those who supported General Mohamed Farah Aidid, Head of the Armed Forces. Barre's tyrannical leadership did not only rely on brutal actions to suppress opposition groups, both Islamic and nationalistic, but also exacerbated clannish rivalries. The end of Barre's regime and the civil war created extreme socio-political instability and led to a governance vacuum, which later resulted in multiple clan-based militias emerging to take control over specific territories in Somalia*. For instance, the United Somali Congress (USC) representing the Hawiye clan in Central Somalia emerged in 1989. The USC was also divided by an "internal" faction fighting locally, and an "external" branch fighting internationally, with a branch based on Italy. As a result, international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, promoted diverse peace and reconciliation processes to create a federal government, but the competing goals of the inter clans and the tensions between the federal authorities and the regional states disrupted these attempts to reach consensus, to build a stable nation-state, and ultimately to implement an effective peacebuilding plan. Furthermore, Somalia was decimated by a drought affecting the entire Horn of Africa. A famine followed suit and left hundreds of thousands of victims in its wake before the deployment of international aid began in August 1992.

By early 1992, the country's humanitarian situation was dire with more than 300,000 people estimated to have died of hunger and disease and another 1.5 million in danger of starvation, according to several UN agencies.



More than one million people lost their homes as a result of the civil war

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094503>

Cooperating with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other organizations, the United Nations tried to end the civil war. In fact, when the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, sent Mohamed Sahnoun as his representative to Somalia all faction leaders expressed their support for United Nations' role in peace and reconciliations efforts. The United Nations also became engaged in providing humanitarian aid, in cooperation with relief organizations. The war had also resulted in nearly 1 million refugees and almost 5 million people threatened by hunger and disease.

Later, the Secretary-General organized talks between the parties, who agreed on a ceasefire, to be monitored by United Nations observers, and on the protection of humanitarian convoys by United Nations security personnel.

On 24 April 1992, in response to a recommendation of the Secretary-General, the Security Council adopted resolution 751 (1992), by which it established a United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), initially as a small observer mission but subsequently as a security force to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance. By mid-1992, the media, especially US television, was reporting starvation in southern Somalia. With fifty unarmed observers and lightly armed infantry, UNOSOM proved unable to protect humanitarian aid. Shortly before he left office, US President George HW Bush initiated a US-led military operation, Unified Task Force (UNITAF), authorized by the Council in resolution 794, to guard and distribute relief supplies. The result was a short-term improvement in security and a decline in deaths from starvation and malnutrition. However, the opportunity to convert this into a sustainable long-term solution was missed.



Three months later in March 1993, under resolution 814, the operation was turned over to UN peacekeepers (UNOSOM II) without adequate resources or capacity and without a peace to keep. Armed conflict between Somali factions intensified and resistance to the UN began to emerge. On 5 June, a key warlord, General Mohamed Farah Aidid, in retaliation for UN plans to close his radio station, sent his men to ambush Pakistani peacekeepers. Twenty-four were killed. The Council reacted with outrage, and in resolution 837 mandated UNOSOM to arrest General Aidid. This led to virtually open warfare between Aidid's forces and UNOSOM. The situation further deteriorated in October when American rangers—not part of UNOSOM and without the knowledge or consent of the UN—raided Aidid's area of control. Eighteen US troops and hundreds of Somalis died; 75 US troops were wounded. As a result of the disaster, many in the US government criticized the role of the UN. President Bill Clinton decided to pull out the US force considering the domestic outcry over American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. Many other Western nations followed, and the US urged the UN to also withdraw its peacekeepers.



Lieutenant-General Civik Bir of Turkey (second from left), Force Commander of UNOSOM II, and Lieutenant-General Robert B. Johnston (third from left) of the US Marine Corps, Commander, Joint Task Force on Somalia, inspecting troops at a transition ceremony held today in Mogadishu. The ceremony marked the transfer of operational authority from the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) to UNOSOM II. 04 May 1993 Mogadishu, Somalia



At a ceremony held today in Mogadishu, operational authority was transferred from the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), which was spearheaded by the United States, to the Second United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

Soldiers from Tunisia (left), Pakistan (centre), and the United States (right) attending today's ceremony. 04 May 1993 Mogadishu, Somalia

The UN force departed from Somalia in 1995 and a period of international abandonment followed until May 2000 when Somali civil groups—including local authorities, elders, women's groups, and others—gathered in Djibouti to embark on a peace process. In August 2000, a Transitional National Assembly was formed and elected an interim president. The new Transitional National Government (TNG) initially attracted some international support but only as a transitional entity. Over time it became clear that its lack of representative character was increasingly a problem, and it began to meet active resistance from various clans and militias. In October 2004, the TNG was succeeded by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in talks mediated by IGAD, a regional bloc that includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, and Somalia.

In support of the TFG, IGAD decided to send a “peace support” mission known as IGASOM, an initiative sanctioned by the AU in May 2005. Council members, however, remained divided about whether to support IGASOM, with some seeing it as potentially risky and ineffectual.

In 2006, a new political and military force began to rise in Somalia, the Union of Islamic Courts. Little noticed initially, the UIC began to attract attention when it started a campaign to expand its controlled areas in Somalia. This led to strong concerns from key players, in particular Ethiopia and the US, especially about the UIC connections with terrorist networks and because of a perceived UIC interest in Ethiopia's ethnically Somali eastern region.

Following important UIC victories, including the seizing of Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Jowhar, there was an increased fear that the UIC would eventually overthrow the TFG. Peace talks in June failed to produce a compromise.

The Council came under intensified pressure to support IGASOM, which it reluctantly did in December 2006 in resolution 1725. By then the TFG was confined to a sole outpost in Baidoa.

In late December, Ethiopia intervened without UN authorization (and in apparent breach of the arms embargo) and by late January its forces had completely overrun the UIC.

The Council authorized in February 2007 an AU operation (AMISOM) to allow the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. However, troop generation proved difficult and contributions—besides Ugandan and Burundian contingents totaling some 2,500 troops—failed to materialize (AMISOM's authorized strength is 8,000 troops). Fighting between the Ethiopian-backed government and the opposition forces (in particular the Shabaab militia, an extremist splinter group of UIC) has continued as the AU stepped up efforts to have the Council authorize a UN peacekeeping force. Members currently remain divided on the issue.



AMISOM honors Staff Officers for their contribution towards peace and stability in Somalia

“Somalia remains a prisoner of the past, never forgiven for the violent actions carried out against the international community in the 1990s,” said Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, the UN Special Representative for Somalia, when briefing the Council in March 2008.

On 9 June, the TFG and a wing of the opposition Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) met for peace talks in Djibouti. An agreement (the Djibouti Agreement) was reached. After extensive delays it was signed on 18 August. The agreement envisaged a ninety-day renewable cessation of hostilities, the deployment within 120 days of a Security Council authorized international stabilization force, pledges to ensure unhindered humanitarian access and assistance, a statement by the ARS group condemning violence and disassociating itself from recalcitrant groups and the formation of two UN-chaired committees: the High Level Committee (which deals with political cooperation, justice and reconciliation) and the Joint Security Committee (which is tasked with implementing security arrangements). On 4 September the Security Council requested the Secretary-General provide a detailed and consolidated description of a feasible multinational force. However, despite some expectations that the Council might revert to the sanctions issue as well, at the time of writing action on the sanctions regime remained uncertain.



Finally, resolution 2628 (2022) endorsed the African Union decision to reconfigure the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) into African Union Transitional Mission to Somalia (ATMIS). Through the resolution, the Council authorized — for an initial period of 12 months — African Union Member States to take all necessary measures to: carry out the mandate of reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab; support the capacity-building of the integrated Somali security and police forces; conduct a phased handover of security responsibilities to Somalia; and support peace and reconciliation efforts in that country.

Since the start of its mandate in 2007, AMISOM attained substantial achievements in counterterrorism and security building in Somalia. This reconfigured ATMIS will significantly contribute to the improvement of Somali security forces, and to the transfer of responsibility for security to the Somali authorities within the timeline indicated in its mandate, with a view to establishing stability and security in Somalia and the region.

Sanctions

Sustained sanctions by the Security Council members over the years brought significant advances in the commitment of the international community to address the situation in Somalia. By resolution 733, the Security Council, in January 1992 imposed “a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia until the Council decides otherwise”. Almost a decade later, in June 2001 Security Council resolution 1356 allowed for exemptions to the embargo for supplies of non-lethal military equipment for use in humanitarian operations. The scope of the arms embargo was also clarified by resolution 1425 (2002) by which the Security Council made clear that it prohibited the financing of arms acquisitions as well as the direct or indirect sale or supply of technical advice or military training.

In a groundbreaking decision, in December 2006 Security Council Resolution 1725 partially lifted the UN arms embargo on Somalia. The resolution authorized the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and African Union member States to deploy a regional intervention force to protect Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and to arm and train the TFG security forces. The resolution maintained the existing embargo but stated that its provisions did not apply to transfers of military equipment, technical training and assistance intended for the regional intervention force.

In February 2007 Security Council Resolution 1744 limited the embargo to non-state actors. It allowed the supply of weapons and military equipment intended solely for the purpose of helping develop

Somali security sector institutions if the sanctions committee on Somalia had been notified in advance and on a case-by-case basis and if the SC had not made a negative decision within five working days after the notification.

While in November 2008 Security Council Resolution 1844 amended the arms embargo to target entities that have violated the arms embargo or obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance to or in Somalia, in December 2009 the UN imposed specifically an arms embargo on Eritrea, partly in response to reports that Eritrea had violated the arms embargo on Somalia.

In March 2013 Security Council Resolution 2093 amended the restrictions and procedures related to arms supplies to the Somali Government while maintaining the embargo on arms supplies to non-state actors in the country. Security Council Resolution 2111 from July 2013 further clarified the decisions of Resolution 2093. Under the resolutions, for a one-year period, until 6 March 2014, "...the arms embargo on Somalia shall not apply to deliveries of weapons, military equipment, assistance, or training intended solely for the development of the Security Forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, and to provide security for the Somali people...'

Although at first sight this appeared to have fulfilled the requests from the Somali Government and the African Union that had called for lifting the conditions on military supplies to the Somali Government, such conditions remained or became even more restrictive.



Somali security forces attend the scene of a car bomb attack in Mogadishu, Somalia, June 20, 2017

Source: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-government-says-up-thirty-percent-its-soldiers-unarmed/4170388.html>

In March 2014 Security Council Resolution 2142 reaffirmed the overall arms embargo on Somalia and extended the provisions related to arms supplies to the Somali government until 25 October 2014.

In October 2014 Security Council Resolution 2182 reaffirmed the overall arms embargo on Somalia and extended the provisions related to arms supplies to the Somali government until 30 October 2015. It also authorized for a period of 12 months states to inspect in Somali waters or on the high seas' vessels bound for Somalia which they have reasonable grounds to believe are carrying weapons to Somalia in violation of the arms embargo. The UN Security Council also decided to explicitly require that states shall prevent the supply a list of specified explosive materials, explosives precursors, explosive-related equipment, and related technology to Somalia if there is sufficient evidence that these will be used, or a significant risk they may be used, in the manufacture improvised explosive devices. The embargo has been extended annually since and is currently in force until 15 November 2022.



Somalia's Permanent Representative to the UN termed the sanctions on arms imports 'outdated'. Photo: UN
 Source: <https://goobjoog.com/english/unscc-extends-arms-embargo-somalia-protests-terms-it-outdated/>

More recently, the text of resolution 2607 focused on “the need to target Al-Shabaab’s finances, improve maritime domain awareness, prevent illicit revenue generation, including from the sale of charcoal, and reduce the threat posed by [improvised explosive devices (IEDs)]”. Effective weapons and ammunition management by the Somali government would be an important step towards building the capacity of Somali security forces to counter Al-Shabaab and for the Council to review the arms embargo. To that end, the Council requested in resolution 2607 that the Secretary-General undertake a technical assessment of Somalia’s weapons and ammunition management capabilities and provide recommendations by 15 September to improve them, including benchmarks that could assist the Council in reviewing the arms embargo. The Council could consider calling for the international community to strictly comply with the sanctions measures and for sustained support in building Somalia’s security capacity. Although resolution 2607 was adopted with two abstentions (China and Russia), the Council was united in its support for the sanctions measures. Disagreements during the sanctions renewal that led the two members to abstain were related to references in the text to the unresolved border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The relationship between Djibouti and Eritrea has been addressed in Somalia-related sanctions resolutions since the adoption of resolution 1907 of 23 December 2009, which linked Djibouti-Eritrean relations to the peace process in Somalia. Although the Council lifted sanctions on Eritrea and terminated the mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group to establish a Panel of Experts solely focused on Somalia in resolution 2444 of 14 November 2018, several Council members hold the view that the Council should continue monitoring the rapprochement between Eritrea and Djibouti.

The election of Mohamud may also affect regional dynamics. For Council member Kenya, which shares land and sea borders with Somalia, degrading Al-Shabaab has been a priority issue. However, the relationship between the two countries has been strained, including due to an ongoing maritime border dispute. On 16 May, Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta congratulated Mohamud and assured him of Kenya’s cooperation.

Key Recent Developments

The Council last met to receive a briefing by the Chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee on 24 February. The late Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ambassador Jim Kelly, delivered the briefing on the committee's activities between 21 October and 24 February of 2021. This was the first time the chair had reported to the Council since the adoption of resolution 2607 (15 November 2021) renewing the Somalia sanctions measures.

The Secretary-General appointed the Panel of Experts to the Somalia Sanctions Committee on 16 December 2021. The panel presented its work programme to the committee on 11 February. During that meeting, the coordinator of the panel, Ahmed Himmiche, noted that the panel will focus its work on the structure and financing of the armed terrorist group Al-Shabaab, the smuggling and trafficking of weapons and military equipment into Somalia, weapons and ammunition management within Somalia, the implementation of the charcoal ban, and child recruitment and gender-based violence perpetrated by Al-Shabaab.

Disrupting the activities of Al-Shabaab has been a key focus for the Council. On 18 February, the committee designated Ali Mohamed Rage, the spokesperson for Al-Shabaab, for "engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Somalia, including acts that threaten the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia, or threaten the Federal Government of Somalia or [the AU Assistance Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)] by force."

The Secretary-General's 13 May report, covering the situation in Somalia between 1 February and 6 May, said that 236 security incidents had occurred in the country, most of which were attributed to Al-Shabaab. The report also noted an increase in Al-Shabaab attacks with the acceleration of the electoral process, including a 23 March attack on the Mogadishu International Airport area, where elections for the speakers of Somalia's upper and lower houses took place several weeks later. (The Mogadishu International Airport area is a fortified location hosting the UN and several diplomatic representations). On 3 May, Al-Shabaab attacked a base of the recently formed AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the successor mission to AMISOM. Several Burundian peacekeepers lost their lives in the attack. In February, three weeks of sustained hostilities by Al-Shabaab caused over 17,000 persons to flee their homes in Somalia's South-West State.

On 15 May, Somalia completed its long-delayed electoral process with the election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who served as the country's leader between 2012 and 2017, as president. In an 18 May media interview, Mohamud—referring to security in the country—said, "We will ask for support and collaboration from anyone who is willing to help us to ensure the security." Mohamud assumed office on 23 May and is now in the process of constituting a government.

On 16 May, US President Joe Biden approved the deployment of some 500 US troops to Somalia to further support Somalia in degrading Al-Shabaab and eventually take sole responsibility for its safety in accordance with its Transition Plan—the document that foresees the gradual handover of security responsibilities from international to Somali security forces. The previous US administration had decided to withdraw the troops. Somalia's newly elected president has welcomed the latest decision to redeploy US troops.

On 27 May, the Somalia Sanctions Committee met with Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba. Resolution 2607 requests Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to share relevant information with the committee. The Secretary-General's report in

that regard notes that from 1 February to 31 March, the UN had verified 372 grave violations against 368 children, 217 of which were attributed to Al-Shabaab.

The Humanitarian Crisis and the Impact of COVID-19 in Somalia

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected Somalia and has wrought unparalleled economic damage reminding the international community about the extreme risks posed by infectious diseases for vulnerable nations like it. In this context, the establishment of regional disease-surveillance and response networks has taken on a new urgency, and the global recognition that a pandemic risk anywhere is a threat everywhere has elevated the profile of institutions dedicated to countering this threat at the continental level. Even before the emergence of COVID-19, infectious diseases were the leading cause of death in Africa, and the continent has one of the highest rates of communicable, neonatal, maternal, and nutritional diseases in the world. In April 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 98 ongoing outbreaks and 11 humanitarian crises across different regions of Africa, with major reported outbreaks including COVID-19, measles, cholera, chikungunya, dengue, Ebola virus disease (EVD), and monkey pox*.

In Somalia, specifically, the impact of COVID-19 goes far beyond the immediate challenges to its citizens and health implications. As highlighted before, for the last 30 years, Somalia has been in a permanent and complex humanitarian emergency with compromised security and fragile health systems due to decades of civil war and recurring climatic shocks, such as chronic droughts, floods, and cyclones. Consequently, the WHO Country Office's (WCO) preparations for COVID-19 in Somalia began in January 2020, long before the first case was confirmed on 16 March 2020. These challenges, if unaddressed, can undermine the progress that has been made in the last 10 years in the humanitarian front and create even more political instability and security threats in the fragmented nation.

"Somalia's coping mechanisms are significantly less than those of the neighboring countries. Therefore, the impact [of floods, locusts, and COVID-19] is not simply humanitarian but has the potential to reverse some of the political and security gains that the international community has invested in over the past decade." (Justin Brady, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Somalia)

Even though concrete actions were taken to immediately mitigate the effects of COVID-19, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the WHO broadened their scope to manage COVID-19 as part of a "triple threat" (floods, locusts, and COVID-19), which requires adequate funding to be effectively fought against. As the WHO Country representative for Somalia, Dr. Mamunur Rahman Malik, pointed out in Somalia's case:



"Unless we are able to rapidly scale up our response operations, unless we get adequate funding from our donors, we will not be able to respond to this need of the government and that window is closing very rapidly."

Dr. Malik concluded that in Somalia COVID-19 cases remain undiagnosed and undetected; the self-isolation and quarantine measures are not working as efficiently as global health experts will expect them to work. Consistent with this risk-assessment, in March 2020, the Federal Government launched the National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, seeking \$57 million. The WHO also estimated that the funding gaps in Somalia are in the areas of case management, surveillance and laboratory diagnostics, and coordination. Without these key services and resources, the response to COVID-19 is hampered in the country.



Source: https://www.voanews.com/a/covid-19-pandemic_covid-pandemic-exposes-somalias-weak-health-care-system/6209714.html

On its part, WHO and other agencies require \$25.7 million to support the Federal Government of Somalia in critical response areas. Nonetheless, only 20 per cent of this has been funded, leaving a huge funding gap. FAO and the Federal Government require \$57 million to bring the locust infestation under control. Some \$24.2 million had been made available by donors by 1 May. In responding to the floods, locusts and COVID-19, the UN and its partners are working to ensure that emergency and development assistance complement each other, in line with the Federal Government's National Development Plan to achieve long-term recovery and resilience.

While these fundraising efforts have addressed the most pressing humanitarian needs of Somalis, a serious health problem remains in Somalia at a larger scale. First, according to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Somalia's preparedness for disease outbreaks occupies one of the lowest ranks in the world. Specifically, Somalia is the 194th country (of 195) countries on the Global Health Security Index. As of December 2021, just 3.5% of Somalis had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, making the African nation more vulnerable to future waves of transmissions. Five months later, on May 2022, a situation-report jointly published by the Ministry of Health and Human Services of the FGS and WHO Somalia Country Office showed that the percentage of people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 improved to 9.1%, but the percentage increase is still low to combat the pandemic.

Second, the WHO reported that before COVID-19 reached Somalia, access to medical grade oxygen supply was very limited or null in the country. To meet the immediate need for medical oxygen and related equipment WHO conducted a survey for existing supply and based on the survey's results procured required equipment to address the identified gaps. Leveraging these measures, the WCO works with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) through the Global Action Plan to scale up the availability of oxygen in all health centers which is likely to have a significant impact in preventing deaths, including from childhood pneumonia. Furthermore, three polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machines had been procured by WHO for setting up testing laboratories in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and Garowe in 2020. Moving forward, the WCO plans to expand laboratory testing capacity through additional PCR machines in other states, including the use of GeneXpert technology. This will not only be useful for increased COVID-19 testing capacity but also the detection of other epidemic-prone diseases.

Third, other communicable diseases, such as cholera, polio, and measles, continue to pose severe health hazards to Somali communities. However, reaffirming its commitments, the FGS, along with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners, which include WHO, UNICEF, the BMGF, CDC, Rotary International, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and other key partners endorsed the Somalia Polio Eradication Action Plan. The robust plan aims to direct partners' efforts and resources towards boosting population immunity, making concerted efforts to reach high-risk populations — including inaccessible and nomadic communities and internally displaced persons — to strengthen their immunity, enhancing the search for poliovirus circulation, and strengthening coordination among all stakeholders. Some of the strategies that will be deployed include intensifying efforts to offer 5 opportunities for vaccination against polio in 2022, providing routine childhood immunization in high-risk locations, where children have missed out on vaccinations, and strengthening community engagement. Given how easy it is for the cVDPV2 virus to spill over international borders, the emergency plan also advocates for stronger cross-border coordination among the polio eradication programs in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.



Source: <https://polioeradication.org/countries/somalia/>

"In the midst of the ongoing drought, and while recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, our stakeholders must not forget how important it is to contain the ongoing poliovirus outbreak so that it does not spread any further and does not affect any more children's lives," (Fawziya Abikar Nur, Federal Minister of Health and Human Services)

Since its inception 25 years ago, Somalia's polio eradication programme has made progress, including by stopping outbreaks of wild poliovirus and, recently, one of circulating poliovirus type 3 in 2021. The programme has established a vast network of polio workforce and assets and we can do more not only to stop the current outbreak but to achieve broader health system goals through integration and effective use of our human and operational resources. Since 2018, Somalia has

conducted several supplementary immunization campaigns. Despite these efforts, pockets of unvaccinated children remain, due to insecurity and limited access to health services,” said Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik.

Ongoing activities on scaling up the oxygen program, research, and evaluation for recovery of health systems, as well as WHO’s support to the government on maintaining essential health services (e.g. routine immunization for polio and measles and improving access to care for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and essential medicines) have proved vital to maintain Somalia’s achievements in progressing towards UHC. WHO’s work on ensuring that health systems strengthening, and emergency response activities go hand in hand has reaffirmed the Organization’s key technical advisory and operational role in Somalia.

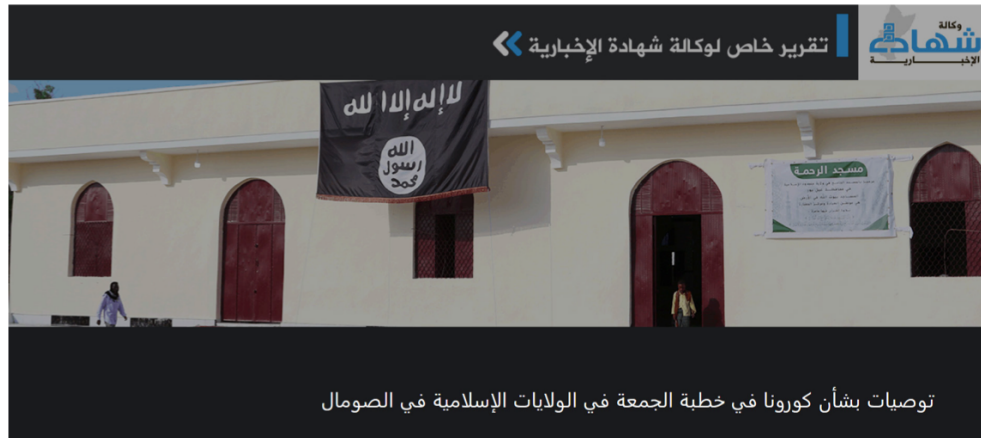


Despite these collective commitments, Isha Dyfan, the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, urged, in her report on April 2022, the central government to improve health care services and facilities, and to end child marriage. At the end of a six-day visit to the country, she acknowledged the steps taken by the authorities and humanitarian partners to implement an Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan and provide food, water, and other essential items to support IDP populations in Baidoa and other areas of Somalia. The UN expert called on the international community to ensure access to basic social services including drinking water, sanitation facilities, housing, health care education for all children, in particular girls.

In addition, she urged again the Government to expand the delivery of public health services, considering the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to increase funding for its health system. While she was interviewed by journalists in Mogadishu, she affirmed "access to health care remains dangerously low in the country". She added that there are limited public and affordable services available for the Somali population as she reported that:

"There is only one government hospital in the capital, Mogadishu, and people often have to seek health care services at a private health facility and pay out of their own pocket very high amounts for their own treatment. Only a few people can afford these services, thereby leading to high child and maternal mortality."

The pandemic has added dimensions to the issues faced by Somalia by introducing the risk factor of COVID-19 being weaponized by Al-Shabaab. Hockey and Jones (2020) found that in a speech at the end of April 2020, while addressing the pandemic, Ali Mahmoud Rage, Al-Shabaab's spokesperson, suggested that the virus may have been intentionally spread by foreign forces in Somalia. Then, he urged followers to "be cautious" of medical assistance from non-Muslims, to instead turn to Allah and to be charitable. Reiterating a message delivered by other officials during sermons, Rage argued that Muslims should celebrate because Allah is justly punishing the 'disbelievers' for their treatment of Muslims. However, he lamented that Somalis would also be affected because the foreigners were in their land and suggested that this was further reason to "expel them from our country."



An image from a news report released by Shahada News Agency, an unofficial al-Shabaab media outlet that publishes news about the group and the East Africa region. The bottom caption reads: "Recommendations Regarding Corona Delivered During the Friday Prayers in the Islamic Wilayat of Somalia"

Source: <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CTC-SENTINEL-062020.pdf>

Conclusion

The situation in Somalia, entering its thirtieth year, has seen political advancements to improve the instability and armed conflicts throughout the country but still has much to address since the conflict has taken new forms in the recent years. The humanitarian crisis that has resulted due to the political violence has made Somalia one of the most impoverished, challenged, and unsafe places in the world for the country's citizens, especially for children. The UN and its entities including the Security Council have been actively engaged and have been working on various facets of the situation ranging from the council's work on implementing sanctions to combat terrorist actions and creating political missions to oversee ceasefires. There has been some headway in being able to establish a national ceasefire, but efforts must remain focused on ensuring the proper function of the Somali state and provide stability for the region. A lasting solution will have to address the political differences and compromise between the main factions still engaged in Somalia. Likewise, countering the actions of Al-Shabaab is relevant to any effective and sustainable plan. While new negotiations have brought the parties to discuss solutions, the vision for Somalia will require assistance to address the critical humanitarian crisis and ensure lasting peace.

TOPIC I THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

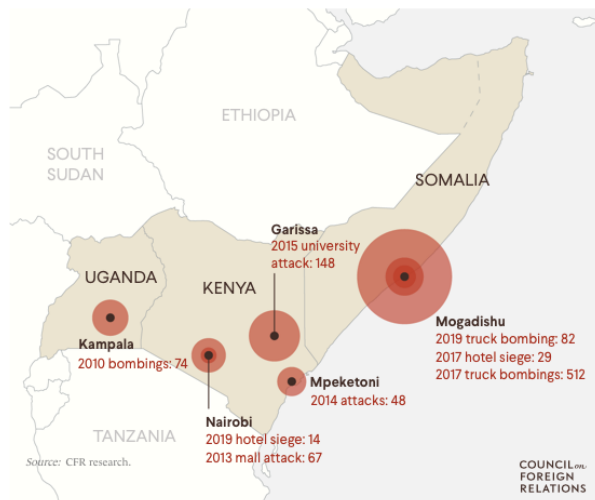
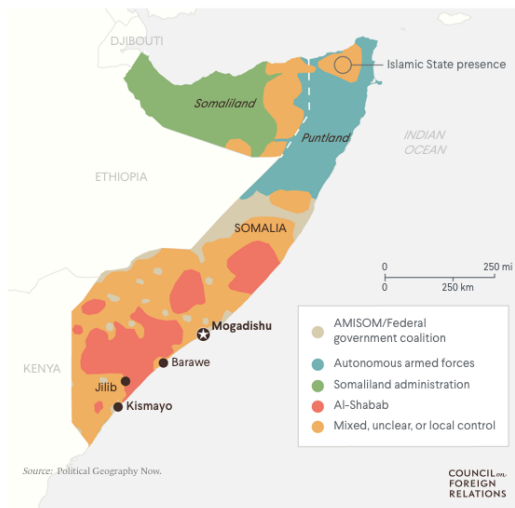
Introduction

With the formation of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2012, the peace and security situation in the Somali nation improved slightly. While some progress has been made, FGS has continued facing unprecedented challenges to gradually achieve its goals to transition to a stable and peaceful democracy. Somalia has not had a functional and viable national government for more than twenty years.

Somalia faces a vast legacy of unresolved problems, including food insecurity crises, climate change disasters, and deadly terrorist attacks executed against civilians, government officials, military targets (including the African Mission I Somalia (AMISON) by Al-Shaabab (“the youth”, in Arabic), an insurgent organization founded in the early 2000s by Somali Islamists, many of whom had been affiliated with al-Ittihad al-Islami, a group that sought to impose Islamist rule across the Horn of Africa. Al-Shaabab is the main obstacle to peace and security in the country. This violent group engages not only in terrorist attacks against multiple targets, but also radicalizes young people and children and encourages extremist ideologies.

Al-Shabab Maintains Its Hold in Somalia

Territorial control as of February 2021



Source: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab>

Several UN agencies have documented how Al-Shabab controls large territories of Somalia, enabling it to also launch attacks in Kenya and Ethiopia, resulting in the spread of terrorism and regional insecurity. Piracy, economic stagnation, and grave human rights violations have led to Somalia being classified as a “failed state” and as a case of statelessness in the modern world. In the last five years, some of existing Somali government structures, assisted by 22,000 African Union troops, controlled only small pockets of the state, with most of the landmass being either autonomous (Somaliland), semi-autonomous (Puntland), or in the hands of extremist groups. In Mogadishu, the capital, it has been estimated that the government controls approximately one-third of the city. The remainder of the territory is controlled by Al-Shabab, and the group has expanded its attacks to northern Kenya.



Al-Shabab has been fighting the UN-backed government in Mogadishu for more than a decade



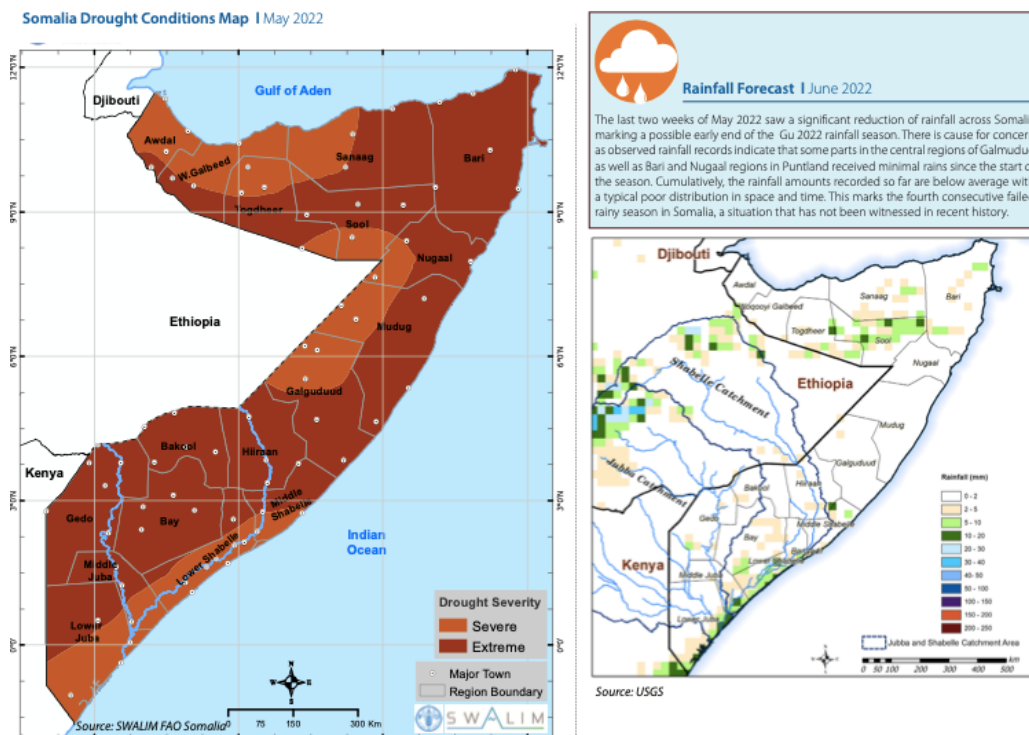
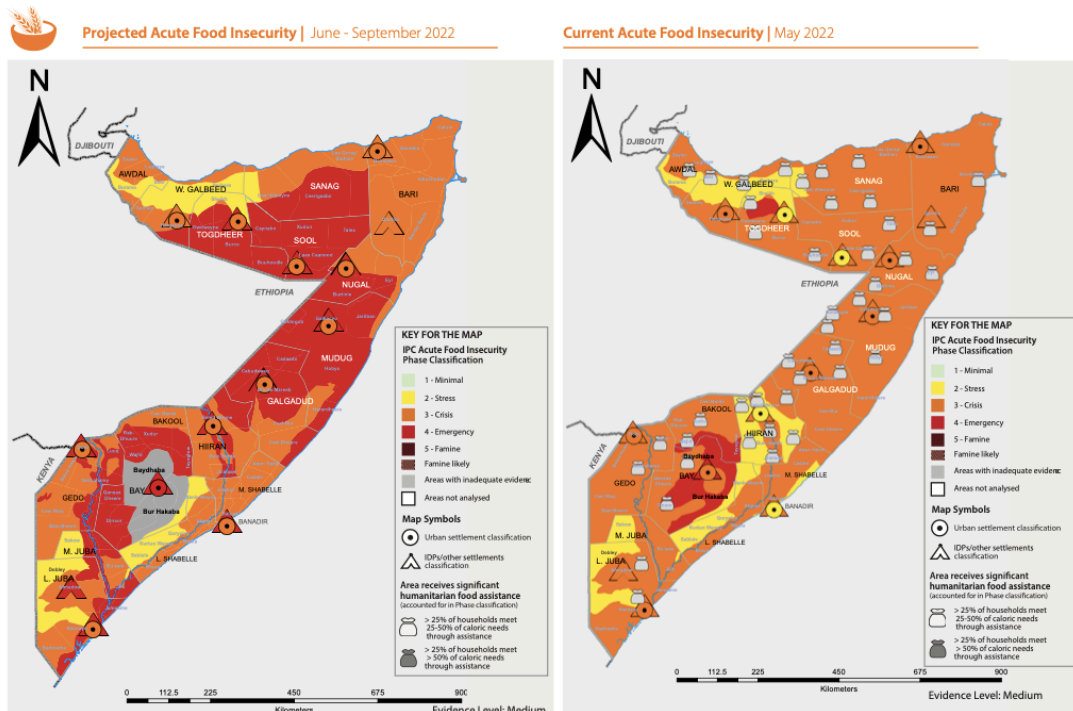
Suicide bomber strikes near presidential palace in Mogadishu in 2021. The explosion took place as divided Somalia tries to break a national election deadlock

Dated June 25, 2021, the twenty-eighth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017) documented that Al-Qaida-affiliated Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahidin (Al-Shabaab) continued its operations in Somalia, exploiting the security vacuum created by the preoccupation of Somali security forces with pre-election violence. In southern and central Somalia, the group encountered little resistance in capturing several towns and villages in areas that had previously been hostile to it. Heavily armed fighters moved into Mogadishu and occupied strategic positions from which they continue to plan and conduct attacks, forcing residents to flee. The United States military withdrawal and the partial drawdown of the African Union Mission in Somalia left Somali special forces struggling to contain Al-Shabaab without strategic support. Likewise, Edmund Fitton-Brown, the coordinator of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, reported that in April, Al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Omar Abu Ubaidah renewed his call for operatives to attack foreign interests across Somalia as well as allies supporting the Government of Somalia and neighboring countries, specifically Djibouti. In March, Al-Shabaab attacked Boosaaso prison in Puntland, which is outside its regular area of operations. More than 400 individuals escaped, most of whom were absorbed into the ranks of Al-Shabaab.

Furthermore, according to the report, Al-Shabaab has significantly increased its use of drones to conduct reconnaissance flyovers and record the activities of security forces. Member States expressed concern about the threat from weaponized unmanned aerial vehicles and the group's intent and capacity to launch attacks on aircraft and civil aviation infrastructure. That concern was aroused by Al-Shabaab plans to target low-flying aircraft within Somali airspace and along the border between Kenya and Somalia, which is an important corridor for humanitarian flights and the main route for commercial aircraft landing in Somalia. Al-Shabaab possesses man-portable air defense systems and other conventional weapons that could damage aircraft. Member States also noted the prosecution in the United States of Cholo Abdi Abdullah, who was undergoing pilot training in the Philippines, as evidence of Al-Shabaab intent in that regard.

In addition to the challenges in the peace and security front, UNICEF has estimated that 7.7, including 5 million children, will need humanitarian assistance in 2022 due to the devastating impact of conflict, insecurity, floods, drought, desert locusts' infestation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, girls, boys, and families experiencing food insecurity, higher food and other commodity prices coupled with a decrease in remittances, strained public services, and significant protection challenges will require multifaceted interventions in Somalia. Similarly, it has become increasingly complex to evaluate the repercussions of the threats. For instance, a recent report by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) detailed the extreme nature of many of the issues and obstacles humanitarian agencies and other actors are faced with in Somalia. According to the Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview (2021), 2.9 million Somali people have been estimated to be internally displaced.* In fact, the IOM has classified Somalia as one of the countries with the highest numbers of internally

displaced persons (IDPs) in the globe. Another alarming fact is that approximately 7.1 million people across Somalia will likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity between June and September of 2022.



Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-ipc-risk-famine-snapshot-l-may-september-2022>

International and Regional Framework

The General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution titled “The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: seventh review” calling upon member states to take appropriate measures to address the new and emerging threats posed by the rise in terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief on June 2021. By the terms of some of the resolution's 119 operative paragraphs, the world body stressed the significance of a sustained and comprehensive approach, including through stronger efforts, where necessary, to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, bearing in mind that terrorism will not be defeated by military force, law enforcement measures and intelligence operations alone. This resolution also approved more than \$6 billion for 12 peacekeeping missions for the 2021/22 fiscal year. Specifically, the world body adopted, without a vote, 18 resolutions, recommended by its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), including the approval of a \$6.37 billion budget for the following peacekeeping operations: the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS).

The Security Council has recently devoted a significant amount of time and resources to addressing the situation in Somalia. SC's resolution 2628 (2022) specifically addressed the reconfiguration of the African Union Mission (AMISON) into the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, a recognition of the continued need to countering al-Shabaab and the expectation that the Government of Somalia will gradually have a more instrumental role in keeping the country safe.

By its resolution 2592 (2021), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until 31 May of 2022 and requested it to strengthen its presence across the country “as the security situation allows”. With a unanimous adoption, with this resolution the SC also decided that UNSOM should continue to coordinate United Nations plans, maximizing joint efforts and designing programs conjointly with the FGS and the federal member states, specifically those geared towards supporting and accelerating government-led inclusive politics.

It further urged the Federal Government and federal member states “to create a conducive political and security climate for inclusive elections across Somalia, fostering political pluralism, ensuring political space for the rights of legally constituted political parties and upholding the rights to free expression, association, peaceful assembly and movement”.

By the terms of this resolution, the Council demanded that all parties work to end and to prevent recruitment and participation of children in armed conflict. Reiterating that the Somali authorities have the primary responsibility to hold recruiters legally accountable and to consider those children who have been released or separated from armed groups as victims, according to the Paris Principles endorsed by the FGS, and to stop detaining all children on national security charges where it is in violation of international law. Furthermore, the Council harshly condemned continued attacks by Al-Shabaab and urged Somalia's authorities, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the United Nations to work closely on strengthening safety for United Nations and African Union facilities and staff. The SC also expressed its condemnation of the misuse and blockade of humanitarian assistance; it further called on the Federal Government and federal members to implement effective actions to address internal displacement.

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the security, economic, and social situation in Somalia. Questions to consider are: How can the Security Council leverage its capabilities to meet the demands of local governments to combat terrorism and extremism? How can the international community adapt to meet new challenges, like youth radicalization, propaganda spreading, and the financing of terrorism? Does UNSOM need to be strengthened? What factors can lead to an increase in security in the region? Would the expansion of operations in the region lead to dislodging terrorists from their strongholds? How can the Security Council strengthen security cooperation in the region to fight Al-Shabaab? What is missing in the operational method of the assistance missions? How can the Security Council prevent the current and potential future rise in terrorist and extremist groups in Eastern Africa? What aspects of de-radicalization policies must be improved for greater effectiveness in deterring young people from joining terrorist and extremist organizations?

TOPIC II: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE-CHANGE RELATED DISASTERS ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY



Locals wait at a World Food Programme food distribution center to receive grain donations at a government-led feeding center in the Wagdud Temporary Resettlement site, Somali regional state. Photo by: UNICEF Ethiopia

Seven years ago, in their report *United We Stand: Reforming the United Nations to Reduce Climate Risk* (2016), Camila Born and Nick Mabey asked a question that is still relevant today. They explore to what extent climate change poses a direct threat to the United Nations' mission. Central to their exploration is the reflection that the international system's ability to deal with climate risks – the impact from climate change that is already being experienced – is fragmentary and ad hoc. This reality they contend will require a new leadership to create robust institutions to manage environmental risks, to change procedures, and to promote reforms in an international agenda that should be supported by all individual member states.

Born and Mabey's concerns are not new in the UN system. Whether climate change is an issue that should be examined by the UN's peace and security body to begin with, has been the subject of controversy. Some Member States believe that this is stepping on the toes of other UN entities, specifically mandated with taking a lead on social and economic development, or environmental protection.

The first ever meeting of the Security Council examining the linkages between climate change and insecurity happened in April 2007. Since then, the UN body has increasingly taken steps that effectively acknowledge that the two issues are related: in July 2011, another open debate on the matter was held; in March 2017, resolution 2349 was adopted highlighting the need to address climate-related risks to tackle the conflict in the Lake Chad basin; and in July 2018, a debate was held on "understanding and addressing climate-related security risks".

In a sign of how important the discussion is to many countries, the debate was attended by over 70 Member States and included statements in the Council chamber from a dozen Ministers, including Kuwait, Belgium, Indonesia, Germany, and Poland.

As recently as December of 2021, the Security Council, in a contentious meeting, rejected a draft resolution co-sponsored by Niger (Council President for December) that would have integrated climate-related security risk as a central component of United Nations conflict-prevention strategies aiming to help counter the risk of conflict relapse. In a recorded vote of 12 in favor to 2 against (India,

Russian Federation), with 1 abstention (China), the Council — acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations — rejected the draft owing to the negative vote by a permanent member of the Council. The vote followed an open debate of the Council on 9 December in which nearly 60 speakers warned that people and countries most vulnerable to climate change also are most vulnerable to terrorist recruitment and violence. Although the resolution did not pass, its elements are relevant. Their content build in part on existing UN practices. The Council has previously expressed concern about the implications of climate-related issues. For instance, the language of resolution 2349 (2017) was explicit when in its operative clauses that it “recognizes the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors;” but the Council’s handling of these matters to date has been ad hoc, and the UN’s resources for addressing climate security remain limited. Most UN field operations have no climate security expert to help them analyze threats arising from the loss of land or extreme weather events. (The sole exception is Somalia, where the mission has charged an official with monitoring such matters.) The draft resolution urges Guterres to improve training and guidance for UN staff on risks related to climate security.

Members of the Council, speaking before and after the vote, expressed pronounced disagreement on the content of the resolution, the consensus process and the very notion that it should appear on that organ’s agenda.

Later, the Secretary-General recognized the findings of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (August 2021) -- that the world is facing unprecedented risks from climate change and that every region is affected -- as a “code red for humanity”. Inevitably, given the magnitude of the climate emergency, its cascading effects extend beyond the environmental sphere and into the social and political realm. While climate change is rarely -- if ever -- the primary cause of conflict, it can act as a risk multiplier, exacerbating underlying vulnerabilities and compounding existing grievances.

Understanding and responding to climate-related security risks has become a strategic priority for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), as is reflected in its Strategic Plan for 2020-22. Such risks are highly context-specific, with impacts that vary across regions, countries and communities, requiring integrated analysis and responses as women, men and youth are affected in different ways. The risks are greatest where past or current conflicts have undermined the capacity of institutions and communities to absorb the additional stress brought on by climate change or adapt to the changing environment.

As the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, stressed in a briefing to the Security Council in 2020, climate change has major implications for our ability to prevent conflict and sustain peace around the world. This is true in contexts where DPPA manages special political missions (the majority of which are deployed in highly climate vulnerable countries according to the ND-GAIN Index) as well as in non-mission settings, where DPPA supports UN Resident Coordinators on conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, including through the Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention.

DPPA is making targeted efforts to adapt its practices and methods to a climate changing world, including by integrating climate change considerations into analytical and planning mechanisms as well as into prevention, mediation and peacebuilding strategies. Key activities include targeted analysis, coordination for action, environmental approaches to prevention, and the development of new guidance in DPPA core areas, such as the mediation of armed conflict. In line with its Security Council mandate, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia was the first UN field mission to deploy dedicated capacity on climate security to assess climate-related security risks, develop appropriate risk management strategies, and report findings to the Security Council. Similar efforts are underway in other contexts where the Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change, among other factors, on stability. Since climate-related security risks are not felt equally by everyone, DPPA

pays particular attention to the impact on women as well as the potential of women as agents of change.

Given the complex nature of the linkages between climate change, peace and security, DPPA pursues in integrated approaches and multi-layered partnerships. In an effort to promote approaches that combine peacebuilding with resilience and adaptation efforts, DPPA, through the Peacebuilding Fund, invests in a growing number of climate-sensitive peacebuilding projects around the world. The Department also seeks to strengthen partnerships with regional organizations, governments, civil society, and the research community to build on existing capacities, support local solutions, and strengthen the global evidence base on climate-related security risks.

Climate Security Mechanism

An important component of DPPA's efforts to understand and address the linkages between climate change, peace and security is the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM). Established in 2018 as a joint initiative between DPPA, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the CSM seeks to help the UN system address climate-related security risks more systematically. See the CSM 2021 Progress Report [here](#).

To this end, the CSM supports field missions, UN Resident Coordinators and regional organizations to conduct climate security risk assessments and develop risk management strategies. The CSM has also established a UN Community of Practice on Climate Security as an informal forum for information exchange and knowledge co-creation. The group – which convenes around 25 UN entities – meets every few weeks and is open to all UN staff interested in this topic.



French soldiers talk to locals in southern Mali. Since 2014, the French have led Operation Barkhane, a military effort to fight terror in the Sahel
(Photo: TM1972/Wikipedia)



Climate change recognized as 'threat multiplier', UN Security Council debates its impact on peace <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031322>

Scientists and youth to advise the Council

For the first time in history, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) was invited to brief the members of the Security Council on climate and extreme weather issues. Professor Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist at the WMO brought some clear scientific data to the table, to inform the debate. "Climate change has a multitude of security impacts - rolling back the gains in nutrition and access to food; heightening the risk of wildfires and exacerbating air quality challenges; increasing the potential for water conflict; leading to more internal displacement and migration," he said. "It is increasingly regarded as a national security threat."

He noted that WMO stands ready to support the UN and Member States with "cutting-edge science" and "expert information" so informed decisions can be made.

Before the floor was opened to Members of the Security Council, a youth representative and a researcher on environmental security, Lindsay Getschel, was also invited to speak.: <https://youtu.be/Mi1oBLdwM9E>

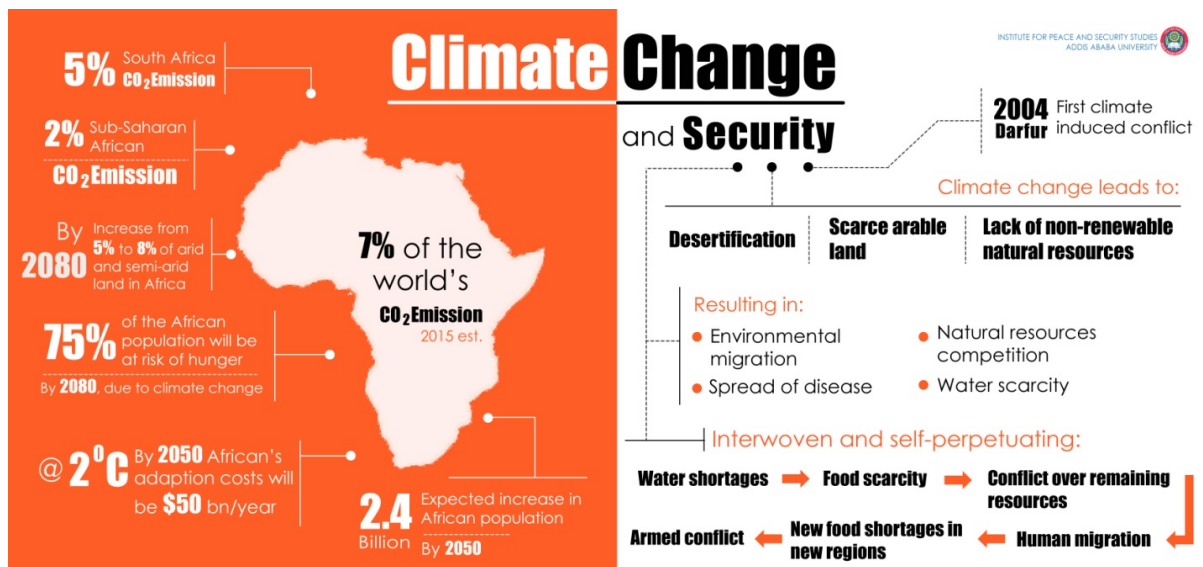


<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2018/01/31/climate-change-affecting-stability-across-west-africa-sahel-un-security-council/>

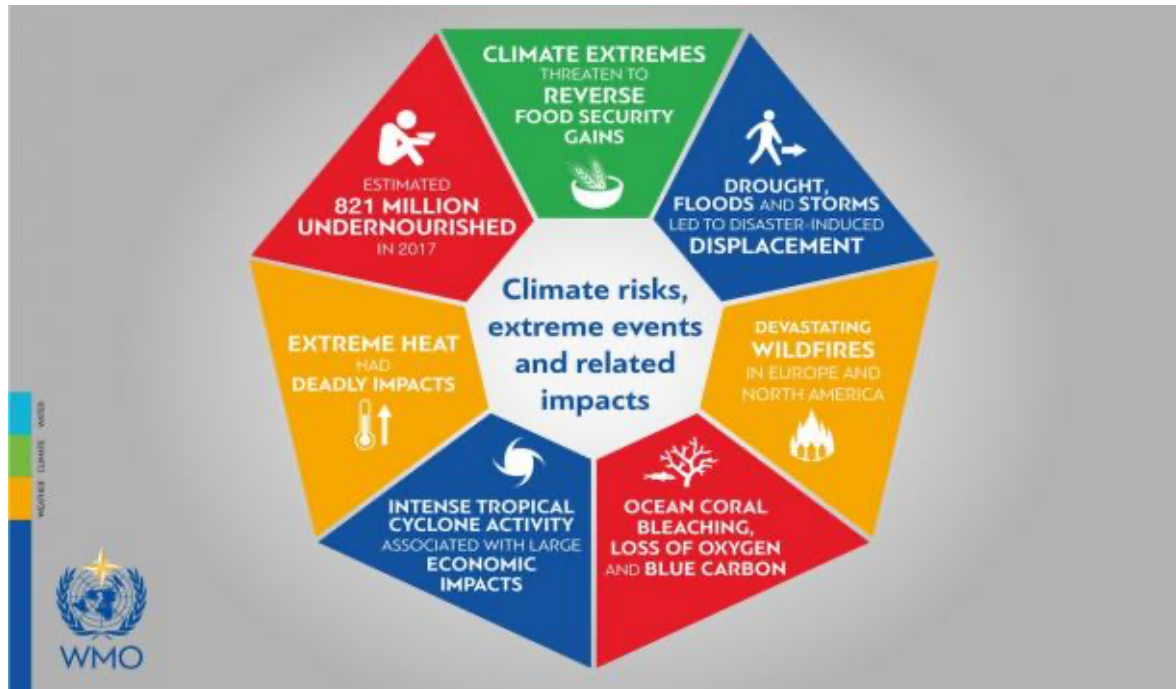
<https://nypost.com/2014/03/30/climate-change-will-push-world-into-war-un-report/>

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<https://www.waterbriefingglobal.org/wmo-warns-un-security-council-on-risks-climate-change-poses-to-international-peace-and-security/>

Other useful links:

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<http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/devastating-climate-change-world-peace-security/> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/climate-change-as-a-security-risk>