

ATMIS HALF YEAR MAGAZINE

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THE ATMIS TROOP DRAWDOWN

ATMIS handed over six Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to the Somali Security Forces by the June 30 deadline, successfully concluding the first phase of a gradual transfer of security responsibilities.





Somalia's Federal Minister of Defence Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur (left), shakes hands with the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef (right), at a ceremony to officially hand over six Forward Operating Bases to the Federal Government of Somalia in Mogadishu on 6 July 2023.

Photo | ATMIS

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Message from the SRCC

Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef
 The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia.

“
We look forward to the remaining half of the year as we prepare for Phase Two of the drawdown of an additional 3000 troops by 30 September and the hand-over of more FOBs.
 ”

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to read the latest issue of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) magazine, which outlines key activities and milestones achieved by the mission over the first half of the year 2023.

The year started on a positive note as we continued to respect the international timetable for the gradual transfer of security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (SSF). This takes place in accordance with the Somali Transition Plan (STP), the ATMIS Concept of Operations 2022-2024 and the United Nations Security Council resolutions 2628 (2022) and 2670 (2022).

One key milestone was the conclusion of the first phase of the troop drawdown, which entailed the handover of six Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to the Somali National Army (SNA) and the withdrawal of 2,000 ATMIS troops from the mission area. I wish to extend my gratitude to the ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), for their support which has ensured a successful outcome to this process.

I am also indebted to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and other partners for their collaboration and support in the implementation. We jointly carried out various capacity building and mentorship programmes for the SSF to prepare them for the task of providing security to the people and territory of Somalia.

On 1 April, ATMIS marked one year since the mission was reconfigured from its predecessor, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It is gratifying to note the tremendous achievements made in degrading the Al-Shabaab terrorists.

To support the ongoing stabilization and early recovery efforts in our Areas of Responsibility, we have implemented various Quick Impact Projects across Somalia. In particular, we handed over a 68-bed capacity Hospital to the FGS to help in providing quality treatment and care to the Somali security forces and to bring basic health services closer to the people.

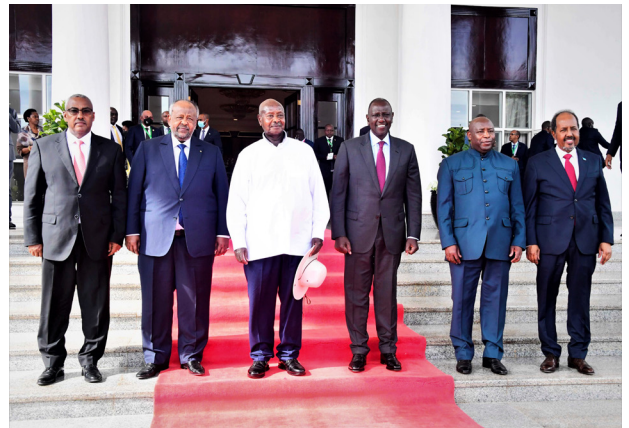
As highlighted during my address to the UN Security Council in New York on 22 June, ATMIS is committed to fulfilling its mandate to create and maintain an environment which enables the restoration of a peaceful, stable, and secure Somalia.

We look forward to the remaining half of the year as we prepare for Phase Two – the drawdown of an additional 3,000 troops by 30 September and the handover of more FOBs.

Thank you.



6 June 2023 - The SRCC and Head ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, welcomed the newly appointed UN envoy to Somalia, Catriona Laing, at the ATMIS Mission Headquarters in Mogadishu. The two envoys discussed the status of Somalia's security, the peacebuilding process and the existing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.



27 April 2023 - Heads of state of Troop Contributing Countries to ATMIS called for renewed support to Somalia at a summit in Kampala, Uganda.



10 April 2023 - The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, hosted the new Head of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, for a courtesy visit at the Mission Headquarters in Mogadishu. UNSOS provides logistical support and is an important enabler of ATMIS in the execution of its mandate.



8 February 2023 - The Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and the Federal Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Daud Aweis, addressed journalists and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing joint military offensive against Al-Shabaab.



1 April 2023 - ATMIS hosted a Ramadan Iftar dinner for its key partners in Mogadishu. The dinner was attended by dignitaries including Somalia's Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre, representatives of international organisations and diplomatic missions.



7 April 2023 - To show solidarity with the humanitarian crisis ATMIS donated 3.5 metric tons of assorted food and other items to 75 households of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the capital, Mogadishu.

SRCC ENGAGEMENTS

The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, accompanied by the Uganda Contingent Commander, Brig. Gen. Peter Omola, held consultations with the top SNA officers led by the former Somalia Chief of Defence Forces, Maj Gen Odowaa Yusuf Rageh. They discussed the security situation and collaboration between SNA and ATMIS.

The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, met Ambassadors and representatives of ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in Mogadishu. They discussed coordination, cooperation and the outcomes of the Heads of States Summit held in Kampala, Uganda.



On the sidelines of the UN Security Council meeting in New York, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, participated in an event where he asked international partners to commit additional support to boost the capacity of the Somali Security Forces to take over security responsibilities from ATMIS by the end of December 2024.

The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, met the UN Under Secretary-General for Safety and Security, Gilles Michaud. They discussed cooperation between ATMIS and the UN.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and the ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, met the newly appointed Somalia CDF, Maj. Gen. Sheikh Muhyadin, accompanied by the Acting Chief of Cabinet, Maj. Hussein Mohamed, and Advisor to the CDF Badri Mohamed. They discussed the handover of FOBs and the gradual transfer of security responsibilities from ATMIS to SSF.





The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef (second from left), and Somalia's State Minister of Defence Abdinur Dahir Fidow (second from right), exchange handover documents during the official handover of Maslah Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Mogadishu on 21 January 2023.

ATMIS hands over Maslah Forward Operating Base

On 21 January, the handover of Maslah FOB took place in line with the joint Concept of Operations (CONOPs) and the Somali Transition Plan – developed by the Federal Government of Somalia, ATMIS, the UN and development partners to guide the transition process.

A land lease agreement formalizing the handover was signed by the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and Somalia's State Minister for Defence, Abdinur Daahir Fidow, at a ceremony held in the capital, Mogadishu.

“Maslah is the first facility to be handed over by ATMIS since its inception in 1 April 2022, following

the end of the AMISOM mandate,” the SRCC said at the ceremony attended by top Federal Government of Somalia officials, envoys and representatives of the UN and troop contributing countries (TCCs).

The handover of the FOB followed the departure of the ATMIS Burundi contingent and subsequent takeover of the facility by the Somali National Army on 15 January. Ambassador Souef emphasised the key role the FOB has played in securing the capital, Mogadishu, and facilitating the Mission's military operations.

“Geographically it has enabled our troops to secure the major supply route (MSR) connecting Mogadishu and the hinterland hence ensuring the safe and secure movement of goods

and services which is important for both economic and social development of this country,” observed Amb. Souef.

Somalia's State Minister for Defence who also spoke at the event, said the handover happened at a time when the Federal Government had intensified military operations against Al Shabaab in central and south Somalia.

“Huge military gains have been achieved in the past few months and we are keen to double current efforts and count on your support in eradicating the Al-Shabaab,” Mr. Fidow said, reiterating the Federal Government's commitment to the transition process.

On his part, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) Director Amadu Kamara lauded the stakeholders for making the process a success despite numerous challenges.



“The success of the handover of Maslah, within the restrictive timelines and other constraints, is a testament to the will of the Somalia Government to succeed in force generation and facilitating new offensive operations,” said Mr. Kamara.

The Commander of the ATMIS Burundi contingent, Brig. Gen. Jean Claude Niyiburana thanked the local community in Maslah for their support over the years adding that his troops will continue playing their part in the stabilization process.

The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef (right), and Somalia's State Minister of Defence Abdirur Dahir Fidow (left), signing the official handover documents for Maslah FOB on 21 January 2023.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, Somalia's State Minister of Defense Abdirur Dahir Fidow, senior officials from ATMIS, FGS and the UN pose for a group photo during the official handover of Maslah Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Mogadishu on 21 January, 2023.

New ATMIS Police Commissioner formally assumes office

In early March, Commissioner of Police (CP), Hillary Sao Kanu, formally assumed office as the Police Commissioner for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).



CP. Hillary Sao Kanu, from Sierra Leone, replaced Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIGP), Augustine Magnus Kailie, also from Sierra Leone, who concluded his tour of duty in October 2022.

She was officially received at the ATMIS Police Headquarters in Mogadishu by senior Police officers before inspecting a guard of honour mounted by ATMIS police personnel.

“My priorities are to build on what has already been achieved and sustain the momentum to ensure we achieve our goal of ensuring security and stability in Somalia,” said CP Kanu in an interview.

CP. Kanu, emphasized that the ATMIS Police component will collaborate with their counterparts, the Somali Police

Force to achieve the mission's objectives and build capacity through training, mentoring and advising.

“In collaboration with the Somali Police force, ATMIS police have maintained peace and security in Somalia and that’s what we will build on,” she added.

ATMIS Police, is one of the three components of the AU peace support operations in Somalia, mandated to provide operational support and capacity building to the Somali Police Force (SPF).

Prior to her appointment as the ATMIS Police Commissioner, she was the Director of Support Services at Sierra Leone Police Headquarters. She previously served at UNAMID, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Sudan.



The new ATMIS Police Commissioner, Commissioner of Police (CP) Hillary Sao Kanu greets senior ATMIS police officers at Force Headquarters in Mogadishu on 3 March 2023.

Women Peacekeepers call for gender equality

In March, women peacekeepers serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), and their counterparts from the Somali Police Force (SPF), commemorated International Women's Day by taking stock of their contribution to global peace and security.

The peacekeepers drawn from ATMIS' military, police and civilian components and their SPF counterparts expressed solidarity with fellow women working on the frontlines to restore peace and security in volatile areas.

"I am proud to say that the women peacekeepers serving under ATMIS are trailblazers. Many of them broke into male-dominated fields in their home countries and have continued to distinguish themselves while here in Somalia," said ATMIS Police Commissioner, Hillary Sao Kanu, who was the chief guest at the celebrations.

Kanu, who represented the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, and Head of ATMIS, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, hailed the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States for their efforts in advancing the socio-economic and political rights of women.

"I applaud the Federal Government of Somalia for the launch of the Somali National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which addresses

the impact of women and their role in conflict resolution and humanitarian response," she added.

Marked every 8 March, the theme of this year's celebrations, "Gender Equality through Innovative Peacekeeping," was adapted by ATMIS in view of the critical role female peacekeepers play in bringing positive change in Somalia.

ATMIS Chief Military Personnel and Administrative Officer, Col. Bassie Abdul Lawrence Sesay, said ATMIS will continue championing gender equality terming women's role in peacebuilding and



ATMIS and Somali Police Force (SPF) officers pose for a group photo during celebrations to mark International Women's Day held in Mogadishu on 8 March 2023.



Women peacekeepers serving with ATMIS perform a traditional dance during celebrations to mark the International Women's Day held in Mogadishu on 8 March 2023.

“Gender Equality prevents violence against women and girls, while gender inequality is a root cause of violence against women. ATMIS will continue to promote gender equality because women living from fear and violence is a basic human right,” said Col. Sesay who spoke on behalf of the military component.

In his remarks, ATMIS Acting Head of Protection, Human Rights and Gender Unit, Dr. Omar Alasow, commended the tremendous contribution Somali women have made in peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa nation.

“Somali women have made significant contributions to the country both during and after independence. During the civil war, they served as the backbone of Somali society. We thank them for the sacrifices they have made and continue to make in peace building. We hope to improve Somali women’s relationships with ATMIS,” he said.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security empowers women to actively participate in peacekeeping missions. SPF’s Head of Women and Children Rights Protection,

Fardowsa Abdullahi, challenged Somali women to take an active role in politics and peacebuilding to help strengthen their role in leadership.

“I urge Somali women to be more visible in various spheres of life, such as politics, security and civil service. Women are a force to be reckoned with, and they should not give up,” said Fardowsa.

The peacekeepers were drawn from ATMIS Troop and Police Contributing Countries of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.





On 1 April, ATMIS marked its first anniversary with a solid commitment to strengthen cooperation with the Federal Government and build new partnerships to speed up Somalia's stabilisation.

ATMIS marks first anniversary

On 1 April, the Head of ATMIS, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, told a press conference at Mission Headquarters that ATMIS remained committed to assisting Somalia achieve long-term peace and security.

"I would like to salute in a special way the contribution of the ATMIS Troops and Police Contributing Countries, particularly the sacrifices made by our gallant soldiers in restoring peace and stability in Somalia," said Amb. Souef, in the company of Somalia's Federal Minister of Defence, Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur.

Since its reconfiguration from AMISOM to ATMIS in April 2022, the transition mission has achieved tremendous gains in securing territories thanks to the commitment of its military, police and civilian units.

"An overview of the situation in ATMIS area of responsibility in the past year shows a decrease in Al-Shabaab activities with the security situation remaining calm," he added.

Ambassador Souef also singled out international partners among them the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the European Union (EU) for praise for their continued support not only to the Mission but also to the people of Somalia.

On his part, Minister Nur commended ATMIS for its contribution to the Somali-led peace and security process and promised a better future for the residents.

"I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our ATMIS partners from the military, police and civilian units. Your continued sacrifices will forever

be remembered. We have jointly achieved key milestones in the past one year," said Minister Nur.

He added that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) would continue collaborating with ATMIS to ensure a smooth transfer of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces in accordance with the Somalia Transition Plan (STP).

"Your continuous efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation have been phenomenal and we look forward to closely working with you as you fulfil your mandate, and as we jointly tackle the implementation of our Concept of Operations," added Nur.

As part of the activities to commemorate the day, Ambassador Souef and Minister Nur paid their respects to the fallen soldiers by laying wreaths at the Force Headquarters as a symbol of solidarity with ATMIS troops battling Al-Shabab and other armed groups in various parts of the country.

ATMIS adopts action plan on environmental management

On 1 April, ATMIS adopted an action plan that will see the Mission integrate environmental management issues into its operations in Somalia.



Military and police personnel attending a one-day workshop on environmental sensitisation organised by the ATMIS and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) in Mogadishu.

The action plan was adopted at the end of a one-day workshop organised by ATMIS and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) in Mogadishu and attended by environment focal points from the military and police components.

The document sets out a raft of measures ATMIS personnel will apply in their day-to-day activities to contribute to environmental protection, especially when utilizing precious resources such as water, food and energy.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, said the action plan will strictly be applied when handing over Forward Operating Bases (FOB) to the Federal Government of Somalia to minimize environmental damage ahead of the expiry of the ATMIS mandate in 2024.

“We therefore need to increase our efforts to integrate climate change considerations into

our ongoing operations while we recognise the different vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men, girls and boys in the communities where we are deployed,” noted Ambassador Souef in his opening remarks at the workshop.

The decision, he said, will fulfil the commitment made by ATMIS and UNSOS during the 23rd session of the Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency held in Abu Dhabi at the beginning of the year.

The Director of UNSOS, Amadu Kamara who also attended the workshop urged ATMIS personnel to adopt sustainable practices that promote environmental conservation by reducing energy consumption and ensuring proper waste disposal.

“Protecting the environment is a critical task that requires everyone’s effort. As ATMIS personnel, you have a unique role to play in this effort by recognising the importance of the environment.,” Kamara noted.

“By adopting sustainable practices and leveraging your resources, you can help protect the environment and safeguard our planet for future generations,” he added.

UNSOS, which provides logistical support to ATMIS, is implementing environmental protection measures such as installing incinerators, constructing portable toilets and establishing tree nurseries at ATMIS Forward Operating Bases.

ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Support and Logistics, Maj. Gen. Peter Kimani Muteti, noted that through environmental protection, ATMIS personnel will help avert climate-change-related conflicts in Somalia.

“We want to leave Somalia peaceful and stable; not with other conflicts resulting from poor environmental management,” said Maj. Gen. Muteti at the close of the workshop.

Safeguarding security gains emphasised ahead of ATMIS exit



Somalia's Minister of Defence Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, during a meeting of representatives of ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries in Kampala, Uganda, on 26 April 2023.



Assistant Secretary-General and Head of UNSOS Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, makes her remarks during a meeting of representatives of ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries in Kampala, Uganda, on 26 April 2023.

On 26 April, defence and foreign ministers from ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) called for a deliberate and coordinated exit of African Union troops from Somalia.

The call was made during a Ministerial Meeting of TCCs in Kampala, Uganda, ahead of the first phase of the drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS troops by 30 June 2023.

During the meeting, Uganda's Foreign Affairs Minister, Odongo Jeje Abubakhar, commended the ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and Somali Security Forces for improving Somalia's security situation.

He added that the meeting had been convened at a critical time, to facilitate proper planning for a successful exit of African Union troops from Somalia.

"It is therefore prudent to effect joint assessment of the security situation, planning and coordination as TCCs to execute draw down timelines and for the Federal Government of Somalia to ensure force generation and integration to assume the security responsibilities," said Minister Odongo, adding that, "This meeting therefore ensure peace, security and stability within our region in order to achieve the much desired economic prosperity," noted Aden Duale, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Defence.

The Head of UNSOS, Assistant Secretary-General, Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, while pledging UNSOS' support to facilitate the transition process, called on the international community to ensure sustainable logistics support to the Somali Security Forces as ATMIS draws down.

"We would also wish to recommend increased support to the development of a Somali logistics capability that is sufficient, affordable and sustainable. This would involve, among others, additional and advanced capacities for the Somali Security Forces in various aspects of logistics including procurement, warehouse management, aviation, firefighting and medical delivery just to mention a few," said Dr. Kacyira.

The Head of the EU Delegation to Uganda, Jan Sadek said developing the capability of the Somali Security Forces is critical to ensuring the long term security of Somalia and the region.

"Strengthening the capacity of the Somali Security and governance actors in order to take over the responsibility to protect the people must remain a key objective of all of Somalia's partners. The only exit strategy for ATMIS is thus to support the Somali Security Sector," noted Amb.Sadek.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, the United Nations, IGAD and partners including the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Special Representative of the AU Chairperson for Somalia and Head of ATMIS Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, also attended the meeting.

The four-day meeting climaxed with the ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries Heads of State Summit, at State House, Entebbe which adopted the recommendations of the Ministerial meeting.

The Head of ATMIS commends Burundi Contingent for their efforts in Hirshabelle State

On May 10, the SRCC and the Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, visited ATMIS Burundi forces at the Sector Five Headquarters in Jowhar, where he commended them for their commitment to security and stability in the Hirshabelle State.



Burundi National Defence Force (BNDF) soldiers clap for the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, during a familiarisation visit to Sector Five Headquarters in Jowhar on 10 May 2023.

Amb. Souef who was flanked by the ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Operations and planning, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka, paid glowing tribute to the Burundi forces for effectively multi-tasking – conducting both joint targeted and routine operations, protecting population centres, main supply routes and key state institutions and installations including Parliament, the Presidential palace, State House and the Jowhar Airport and Airfields.

“The joint offensives conducted over the years by the Burundian contingent and Somali Security Forces (SSF), have liberated swathes of territories that were formerly under the control of Al- Shabaab and other armed

groups. They were part of the joint forces that successfully fought Al-Shabaab in this region a few months ago and have the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) effectively running”, the SRCC emphasised.

Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka, also commended the ATMIS Burundi National Defence Forces troops.

“Our visit here is to laud the important contributions from our Sector 5 contingent and to encourage and boost the morale of our brave soldiers deployed in various Forward Operating Bases (FOBs),” said Maj. Gen. Ngendabanka.

The Commander of ATMIS Burundi National Defence Forces,

Brig. Gen. Jean Claude Niyiburana, assured that the troops remain on high alert and will continue to work jointly with Somali Security Forces to achieve the mandate of ATMIS.

The SRCC and his delegation also interacted with representatives from the civil society and Internally Displaced Persons.

Led by the Governor of Middle Shabelle, Ahmed Meyre Makaran, the discussions focused on the humanitarian situation, and areas of cooperation with ATMIS.

The ATMIS delegation also toured the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) and inspected accommodation facilities for the ATMIS Formed Police Unit (FPU).

New ATMIS Force Commander arrives in Somalia to assume office

On 14 May, Lieutenant General Sam Okiding, the new force commander for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) arrived in Somalia to take up his duties.

Lt. Gen. Okiding, from Uganda, succeeded Lt. Gen. Diomede Ndegeya from Burundi who completed his tour of duty late last year.

He was officially received at the ATMIS Force Headquarters by the Deputy Force Commander in charge of Operations and Plans, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka, and other senior military officers.

Before holding a series of closed-door briefings, he inspected a guard of honour from a contingent of Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).

Lt. Gen. Okiding, who was immediately briefed on the current security situation in Somalia, said his key priority would be to ensure a smooth transition of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces (SSF) while consolidating the gains made.

“The most important thing is to support the Somali security forces in accordance with the CONOPS (Concept of Operations), the Somali Transition Plan

and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2628 and 2670,” the new Force Commander observed.

Lt. Gen. Okiding pledged to work closely with all stakeholders to implement the Mission’s mandate of ensuring a smooth handover of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces.

“All stakeholders will play an important role in the transition process. My work is to give direction on the side of the military and I am confident that we shall all work together,” he explained.

Prior to his appointment as the ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Okiding was the Deputy Commander of UPDF Land Forces.

Additionally, he has served in several operations in the region, including in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic.



Newly appointed ATMIS Force Commander Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, inspects a guard of honour mounted by Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) troops serving with ATMIS at the Force Headquarters in Mogadishu on 14 May 2023.

ATMIS in advance stage of preparation for June drawdown of soldiers

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) on 14 May declared preparations for the drawdown of 2,000 soldiers by 30 June 2023 were at an advance stage.

The drawdown is in compliance to United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2628 and 2670 which mandates ATMIS to drawdown 2000 soldiers by the end of June and hand over security in agreed areas to Somali Security Forces (SSF).



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, addresses Burundi National Defence Force (BNDF) troops at Sector Five Headquarters in Jowhar on 10 May 2023.

In May, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Ambassador Mohammed El-Amine Souef, announced that a joint technical committee drawn from appropriate stakeholders, including the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), and ATMIS had identified and agreed on which Forward

Operating Bases (FOBs) were to be handed over from ATMIS to SSF or to be collapsed.

The Head of ATMIS, who was on an official visit to ATMIS Sector 5 headquarters in Jowhar said while ATMIS reduces the number of soldiers on the ground, the Somali Security Forces will increase its numbers to take over the areas that ATMIS will hand over.

The ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Operations and Planning, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka, who accompanied the SRCC for the working visit to Jowhar, said an operations order had already been released and the joint technical committee team is on schedule to meet the 30 June deadline.



SRCC meets South West State President in Baidoa

On 17 May, political reconciliation, humanitarian efforts, security and the ongoing fight against Al-Shabaab were among key issues discussed by senior officials of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) during a visit to Baidoa, in the South West State of Somalia.

The drawdown is in compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2628 and 2670 which requires ATMIS to reduce its forces and gradually hand over security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (SSF).

The delegation, comprising the newly arrived ATMIS

Under the ATMIS military sectorization, Baidoa is the headquarters of Sector Three which is manned by Ethiopian troops. They work collaboratively with a contingent of Formed Police Unit (FPU) officers from Ghana and Individual Police Officers (IPOs).

Echoing the SRCC's remarks, ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Okiding, said the meetings and engagements had been insightful and productive.

"We have identified the gaps and what we need to do to bridge those gaps. We are committed to ensuring a smooth transition," said the ATMIS Force Commander.

China's Ambassador to Somalia, Fei Shengchao, lauded ATMIS, Somali Security Forces and the South West State leadership for the commitment and collaboration to restore security and stability in the state. He reaffirmed China's support for the ongoing security and peacebuilding efforts.



The high-level delegation led by the Head of ATMIS Amb. Mohamed El- Amine Souef and China's Ambassador to Somalia, Fei Shengchao, met with South West State President, Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed, members of his administration and representatives of civil society groups.

"We discussed the security situation, territorial integrity, support for both the ongoing stabilization efforts launched by the Federal Government of Somalia and the fight against Al-Shabaab," Ambassador Souef said after the closed-door meeting.

The discussions also touched on the upcoming ATMIS troop drawdown and the preparations underway to meet the June deadline.

Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, ATMIS Police Commissioner Hillary Sao Kanu and ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Operations and Planning, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka also held separate meetings with the Ethiopian National Defence Force troops and Ghanaian Formed Police Unit (FPU) officers stationed in the Federal Member State's administrative capital, Baidoa.

"I am encouraged by what I heard from the South West State President, the local authorities and the regional Police Commissioner that ATMIS troops conduct daily joint operations with the local forces to secure the state. The operations are critical," the SRCC noted.



"We are committed and believe that no matter how hard it is, it is important that we invest together with Somalia and international partners in peace, stability and prosperity to support Africa," said Ambassador Shengchao.

ATMIS, UN launch campaign to green Somalia

On 5 June, to mark World Environment Day, the African Union peace mission in Somalia, the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia, launched a joint campaign to protect the environment and reduce the effects of climate change.

As part of the campaign, Ambassador Mohammed El-Amine Souef, Head of the AU Mission in Somalia, the Head of the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), Assistant Secretary-General Ms Aisa Kacyira and Somalia's Minister for Environment and Climate Change Khadija Mohamed, pledged to plant 30,000 trees around some 58 Forward Operating Bases by the time of the proposed exit of AU forces at the end of 2024.

The campaign is in solidarity with President Hassan Sheikh's 'Regreening Somalia' Initiative launched in October last year. That initiative targets 10 million trees to boost biodiversity and climate resilience and help combat repeat cycles of devastating droughts in the Horn of Africa country.

"As far as ATMIS is concerned, we are committed to follow the orientation and the policy of Somalia's President. ATMIS will plant about 30,000 trees to support Somalia by making it green by December 2024," said Amb. Souef, the AU Special Representative for Somalia.

To commemorate this year's celebrations, themed "Solution to Plastic Pollution," ATMIS and UN staff participated in a plastics collection clean-up exercise along the Jazeera-Airport- Marine road. "Plastic pollution is a real disaster and our health is affected by plastics everywhere. If you don't take action today, it will be late tomorrow," added Amb. Souef.

Echoing the remarks, the Head of UNSOS, Assistant Secretary-General Ms Kacyira expressed satisfaction at the deliberate efforts taken by the UN to curb plastic pollution in a bid to restore Somalia's environment.

"The UN in Somalia continues to minimize its plastic waste by prohibiting the use of plastic bags, reducing the use of plastic water bottles-by providing water dispensers in offices and

maintaining drinking water points within our camps, providing waste bins to allow for the separation and recycling of trash and regularly organizing beach clean-ups. We gather two tonnes of waste for every clean up," she said.

On her part, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change expressed Somalia's appreciation for the collaborative efforts by ATMIS and the UN in supporting the Federal Government's initiatives to protect the diverse ecosystem.

"Somalia has a great asset, it's been blessed with a beautiful land, ocean, livestock and agriculture. But unfortunately, our ecosystem has been adversely affected by years of conflict, we need to stand together and act to tame pollution and fight plastics," Minister Khadija Mohamed remarked.



ATMIS-FGS delegation briefs EU officials in Brussels

In early June, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and Somalia’s National Security Advisor Hussein Mahmoud Sheikh Ali led a joint ATMIS-FGS delegation for a series of meetings at the European Union Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

The two officials briefed senior EU officials on efforts to build lasting peace and security in Somalia as well as the progress and challenges of implementing the EU-backed Somalia Transition Plan.

Amb. Souef and the National Security Advisor outlined how the significant strides made by Somalia in peace and security, arms control, the fight against terrorism, the promotion of human rights, and national transformation and governance.

Of key importance, they said, was the commitment by the Federal Government of Somalia to promote reconciliation, stabilization, judicial reforms, and ensure citizen participation in elections under universal adult suffrage.

The delegation also briefed the EU officials on the offensive operations against the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, the upcoming drawdown of troops serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and its complete exit by December 2024.

“We are talking about handing over security responsibilities to Somalis and taking over from ATMIS. This process will be in phases because we don’t want a catastrophic exit. We want things to go smoothly,” said Amb. Souef adding: “the plan is ongoing, by June, we will withdraw 2,000. The objective is for ATMIS to exit Somalia by December 2024.”

“This requires effort and coordination, not just between the FGS and ATMIS, but also with other partners such as the EU and UN. The EU provides financial support for this mission. We are grateful and thank the member states and the Commission for this generosity to support peace and security in Somalia and Africa at large,” said Amb. Souef.

Somalia's security chief Hussein Sheikh Ali noted that with the support of the African Union troops, the Somali Security Forces have made considerable progress to secure the country and built adequate capacity to conduct offensive operations. Amb. Souef confirmed the country was on course to meet the exit date in line with UN Security Council resolutions 2628 and 2670.

“We have 18 months to defeat Al-Shabaab and complete the ATMIS drawdown. Overall, we are on track to transition from ATMIS to Somali Security Forces,” he said noting that, “for Somalia to achieve that, we are reforming and rebuilding our security forces – the military, police, intelligence services and the custodial corps. These are the four security apparatus that are constitutionally accepted, and we are reforming them under the National Security Architecture, which is a political agreement on security,” said the National Security Advisor.

The delegation also held meetings with officials from the Council of EU-Africa Working Party, the Managing Director of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Rita Laranjinha, officials from the Military Planning Conduct and Capability (MPCC) and the Director of the Integrated Security Policy (ISP), Cosmin Dobran.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, accompanied by Hussein Mahmoud Sheikh Ali, Somalia’s National Security Advisor, brief senior EU officials on security and political developments in Somalia during an official visit to the EU Council in Brussels on 1 June 2023.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, and National Security Advisor Hussein Mahmoud Sheikh Ali (front row-centre), pose for a group photo after briefing ambassadors of ATMIS troop contributing countries to the European Union (EU) during an official visit to EU Headquarters in Brussels on 1 June 2023.

ATMIS senior officials visit soldiers injured in Buulo Mareer attack

On June 6, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, together with Uganda's Acting Ambassador to Somalia Maj. Gen. (Rtd.) Nathan Mugisha, and the ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, visited soldiers recovering at the Level II Hospital following an attack on the Buulo Mareer Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Lower Shabelle region.

"Their conditions are improving, and moral is high. We take this opportunity to express both our sympathy and solidarity, and to also condole with the government and people of Uganda for the loss of lives last week," said Ambassador Souef.

The officials were briefed on the recovery status of the soldiers by the Commanding Officer of the Level II Hospital, Lt. Col. Dr.

Godfrey Ssemakula Ngobya. Those in need of specialised care have already been airlifted to hospitals outside Somalia.

Uganda's Acting Ambassador to Somalia, Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Nathan Mugisha, noted that the Uganda troops remain firm in their resolve to fulfill the ATMIS mandate despite last week's attack on their base.

"We are containing the situation, reassessing, and proceeding as scheduled. The incident will not distract us. We will continue with the Somalia stabilisation processes, supporting the Federal Government, the Somali National Army, and the people so that they can have stability, economic development, and transformation," said Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Mugisha.



SRCC and Head of ATMIS Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef accompanied by the ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, visit recuperating UPDF soldiers at the ATMIS Level II hospital in Mogadishu on 5 June 2023.



SRCC, ASG visit Cadale FOB to assess preparations for ATMIS drawdown

In early June, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, visited Cadale Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Hirshabelle State to assess preparations for its handover to the Somali National Army (SNA) as part of the drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS troops by the end of that month.

Amb. Souef commended Burundi troops serving as part of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and currently manning the FOB for a “long and outstanding commitment” to ongoing efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia.

“Burundi was the second country after Uganda to deploy on this AU mission, and together with Ugandan troops played an active role in the liberation of Mogadishu and other areas, thereby facilitating state building processes in Somalia. We are proud of you and your country, you have been good ambassadors for the entire continent. You are part of those who brought and made peace in this lovely country,” said Amb. Souef, who is also head of

ATMIS, said in his address to the Burundian contingent. The SRCC and ATMIS head was part of a high-level delegation of United Nations and African Union officials.

The delegation included, the Head of United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), Assistant Secretary General Aisa Kacyira, ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding and other senior UN and ATMIS officials.

Amb. Souef praised Burundian troops for fostering good relations with the local communities and undertaking projects to support stabilisation efforts, through Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities.

“What you have done to reinforce the relationship between the international community with the locals here and what you have done in support of the IDPs, we appreciate. I know that they are getting water from here. This is very important,” he said.

ASG Kacyira hailed the ATMIS Burundi soldiers for their sacrifice in contributing to Somalia’s stabilisation and pledged UNSOS support to ensure a successful transition.

“You are drawing down with dignity and a sense of achievement. We want to thank you for having done a hard job of sacrificing yourselves. I am aware that along the way some troops lost their lives and we honor them,” she said.

ATMIS Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding commended ATMIS Burundi troops for their role in degrading the Al-Shabaab and urged them to remain vigilant during the transition period.

Cadale is part of several FOBs in Hirshabelle State manned by Burundi National Defence Forces (BNDF) troops serving under ATMIS. It is one of the three FOBs in Hirshabelle State to be handed over by the end of June.

The planned handover of Cadale FOB is in line with the joint Concept of Operations (CONOPs) and the Somali Transition Plan – developed by the Federal Government of Somalia, ATMIS, the UN and development partners to guide the transition process.

ATMIS, US Commanders discuss Somalia security



In mid June, senior commanders with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) held talks with top U.S. military officials on the security situation in Somalia.

ATMIS Force Commander Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, Deputy Force Commander in charge of Support and Logistics Maj. Gen. Peter Kimani Muteti and other senior ATMIS military officers met with Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga, Commander of the US Army Special Operations Command and Rear Admiral Jamie Sands, the US Navy Commander of Special Operations Command Africa at ATMIS force headquarters in the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

The ATMIS Force Commander said the closed-door discussions focused on support to the Federal Government of Somalia to ensure security and stability as ATMIS forces gradually wind down and hand over security responsibilities.

“The U.S. is one of our international partners. They have also injected a lot of resources into this mission and we have discussed salient issues,” said Lt. Gen. Okiding after the meeting.

“We are in the transition process, so as ATM exits, we should be proud of our brothers and sisters who remain behind to take charge of their country’s security. That is our hope and prayer,” he added.

Rear Admiral Jamie Sands said the meeting was an opportunity to reaffirm the United States’ commitment to the partnership with ATMIS and support for Somalia in the fight against Al-Shabaab.

“We talked about common challenges, and common purpose. We looked at different assets we can use. We also discussed the way ahead for Somalia support, the success of the support from ATMIS to Somalia over the last decade and reaffirmed our commitment to one another,” said Rear Admiral Sands.

The United States has over the years provided security assistance including logistical, and financial support to the African Union peacekeeping operations in Somalia.



Head of ATMIS briefs UN Security Council on support to Somalia

On 22 June, the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, briefed the UN Security Council and laid out the Mission's security plans to support Somalia during the transition period ahead of ATMIS exit in December 2024.

The briefing on the situation in Somalia took place during the 9356th meeting of the UN Security Council. The session was chaired by the United Arab Emirates' Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Shakhboot Bin Nahyan Al Nahyan.

In his address, Ambassador Souef outlined that ATMIS is providing advisory support to the Somali security forces to safeguard civilians and ensure compliance with the International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law during the ongoing Somali-led military offensives.

ATMIS has also supported the Somali security forces in the first phase of the military offensive against Al-Shabaab. The upcoming second phase of the offensive dubbed "Operation Black Lion" will include the regional forces of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya that border Somalia.

In his brief, Ambassador Souef also noted that the ATMIS military and police components continue to mentor and train the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force personnel. This is in readiness for the transfer of security responsibilities from ATMIS to the Somali security forces.

The Head of ATMIS updated the session on the implementation of phase one of the drawdown including a reduction of troop numbers and handover of seven Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to the Somali security forces.

"I can report to the Council that the drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS troops in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2628 (2022) and 2670 (2022) is now being implemented," said Ambassador Souef.

"With the completion of phase one, particularly the drawdown, ATMIS can create Quick Reaction

Forces and Mobile Forces. We also anticipate the deployment of key enablers, such as attack and utility helicopters and long-range Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Counter-IED capabilities. This will enhance ATMIS's operational capability, enabling the mission to better respond to Somali security forces' operational requirements on the battlefield," added Ambassador Souef.

He appealed to the UN Security Council to lift the 31-year long arms embargo against Somalia, to enable Somali security forces take over FOBs vacated by ATMIS and hold territory liberated from Al-Shabaab.

The session was also addressed by Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Ms Catriona Laing and the UN World Food Programme Executive Director, Cindy McCain. Ends



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, shakes hands with the United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, at the United Nations in New York.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef, addresses the UN Security Council on Somalia in New York.

ATMIS concludes Phase One of troop drawdown

On June 30, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) concluded the first phase of the troop drawdown after handing over the last two Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), Aljazeera 1 in Mogadishu and Gherille in Jubaland State.

In collaboration with the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), a total of seven FOBs were earmarked for handover to enable the drawdown of 2000 troops. All the seven FOBs, including - Xaaji Cali, Miirtugo, Cadale, Albao, Gherille, Aljazeera 1 and Marka Ayub, were handed over to Somali Security Forces (SSF).

The final two to be handed over, Gherille FOB in the Gedo region of Jubaland State which was under the responsibility of ATMIS Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) while Aljazeera 1 located on the outskirts of the capital, Mogadishu, was under the responsibility of ATMIS Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF).



Clerics denounce religious extremism, hail offensive on terror groups

In January, over 300 Islamic clerics from Somalia and the diaspora issued a fatwa denouncing religious extremism in all its forms and urged the public to support the ongoing Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)-led offensive against Al-Shabaab and other terror groups.

The clerics issued the edict on in the capital, Mogadishu, after four days of deliberating on religious extremism.

The 14-point declaration emphatically denounced Al-Shabaab, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other like-minded groups saying their extremist ideology had no religious basis and branded them enemies of Islam.

“The conference unanimously agrees that Al-Shabaab, ISIS and other like-minded groups have deviated from the true teachings of Islam and that they are considered enemies of the Islamic religion and the Somali population,” said Dr. Osman Maalim Mohamud from Saudi Arabia who read the declaration in the company of other Ulamaa (clerics).

They also warned against financing extremist groups, providing them refuge and seeking justice in their courts.

“Fighting extremism is a duty of every Muslim in Somalia who would love to live in a peaceful and secure country,” the clerics said.

The religious scholars thanked individuals who share information about the militants with the

authorities. They described them as nationalists who had the best interest of the country.

The four-day conference opened on 23rd January and was facilitated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

Religious Affairs Federal Minister, Sheikh Mukhtar Roobow Ali, thanked the clerics for heeding the government’s call to attend the conference and give their verdict on extremism in accordance with the true teachings of Islam.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, the Prime Minister, H.E. Hamza Abdi Bare, welcomed the declaration and thanked the clerics for their selfless service to the country, promising full implementation of the fatwa.



Somali clerics attend a conference on religious extremist ideologies in Mogadishu on 26 January 2023. The conference organised by the Somali Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment, attracted at least 300 religious scholars and clerics.

He urged the Somali population to heed the clerics' clarion call so the country can enjoy peace, prosperity, and development.

"I welcome the conference and the outcome. The declaration issued was carefully thought through and indeed addresses the many challenges our people face today. It was important for the clerics to clarify the truth," said the Prime Minister.

"I want to promise here, since this conference was also officially opened by the President, that the government will implement the outcome of this conference. As Head of the Executive, I promise you all that we will fully

implement decisions reached here," he added.

The Chairman of the Somalia Religious Scholars Council, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed Salaad, urged the youth who are still fighting for the terror groups to lay down their arms and stop shedding the blood of their fellow countrymen and women.

"I want to tell the brainwashed youth to stop destroying your own people's properties, maiming and killing them. You still have a chance in the sight of God to seek forgiveness. We, the public, are ready to forgive you," Sheikh Bashir said.

The declaration also had specific recommendations for the government, politicians, Somali security forces, business people and the public.

Among the recommendations are the creation of a religious council, financial support for religious programmes to effectively fight extremism and proper Federal and State government support to reconciliation and peacebuilding initiatives.

The clerics also called for similar events every year to provide guidance on religious matters and other issues that impact the public.



Somali clerics attend a conference on religious extremist ideologies in Mogadishu on 26 January 2023. The conference organised by the Somali Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment, attracted at least 300 religious scholars and clerics.

ATMIS hands over hospital facility to FGS

In May, a hospital facility designed to provide quality treatment and care to Somali security forces was handed over to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) by ATMIS.

The 68-bed facility located in Mogadishu was commissioned at a ceremony presided over by Somalia’s Federal Minister of Defence, Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and Italy’s Undersecretary of State for Defence, Matteo Perego Di Cremnago.

ATMIS built the facility as a Quick Impact Project (QIP) with funding from the Italian Government. QIPs are aimed at bringing basic services closer to the people and involve the construction of schools, health facilities, police stations and the sinking of boreholes among other necessities.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Souef said the facility will help improve treatment and care offered to Somali security forces as they continue their offensive against Al Shabab militants.

“This is a proud moment for all of us. This project is being inaugurated at a time when the SNA (Somali National Army) is fighting against the Khawarij (Al-

Shabaab militants). The facility will definitely support the SNA,” said Ambassador Souef.

The Federal Minister of Defense, Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, echoed the SRCC’s remarks noting that the facility would go a long way in providing urgent medical attention to soldiers and other security officers wounded on the battlefield.

“This facility is critical to the safety of our soldiers engaged in the fight against terrorism. We acknowledge the contribution of the Government of Italy and ATMIS to this facility,” the Minister said.

Somalia’s Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Odowaa Yusuf Rageh, said the opening of the facility was a significant step in the transition process and hailed the

successful implementation of the project.

“This is also a lesson for future stabilisation projects in support of the Somali National Army or other sectors. Beneficiaries need to be consulted about their needs so that we can determine what should be implemented and what needs to be prioritised,” said Gen. Odowaa.

Italy’s Undersecretary of State for Defence described the facility as timely assistance, adding that it will significantly benefit soldiers fighting to liberate Somalia from Al-Shabaab terrorists.

“We are also grateful to ATMIS for their support in the construction of this hospital. This facility will serve the soldiers of Somalia who are involved in combating terrorism, which is our common enemy,” said Mr Di Cremnago.



collaboration between the SNA, ATMIS and Italy, which enabled

ATMIS, EUCAP train Somalia naval officers on marine security

On 21 May, 15 Somalia Navy and Coast Guard (SNCG) officers completed specialised training on maritime security in a joint initiative conducted by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia).

The two-week course, which included theory and practicals, was aimed at helping Somalia secure the longest coastline in Africa ahead of the drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS troops by 30 June 2023.

“This refresher training is in line with the goals espoused in the Somalia Transition Plan and ATMIS mandate, specifically with regard to mentorship and capacity building of Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) institutions across all domains,” said Major General Peter Muteti, the ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Support and Logistics.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Maj. Gen. Muteti said it had been a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to build robust Somali institutions in preparation for the gradual handover of security responsibilities to Somali Security Forces (SSF) in line the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2628 and 2670.

“Capacity building of the SNCG is therefore critical to enable the conduct of Maritime Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue (SAR), and Somalia Coastal Defense while securing sea-lanes of communication and protecting against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, dumping of hazardous waste among other crimes,” Maj. Gen. Muteti told the closing event.

Somalia boasts the longest coastline in Africa, measuring about 3,300 kilometres, rich in sea-based resources. It has often been exploited by illegal fishing and smugglers and will need a well-trained and equipped navy

to ensure the country can fully benefit from the ‘blue economy’. Over the years, ATMIS, EUCAP and the United Nations (UN) in Somalia have aided the country’s maritime security sector through mentoring, capacity development, training, logistics and strategic level advice, based on coast guard functions, among others.

Dr. Fabian Loewenberg, Deputy Head of Mission of EUCAP Somalia, stated that training is essential to assisting Somalia in dealing with maritime concerns and that EUCAP will continue to support future training.

“Reflecting on the subject of training, I take the interest and determination of many to advance and develop a well-functioning Somalia Navy and Coast Guard,” he said. Maj. Abdiwaahid Ali Afrah, SNCG Deputy Force Commander urged the trainees to “embrace and share knowledge and skills gained from the training to other colleagues.”



Senior ATMIS military officers, Somalia Navy and Coast Guard officers, and representatives of development partners pose for a group photo at the closing ceremony of a refresher course on maritime security held in Mogadishu on 21 May 2023.

ATMIS and Somali police officers step up joint patrols

In March, the ATMIS Police component and the Somali Police Force (SPF) stepped up joint patrols in the capital, Mogadishu.

A team of officers led by Barrie Yusuf, ATMIS Joint Operation Command Centre (JOCC) Team Leader and Lt. Ali Mohamed Ousman, SPF Head of Operations at Wadajir Police Station District, conducted search operations that included mounting snap checkpoints on main roads and access routes leading to government buildings and offices.

“The importance of this joint patrol is for the residents to know

that ATMIS is working alongside them round the clock to improve security,” said the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Yusuf.

The patrols were aimed at providing both proactive and reactive responses to security situations to ensure safety in Mogadishu during and after Ramadan.

His remarks were echoed by Lt. Mohamed who emphasized that ATMIS and SPF officers must remain vigilant to thwart or prevent any planned attacks by terrorists.

“The importance of the patrols is to reduce the attacks from

terrorist groups,” said the officer who has served in the SPF for four years.

Lt Mohamed urged ATMIS to redouble its efforts in collaborative operations to combat insecurity in Mogadishu and its environments. “The patrols have so far accomplished many things, including increased public safety and security stability,” added Lt. Mohamed.

ATMIS Police and SPF also conduct regular joint patrols in the Federal Member States as part of efforts to build the capacity of the local security forces.



Police officers serving with ATMIS and Somali Police Force patrol a street to keep civilians safe during the Holy Month of Ramadan in Mogadishu on 29 March 2023.

FGS, ATMIS reaffirm commitment to Transition Plan

On June 7, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate a smooth transfer of security responsibilities to the Somalia security forces in line with the Somali Transition Plan.

The SRCC and Head of ATMIS Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and the Somalia Minister for Information, Culture and Tourism, Daud Aweis, who spoke at a joint press briefing in Mogadishu, said operations against Al-Shabaab to liberate remaining territories under their control were ongoing in various parts of the country.

"I wish to reaffirm our commitment to implementing the transfer of security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces in line with the Somali Transition Plan and the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. In this regard, ATMIS has finalized plans to commence the drawdown of 2000 troops which must be done by end of this month," SRCC Souef said.

Amb. Souef expressed confidence that the FGS has generated sufficient forces to take over security responsibilities once ATMIS troops leave.

"I have full confidence in the capabilities of the Somali Security

Forces. The SNA has over the last one year shown growing ability to conduct military operations against the terrorists group. I wish to sincerely commend the leadership of His Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in ensuring force generation as well as bringing onboard various segments of the Somali public in the fight against Al-Shabaab," he noted.

Minister Aweis commended the Somali security forces for their determination in ensuring peace and stability across the country and urged security agencies to continue to work together to eliminate the threat posed by Al-Shabaab.

"As you all know, there are ongoing operations to eliminate Al-Shabaab in many parts of the country. In addition, the second part of operations led by the Federal Government of Somalia is expected to start soon," he declared.

The Minister outlined various initiatives taken by government officials and agencies to ensure the Somali public enjoys relative peace and stability.

"The Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia, H.E. Hamza Abdi Barre, has urged for the acceleration of liberating the remaining areas in the hands of Kharijites Al-Shabaab," Minister Aweis added.

The two leaders welcomed the arrival of the new UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Somalia (SRSG) Catriona Laing and pledged to work with the UN to stabilise the country.

In line with the UN Resolution 2670, ATMIS is expected to drawdown 2000 troops by the end of this month in a phased hand over of security responsibilities to the Somali security forces in the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan. The AU peace Mission is expected to fully exit Somalia by 31 December 2024.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohammed El-Amine Souef (left), and Somalia's Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Daud Aweis Jama (right), address press conference on joint military operations against Al-Shabaab at the Villa Somalia in Mogadishu on 7 June 2023.

ATMIS UPDF troops clear Buufow-Janaale main supply route in Somalia

On February 25, Ugandan troops serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), completed road expansion works for the nine-kilometer stretch connecting Buufow and Janaale towns in the Lower Shabelle region.

The road which is on the main supply route connecting to the key towns of Afgoye and Arabiska north of the capital Mogadishu, was expanded to reduce the thicket of trees along it where Al-Shabaab militants often hide to stage surprise attacks on convoys and civilians

For the weeks, ATMIS Uganda People Defence Forces (UPDF) engineers, officers and partners from Bankroft Global Development detonated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) implanted by Al-Shabaab militants, graded and compacted the road with tractors to ensure it is accessible, safe, and secured for movement of people and goods.

“Tens of people have lost their lives and properties due to the IEDs emplaced along this stretch by Al-Shabaab. Clearing this route will improve security, and connect the two towns”, said Col. Charles Asiimwe, Commander of the Uganda Battle Group 37 who spearheaded the repair works.

“The clearance of the bushes will help to secure the road and impede the operations of the Al-Shabaab who are an obstacle to the social-economic wellbeing of the people and the general development of Somalia,” noted Jasper Genis, the head of engineering at Bankroft Global Development.

The Janaale District Commissioner, Mohamed Yusuf, commended the leadership of ATMIS and the Ugandan troops for providing security and ensuring the free movement of people along the road



An ATMIS Uganda soldier directing ATMIS road construction machine clearing bushes along the Buufow-Janaale main supply route in Somalia on 25 February 2023.

ATMIS Uganda troops mark ‘Tarehe Sita’ day

On 5 February, Ugandan troops serving with ATMIS took part in community service initiatives as part of celebrations to commemorate ‘Tarehe Sita.’

‘Tarehe Sita’ is an annual event that marks the day the National Resistance Army – the armed wing of the National Resistance Movement – led by Yoweri Museveni (the current President) launched an armed struggle on 6 February 1981 to end misrule in Uganda.

In Somalia, the Ugandan forces celebrated the 42nd ‘Tarehe Sita’

anniversary by organising a free medical camp for communities living near the base camp and also conducting a tree planting and clean-up exercise.

Speaking during the celebrations, the commander of the Uganda ATMIS contingent, Brig. Gen. Peter Omola, said the community activities were meant to strengthen relations with the local communities.

“It is not about fighting. It is not about guns. We need to do a lot and win the hearts and minds of Somali civilians,” said Brig. Gen. Omola, adding that marking ‘Tarehe Sita’ in Somalia was

an opportunity to strengthen relations with local communities that have remained steadfast in supporting ATMIS’ work.

“We are a people’s army and on a day like this, we always associate with the civilians and we give back to the population. Without the civilian population, we cannot achieve much especially here in Somalia,” observed Brig. Gen. Omola.

The day was commemorated under the theme: “Recognising the Sacrifice of the founders of the People’s Revolution for social economic transformation.”



The Commander of the Uganda Contingent serving with ATMIS, Brig. Gen. Peter Omola, joined by Marine market chairperson Abdullahi Mohamed Ali and senior ATMIS military officers, take part in a clean up exercise as part of the events to mark Tarehe Sita in Mogadishu on 5 February 2023.

ATMIS commends outgoing UPDF troops for distinguished service in Somalia

In mid-April, ATMIS paid tribute to an outgoing contingent of Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) troops for their distinguished and steadfast service to the peace support mission in Somalia.

At a medal award ceremony for officers of Battle Group 35, ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Support and Logistics Maj. Gen. Peter Kimani Muteti saluted the rotating troops for their resilient and professional service in the quest to restore peace and stability in Somalia.

Maj. Gen. Muteti said, the courage and dedication displayed by the UPDF troops in implementing the ATMIS mandate to degrade the threat posed by the Al-Shabaab, had earned ATMIS many accolades.

"The deployment of Battle Group 35 was quite a testing and challenging experience, but the courage and resilience they displayed represents the finest values of professionalism in soldiering, said Maj. Gen. Muteti adding that "The ATMIS leadership genuinely appreciates the work ethic and culture of the troops, a trait earned as a result of UPDF's strong background in military training."

Under ATMIS sectorisation, Ugandan troops are in charge of Sector One which covers Banadir including the capital Mogadishu and the Lower Shabelle regions in Somalia.

The outgoing battalion which has completed its one-year tour of duty in Somalia under the command of Col. Benard Kashemeza, will be replaced by Battle Group 38 commanded by Col. Christopher Berochan.

ATMIS Sector One Commander Brig. Gen. Peter Omola applauded the troops for successfully conducting joint military offensives with the Somali National Army (SNA) against the Al-Shabaab. The troops also detected and detonated several IEDs to secure main supply routes to Baraawe and participated in several Civil Military co-operation activities.

"I want in a special way to thank Battle Group 35 for the sacrifices and dedication towards the restoration of peace in Somalia," said Brig. Gen. Omola.

Battle group 35 was responsible for securing Baraawe and Beled Amiin sub-sectors with troops operating from Embresso, Runway, Sea Port, Knoll, Kismayu road, Beled Amiin, Golweyn and Buulo Mareer Forward Operating Bases.



ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Logistics and Support Maj. Gen. Peter Kimani Muteti, salutes before inspecting a guard of honour mounted by Ugandan troops during a medal award ceremony in Mogadishu on 16 April 2023.

Brig. Kamoiro takes over as Commander of ATMIS Kenya troops

On 24 February, Brig. William Kamoiro officially took over from Brig. Jattani Gula as commander of the Kenya Defence Forces contingent serving with the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).



The outgoing Commander of the Kenyan Contingent, Brig. Jattani Gula (right), hands over the African Union flag to the incoming commander, Brig. William Kamoiro (left), during the command handover and takeover ceremony at the ATMIS Sector Two Headquarters in Dhobley on 24 February 2023.

The Command handover ceremony took place at the ATMIS Sector II Headquarters in Dhobley town, which is manned by Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF).

Brig. Gula supervised the eleventh ATMIS KDF contingent during his one-year tour of duty in Somalia, while Brig. Kamoiro will command the twelfth ATMIS KDF contingent troops.

The outgoing commander commended his officers for their cooperation and commitment which enabled the contingent to carry out joint operations consistently and successfully with the Somali National Army (SNA) against Al-Shabaab militants.

“Throughout our stay in Somalia, we have implemented the ATMIS mandate by protecting the civilian population in major areas like Dhobley, mentoring Somali security forces and working with Somali security forces to conduct targeted operations to degrade the Al-Shabaab.” said Brig. Gula.

He noted that under his command, the Kenya ATMIS contingent had initiated several Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) projects to support several communities.

“We have done our best to win the hearts and minds of the population by providing medical assistance and supporting education. The Bilis Qoqani Primary School was a beneficiary,” added Brig. Gula.

The incoming contingent commander, Brig. Kamoiro said he will prioritise the capacity building of the Somali security forces, the phased handover of security responsibilities to Somali security forces and support peace and reconciliation efforts in accordance with ATMIS mandate. “As a commander, my tasks include degrading Al-Shabaab through targeted operations across the sector by coordinating with Somali security forces,” said Brig. Kamoiro. He added that “I will support the Somali security forces to secure main supply routes and areas, and mentor the Somali National Army to be able to carry out security tasks”.

Ethiopian Peacekeepers in Somalia mark 127th victory anniversary



On 3 March, Ethiopian peacekeepers serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), celebrated the 127th victory anniversary of the battle of Adwa, during which Ethiopia was commended for triggering the quest for independence by African countries and setting the stage for Pan-Africanism.

In March 1896, at the battle of Adwa, the Ethiopian army emerged victorious after successfully resisting an onslaught by the Italian army.

ATMIS Ethiopia forces celebrated with events in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Beletweyne and Kismayo where they are engaged in combat operations against the Al-Shabaab.

Somalia's Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs and International

Cooperation, Abshir Omar Jama, who presided over the celebrations in Mogadishu, saluted the people of Ethiopia for their bravery and contribution to the freedom movement on the continent.

"This wonderful and historic victory of Adwa symbolizes the resilience, bravery, unity and dedication of Ethiopia to Africa as a continent," said the Minister at the event attended by senior officials from the Federal Government of Somalia, ATMIS and accredited diplomats.

"At the time of the hostility and conflict, most of African countries were facing the same fate, however, there did not have the capability, unity, and preparedness of our Ethiopian brothers. That victory was perceived as a victory for all," He explained.

He hailed the cordial relations between Somalia and Ethiopia.

The Charge' d Affairs at the Ethiopian Embassy in Somalia, Ketema Haile, traced the history of the battle of Adwa and its significance to the liberation struggle on the African continent.

"In the decades that followed, the black community drew lessons and inspiration from this historic victory in the struggle against colonialism, racism, and apartheid.

Adwa is considered as a turning point in modern African history. This came true when several African countries gained their independence in the early 1960's," said Haile.

The ATMIS military Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Kindu Gezu, highlighted the lessons to be drawn from the battle of Adwa, regarding unity, commitment, sacrifice and the capacity of Africans to find solutions to their own problems.



Outgoing ATMIS Djiboutian troops commended for fostering peace in Somalia

On 9 February, an outgoing contingent of Djiboutian troops serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) was commended for advancing peace and stability in south-central Somalia.

The battalion, which was based at the Jalalaqsi Forward Operating Base (FoB), had been instrumental in the ongoing offensive against Al-Shabaab in Hiiraan region and had forged a strong working relationship with counterparts in the Somali National Army (SNA).

Speaking during the farewell ceremony in Beletweyne, ATMIS Sector 4 Commander Col. Hassan Djama Farah praised the troops for advancing the mission's objectives of maintaining peace and stability in their area of operation.

"The departing troops have achieved enormous outcomes during their stay; they have carried out their duties with competence and responsibility; they have managed to maintain peace in Jalalaqsi town and its nearby areas," said Col. Farah. "They have helped the residents during times of severe drought. Alongside the Somali National Army (SNA), they participated in recent operations to combat the terrorist group Al-Shabaab."

Djiboutian peacekeepers are based in sector 4 in the Hiiraan

region of Hirshabelle State. Working closely with their Ethiopian counterparts, the Djiboutian troops have been active in supporting the SNA in its ongoing offensive against the Al-Shabaab in south and central Somalia.

The military operations have in the recent past registered significant gains in uprooting Al-Shabaab and recovering significant territories which were previously outside government control.



ATMIS Sector Four Commander Colonel Hassan Djama Farah, after the arrival of the 10th Battalion of the Djiboutian Contingent in Jalalaqsi on 9 February 2023.



Troops from the 10th Battalion of the Djiboutian Contingent on parade after arriving in Jalalaqsi on 9 February 2023.



Sector Four Commander Colonel Hassan Djama Farah welcomes troops from the 10th Battalion of the Djiboutian Contingent on 9 February 2023.



Soldiers from the 8th Battalion of the Djiboutian Contingent board a plane for Djibouti at the end of their tour of duty in Somalia on 9 February 2023.

Senior ATMIS officials visit Bal'ad FOB to assess needs

Last January, a high-level ATMIS delegation led by Acting Force Commander Brig. Gen. Peter Omola, visited Bal'ad Forward Operating Base (FOB) to assess the requirements to elevate the facility into a Battalion logistics base.

The FOB, located in the Hirshabelle State, currently serves as the logistics base for the Burundi contingent who exited and handed over Maslah FOB to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) on 21 January, 2023. When fully completed, the Bal'ad FOB will serve both ATMIS Burundi forces and the Somali National Army (SNA) in the Hirshabelle State.

The delegation which was received by the ATMIS Sector 5 Commander, Brig. Gen. Jean Claude Niyiburana, held

discussions with community elders led by the Bal'ad District Commissioner, Kassim Ali Nur and the Ugas, Mohamed Hussein. "Our visit is to assess the next steps in terms of constructing defense positions in Bal'ad and to engage with local leaders and the civilian population to identify areas of mutual cooperation," said the ATMIS Acting Force Commander.

Brig. Gen. Omola thanked the Burundian forces stationed in Bal'ad for strengthening the security of the FOB since their relocation from Maslah on 15 January, 2023. He assured the soldiers that the conditions of the FOB would be improved to enable them to operate effectively.

The Bal'ad District Commissioner (DC), Kassim Ali Nur, welcomed the team and spoke about several issues including the ongoing fight against Al-Shabaab militants.

"We discussed how we can coordinate on security, how the forces and the local administration can work together, how to improve relations between the public and the security forces in the fight against terrorists and how to fast-track the ongoing expansion of the base," said the District Commissioner.

The Ugas for Bal'ad, Mohamed Hussein, thanked ATMIS for choosing the district as one of its key logistical hubs and pledged their commitment to work closely with the forces to improve security in the region.

Located approximately 39 km north of Mogadishu along the main Mogadishu-Jowhar Road, Bal'ad is a strategic town noted for agriculture, livestock, and marine resources



Acting ATMIS Force Commander Brig. Gen. Peter Omola (middle), and the ATMIS Military Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Kindu Gezu (left), upon arrival at the Bal'ad Forward Operating Base (FOB) on 25 January 2023.



Senior military officers from ATMIS and local community leaders hold talks at the Bal'ad Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Hirshabelle State on 25 January 2023.

SRCC commends ATMIS troops on Kismayo visit

On 2 January, during a working visit to Jubaland the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, commended ATMIS troops and affirmed the Mission's commitment to ensure a safe and stable Somalia.

The SRCC made the remarks during a two-day working visit to the southern port city of Kismayo, to assess the mission's performance and evaluate the welfare of the peacekeeping troops.

Kismayo which falls under Sector 6 area of responsibility, is manned by a multi-national force of ATMIS troops from the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) and Ethiopia National Defence Forces (ENDF).

During the visit, the SRCC held a number of engagements with top ATMIS military commanders, led by the contingent commander, Brig. Gen. Lukas Kutto, and Jubaland's Second Vice President, Abdulkadir Haji Mohamud and

other top state level officials, where he was briefed on the security and political situation in the region.

"I had very productive discussions with the Vice President and members of the executive, I 'am satisfied that we are heading in the same direction with the same commitment- that is the fight against Al-Shabaab" said Ambassador Souef.

The SRCC reiterated ATMIS's continued support and that of other partners, especially in securing the region, to ensure peace and stability, and thereby enhance social, economic and political activity.

"This will be done not only by the leadership of Jubaland but with the Federal Government of Somalia as well as ATMIS. We want to assure that ATMIS will provide the necessary support as mandated by the UN Security Council Resolution 2628 and 2670 of last year."

In his meeting with top ATMIS military commanders, the SRCC was also briefed on a wide range of issues, including the welfare of the troops and efforts to degrade the Al-Shabaab.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Jubaland's Vice President, Abdulkadir Haji Mohamud reaffirmed the readiness of his administration to conduct military offensives against the Al -Shabaab with the support of ATMIS.

"We agreed to speed up the fight against the terror group Al-Shabaab and ATMIS has taken a strong position on this issue. We are very happy with this and our meeting went on well" the Vice President said.

Kismayo was liberated from the Al-Shabaab in 2012 in a joint operation by the Somali National Army supported by African Union troops and has since enjoyed relative peace and stability.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, is introduced to senior military officers during a visit to ATMIS Sector Six Headquarters in Kismayo, Jubaland State, on 2 January 2023.



The SRCC and Head of ATMIS, Amb. Mohamed El-Amine Souef, assisted by the ATMIS Sector Six Commander, Brig. Gen. Lukas Kutto, plants a tree during a visit to the Sector Six Headquarters in Kismayo on 2 January 2023.

ATMIS KDF troops celebrate 60th Madaraka Day

On 1 June, Kenyan troops serving with the African Union peace mission in Somalia joined their countrymen to celebrate 60 years of independence from colonial rule.

“It is on this day that the founding fathers of our nation seized power from the former British colonial government and formed the first indigenous government of Kenya,” said Brig. Gen. Lukas Kutto, Commander of Sector 6, the base for the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) contingent in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Presiding over the ‘Madaraka Day’ celebrations, Brig. Gen. Kutto said the event was important in promoting unity and solidarity

among Kenyans and fellow Africans.

On 1 June 1963, Kenya gained its right to internal self-government giving it autonomy from years of colonial rule before attaining full independence in December of the same year.

“Madaraka day is significant in Kenya’s history,” he declared. “We celebrate this day to remind the future generations about our struggle to attain internal self-rule.”

Brig. Gen. Kuto praised the KDF soldiers for their dedication to fulfilling the ATMIS mandate, noting their sacrifices and hard work had contributed significantly to the progress made in restoring peace, security and stability in Somalia.

“We continue to mentor the Somali Security Forces (SSF), to prepare them to take over security responsibilities of Somalia. We have also trained the Somali National Army (SNA) and held numerous joint operations to build their capacity to secure the country,” he added.

Alongside Burundi, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Uganda, Kenya is among five countries that contribute troops to the ATMIS.

Under ATMIS deployment, Kenyan troops are based in Sector Two which is headquartered in Dhobley town along the Kenya-Somalia border and Sector 6 in the southern port city of Kismayo which they jointly secure with Ethiopian troops.



Senior ATMIS officials and invited guests stand to the Kenyan national anthem during an event organised by Kenyan troops to mark the 60th Madaraka Day at the Sector Six Headquarters in Kismayo on 1 June 2023.



Kenyan troops serving with ATMIS chat during an event to mark the 60th Madaraka day at the Sector Six Headquarters in Kismayo on 1 June 2023.

ATMIS Police Commissioner visits Beletweyne

On 30 March, the ATMIS Police Commissioner, Hillary Sao Kanu, visited Beletweyne to assess the working conditions of police officers in Hirshabelle State.

“My visit to Beletweyne is part of my duty as a Police Commissioner to see where my police officers are working, understand the challenges they go through, and most importantly, see how they collaborate with the Somali Police Force in Beletweyne,” said the Police Commissioner.

Commissioner of Police (CP) Kanu who assumed office early this month has so far visited the administrative capitals of

Kismayo, Baidoa and Jowhar as part of her familiarization tour of the ATMIS sectors.

“I thought it fitting that I visit Beletweyne with some of the ATMIS Police senior officers to interact with our officers on the ground and better understand their issues,” CP Kanu said.

The Police Commissioner held discussions with ATMIS senior police and military officers where

matters security was discussed. Since her arrival, CP Kanu has been pushing for more capacity-building and operational support to the Somali Police Force.

During a courtesy call on the Somali Police Commissioner Brigadier General Sulub Ahmed Firin, Tuesday, CP Kanu promised continued ATMIS Police support to the Somali Police Force through training and mentoring.



ATMIS Police Team Leader Sector Four DSP. Doris Oppong Asante, briefs the new ATMIS Police Commissioner, (CP) Hillary Sao Kanu, during a familiarization visit to Beletweyne on 29 March 2023.



The new ATMIS Police Commissioner, (CP) Hillary Sao Kanu, lands at Ugaas Khalifa International Airport for a familiarization visit to Sector Four in Beletweyne on 29 March 2023.



The new ATMIS Police Commissioner, (CP) Hillary Sao Kanu, and senior ATMIS police officers pose for a group photo during a familiarization visit to Sector Four in Beletweyne on 29 March 2023.

Police Commissioner visits Jazeera Basecamp



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu, with senior ATIS police and military personnel during a visit to the Jazeera basecamp in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu, speaks during a visit to the Jazeera basecamp in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu, listens to a brief by the Commander of the Uganda Formed Police Unit, Superintendent of Police (SP) Juventine Euku (extreme left), during a visit to the Jazeera basecamp in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu, is received by senior ATIS police and military officers during a visit to the Jazeera basecamp in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu (right), taken on a guided tour by the Contingent Commander of the Nigeria Formed Police Unit, Superintendent of Police (SP) Ibrahim Mohamed, in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.



ATIS Police Commissioner CP Hillary Sao Kanu, briefed by the Contingent Commander of the Uganda Formed Police Unit, Superintendent of Police (SP) Juventine Euku, during a visit to the Jazeera basecamp in Mogadishu on 23 March 2023.

Sierra Leone Peacekeepers celebrate 62 years of Independence

In April, as Sierra Leone marked 62 years of independence, ATMIS praised the country for its continued contributions to the ongoing peace efforts in Somalia and the continent. Sierra Leone attained independence from Britain on 27 April 1961.

Representing the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, at the event to celebrate the day, the Deputy Force Commander in charge of Operations and Planning, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka, said ATMIS traced Sierra Leone's contribution to peace and security efforts in Somalia, to the years of

AMISOM, the precursor to ATMIS, where it contributed both soldiers and police officers.

"Sierra Leone peacekeepers made tremendous contributions to AMISOM and under ATMIS, they have continued to show support to Africa peace and freedom initiatives, which could serve as a blueprint for other African countries," Maj. Gen. Ngendabanka noted.

The ATMIS Police Commissioner, CP Hillary Sao Kanu, who is from Sierra Leone, urged her countrymen to strive towards national unity, noting the rich culture and resilient people, who over the years had overcome

numerous challenges to put the country on the path to prosperity. She was grateful for the mutual and cordial relations between Sierra Leone and the African Union.

"I salute all the Sierra Leoneans (civilian, military and police) in ATMIS, the UN Missions, and other civilians here in Somalia. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to the peace process in Somalia," said CP Kanu.

Sierra Leone is a Police Contributing Country (PCCs) to ATMIS. It contributes military Staff Officers, a contingent of a Formed Police Unit and Individual Police Officers.



Senior ATMIS officials stand in respect of the national anthem during celebrations to mark Sierra Leone's 62nd independence anniversary in Mogadishu on 27 April 2023.

Ghana Peacekeepers in Somalia mark 66th Independence Anniversary

On 6 March, ATMIS marked Ghana's 66th independence anniversary by commending the country for its contribution to global and continental peace efforts.

Previously known as the Gold Coast, Ghana gained independence from Britain on 6 March 1957, becoming the first sub-Saharan African country to break away from colonial rule.

Ghanaians in Somalia marked the day with an event in Mogadishu, attended by Ghanaian nationals working with ATMIS, the United Nations and other agencies.

The Officer in Charge, ATMIS, Mathias Ngarambe, who represented the SRCC and Head of ATMIS, cited Ghana's long-standing commitment and immense contribution to global peacekeeping, which he noted, is in line with the aspirations and ideals of their first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

"Your hard work and dedication to the work of the African Union and ATMIS and your contribution to the peace process in Somalia will always be appreciated. In this regard, allow me to convey my special thanks to the government and the people of Ghana for allowing your countrymen and women to serve in this mission," Ngarambe said.

Mr. Ngarambe noted that the call for African unity, championed by Dr. Nkrumah, and the spirit of Pan-Africanism, led the African Union to intervene in Somalia in 2007 as part of efforts to ensure regional and continental peace. "Alongside our partners, we remain resolute in our determination to support Somalia," he added.

In Somalia, Ghana has deployed both Police and Military personnel under ATMIS, while several Ghanaians work in the UN Mission. Presently, Ghana has about 200 police officers including a Formed Police Unit serving in ATMIS.

The ATMIS Police Commissioner, Commissioner of Police (CP), Hillary Sao Kanu, paid glowing tribute to Ghana Police officers serving in Somalia for their contributions in capacity building, co-location and securing vital installations together with personnel from other Police Contributing Countries (PCCs).

"You are diligently providing operational support to the ATMIS Police component by securing key installations and to the Somali Police Force, with whom you conduct joint patrols to protect civilians," said the ATMIS Police Commissioner.

Present at the celebrations were the ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in Charge of Operations and Plans, Maj. Gen. Marius Ngendabanka; the ATMIS Deputy Force Commander in charge of Support and Logistics, Maj. Gen. Peter Kimani Muteti; and the Ghana Police contingent commander, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Peter Lennox Aidoo.



The Officer-in-Charge of ATMIS, Mathias Ngarambe (third from right), the UN Deputy Special Representative for Somalia and Officer-in-Charge of UNSOM, Anita Kiki Gbeho (middle), and senior ATMIS officials cut a cake during Ghana's 66th independence anniversary celebrations in Mogadishu on 6 March 2023.

Uganda deploys new batch of police officers to Somalia

On 1 March, Uganda deployed a new contingent of police personnel to serve with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The 144 officers were received in Mogadishu by senior ATMIS police officers. They joined an advance team of 16 other officers who had arrived earlier in the mission.

The total of 160 personnel who are serving under the ATMIS Police Component's Formed Police Unit (FPU), work alongside other contingents and Individual Police Officers (IPOs) to provide operational support and capacity building to their counterparts in the Somali Police Force (SPF).

The eleventh contingent to be deployed to Somalia by the Uganda Police in support of the ongoing African Union peace support operations, replaced the tenth contingent, after concluding their tour of duty in Somalia.

The deputy commander of the newly deployed FPU contingent, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Julian Asaasira, said the personnel are well prepared to support their counterparts from the Somali Police Force and implement the mission's mandate.

"We are well-trained. We've undergone mandatory pre-deployment training for six months, during which we have acquired adequate skills to enable us execute our duties effectively," said ASP Asaasira.

Under the ATMIS Police mandate, the FPUs provide operational support including protection of key government installations, providing escort duties for Individual Police Officers, VIP protection to visiting delegates and conducting joint patrols. The IPOs are tasked with providing specialised training, advising and mentoring the Somali Police Force.

Uganda is one of the ATMIS Police Contributing Countries (PCCs), together with Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Zambia.



Newly deployed Ugandan Formed Police Unit (FPU) personnel serving with the ATMIS disembarking from an aircraft upon arrival at Aden Abdulle International Airport in Mogadishu on 1 March 2023

ATMIS conducts forensic fingerprint training for the Somali Police Force

In January, a team of detectives from the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) of the Somali Police Force completed a three-day intensive training on crime-related evidence gathering.

Organized by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the 11 detectives who contribute to gathering and analyzing physical evidence critical in identifying and arresting criminal suspects were taken through forensic fingerprint evidence as part of gathering evidence and identifying suspects.

ATMIS Police Logistics Advisor, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Timothy Kashinakazhi, who spoke at the closing ceremony, said the training was to improve the capacity of the officers on

handling complex criminal cases that require the use of modern scientific methods to unravel.

“ATMIS and the SPF have agreed on a number of capacity building trainings that will help build on knowledge and expertise. We are all committed to improving policing standards in Somalia,” said SSP Kashinakazhi. “

The Commander of the CID Forensic Department, Maj. Mohamed Mohamud Ahmed, appreciated ATMIS for the support, noting that the training would help equip the detectives with the requisite knowledge and skills to enable them thoroughly and professionally investigate crimes.

“If one does not know how to approach a crime scene, to collect, process and classify

fingerprints found at the scene, it would be difficult to prosecute and convict a suspect,” said Maj. Ahmed, affirming that the CID is a core unit of the police force, and the training was important to managing suspects and securing convictions in courts.

ATMIS Police CID Advisor, Inspector of Police (IP) Esther Ahmadu, said the training was in response to a request by the SPF CID department, following a needs assessment conducted by the Federal Government of Somalia.

The participants were introduced to the history and external structure of fingerprints, types and patterns of fingerprints and the use and characteristics of fingerprints. The investigators were also taught how to file and classify fingerprints.



ATMIS police demonstrate how to lift fingerprints at a practical session during a three-day Basic Fingerprint Course for officers of the Somali Police Force, in Mogadishu on 10 January 2023.

Over 100 Somali police officers graduate in Jubaland State

On 4 February, more than 100 Somali police recruits completed a three-month intensive training organized by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in Jubaland's port city of Kismayo.

Speaking during the graduation ceremony, Jubaland President Ahmed Mohamed Islam Madobe, said the new officers will be deployed in areas liberated from Al-Shabaab terrorists in Jubaland State to help maintain peace and security.

"We are currently in a state of conflict, and at these times, it is very important to have a strong police force which can take over the security in areas liberated by the military, maintain order, and bring services closer to the community," President Madobe told the new officers.

The Jubaland President was referring to the ongoing Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)-led

offensive in the south and central Somalia which has regained swathes of land from Al Shabab control.

President Madobe lauded ATMIS for its continued support and urged partners to help equip the officers to enable them perform their duties effectively.

"We thank the ATMIS Police, Jubaland officials, and everyone who helped facilitate this high-level training. We request ATMIS and other partners to support the new recruits with the necessary equipment to function properly," he added.

Jubaland State's ATMIS Police Coordinating Officer, Superintendent of Police (SP) Okpara Emmanuel Ejike, said the recruitment process and the training imparted were in line with international policing standards.

"The recruits underwent the basic training in policing, gender, Somali penal code, arrest, stop and search, traffic, investigation,

human rights, and all other issues required in international policing," said SP Ejike.

The ATMIS officer noted that the number of female recruits had increased from nine in the previous batch to 20 and hoped that more would enroll in the next recruitment exercise.

Ismail Mohamed Kheer, one of the new graduates, expressed his eagerness to serve and contribute to the peace and development of Somalia.

"I am pleased to have completed the three-month training at the Police Academy. I hope to use the knowledge I have gained to help and protect my community," Officer Kheer said.

The training is supported by ATMIS and other development partners under the Joint Police Programme and aims to strengthen Somalia's policing capacity in both urban and rural areas.



Newly trained women Somali Police Officers (SPF) in Jubaland State show off skills acquired during training at their passout ceremony in Kismayo on 4 February 2023.

