Committee: African Union

Issue: The rise of Al-Shabaab

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Position: President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Melenia Stasinopoulou and I will be serving as the President of the African Union during the 1st ACG Model United Nations Conference. This will be my 12th conference up to now and my third time serving as a Student Officer.

As a Student Officer, I will be responsible for the Committee. I will be there to ensure that the right procedures are followed and that the lobbying and debating process do not come to a standstill. I will maintain the order and address any problems should they arise. My responsibility is to know the issues of our Committee in depth, to be able to provide you with a thorough Study Guide prior to the conference and to be able to assist during lobbying and debating.

The issue of the rise of Al-Shabaab is a vast and complex one. It entails serious issues such as political instability, violence, poverty and discrimination among others. I hope that this Study Guide will be a valuable first introduction to the topic. Yet, in any case, you should not solely rely on it. I strongly recommend that you carry out your own research as there is much to explore and virtually every state will have their own opinion on the topic.

I hope that this experience will prove to be a rewarding and enlightening one for you and I am looking forward to meeting you in the conference. My best wishes for a fruitful and challenging debate.
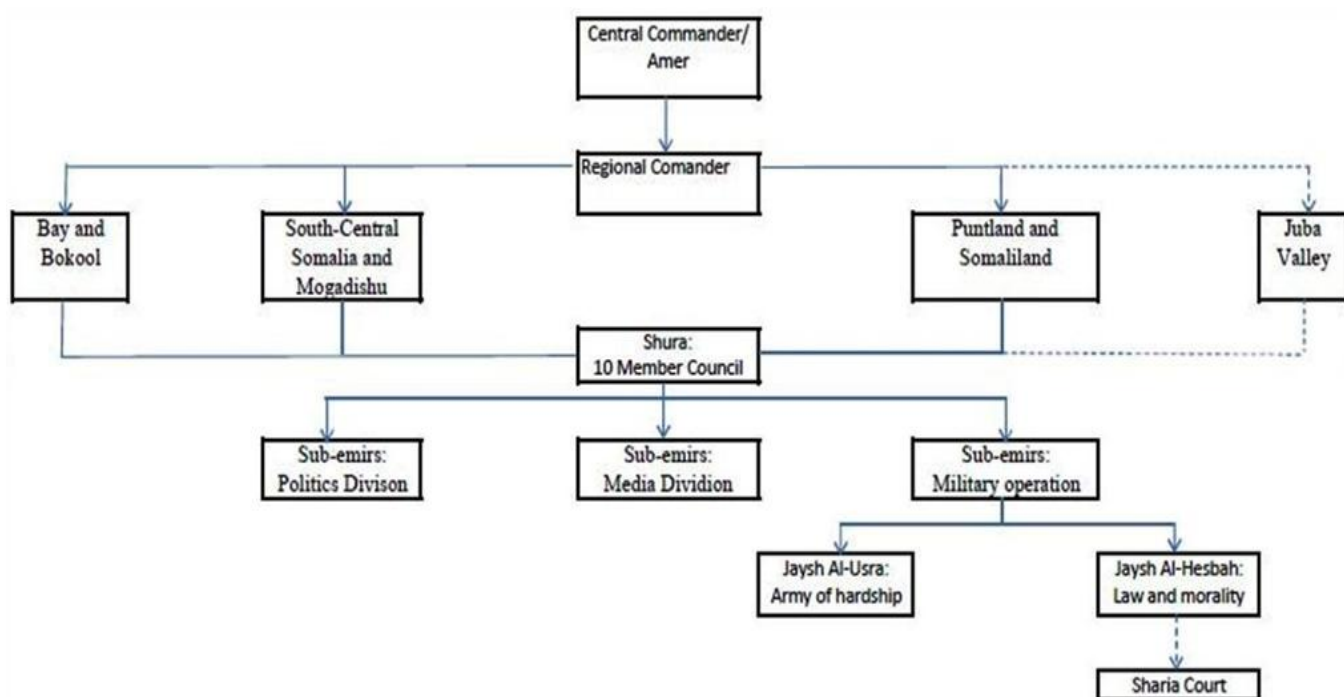
Feel free to contact me (smelenia2001@gmail.com) for any questions you might come up with, whether they concern the topic or the rules.

Kindest regards,

Melenia Stasinopoulou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Al–Shabaab was the militant wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) that conquered most of southern Somalia in the end of 2006. Regardless of the group's overthrow by Somali and Ethiopian forces in 2007, Al–Shabaab, which is a clan–based rebel and terrorist group has carried on its violent dissent in Southern and Central Somalia. This group has established there permanently and maintained control over strategic locations in those areas by enlisting regional sub–clans and their militias, using convict warfare against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers and non-governmental aid organizations. As evidenced by the consisted levels of discord among leadership, Al – Shabaab is not consolidated or hulking in its agenda or aims. In other words, due to the fact that the leaders of Al - Shabaab have several disputes between them, the maintenance and follow up of the day to day task they have in their agenda is not carried out. Its rank-and-file [1]members derive from contrasting clans and the group is affected by clan politics, internal divisions and shifting alliances. [2]The majority of the group's fighters are especially interested in the devoted battle against the TFG and not supportive of global jihad. Al–Shabaab's senior leaders continue to be connected with Al- Qaeda. Al - Shabaab continues its attacks as it describes itself as waging jihad against "enemies of Islam", and is engaged in combat against the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

 # 1: Al - Shabaab's hierarchy structure

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[1] Rank-and-file: ordinary members, as opposed to leaders
[2] "Al - Shabaab". National Counterterrorism Center.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Al - Shabaab

Al-Shabaab, (Somali: "the Youth") is a Somali-based Islamist militant group with links to Al-Qaeda. Beginning in 2006, the group waged an insurgency against Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). [3]

Al - Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is a terrorist group that was founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. It began as a logistical network to support Muslims in Afghanistan fighting against what was then the Soviet Union during the Afghan War.[4]

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

The African Union Mission in Somalia is an active, regional peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with the approval of United Nations' Security Council.

Islamic Courts Union

The Islamic Courts Union is a group of Sharia courts that united to form an opposing authority to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, with Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as their chief. They are also known as Joint Islamic Courts, Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SICC) or the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (SCIC). Moreover, western media cite the group as Somali Islamists. Lastly, in 2006 it cooperated several times with Al – Shabaab.

Wahhabi

A member of a strictly orthodox Sunni Muslim sect founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It advocates a return to the early Islam of the Koran and Sunna, rejecting later innovations; the sect is still the predominant religious force in Saudi Arabia.[5]

Sufi

A muslim ascetic and mystic, which left the mundane and advocated that human destiny depends on the inscrutable will of God. In these communities initially it prevailed the ascetic element of mysticism, while over time asceticism was seen as a preliminary step to achieve the spiritual life.

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[3] "Al - Shabaab". Encyclopaedia Britannica.2017.
[4] "Al-Qaeda". Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2017.
[5] "Wahhabi". Oxford English Dictionary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Al–Shabaab is an Islamist Group based in Somalia that links to Al–Qaeda. Its first act was in 2006 when the group carried on a rebellion against Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Al–Shabaab started as a militia connected with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) wanting to combat the anarchy and overcharging oppression in the area since

#2: Al-Shabaab militias

the collapse of Mohamed Siad Barre's government in 1991. Since 2004 the group has acted as an "armed wing" of the ICU, absorbing fighters from the demobilised Somali militant group Al–Itihaad, the Egyptian Islamist movement Al–Islamiyyah, as well as fighters from the Al–Qaeda network. Al–Shabaab, meaning 'the Youth", was led by Aden Hashi Farah Ayro, who was trained by Al–Qaeda in Afghanistan. On an ideological ground, Al–Shabaab turned out to espouse a puritan version of Islam (Wahhabi) in contrast to the majority of Somalis, which are Sufi–influenced.

In the beginning of 2006 Al–Shabaab fighters played an outstanding role advocating the ICU in a combat against an alliance of Mogadishu (the capital of Somalia) warlords. This alliance was clandestinely[6] supported by the United States in an effort to avert the extent of militant Islamism. In June 2006 the ICU took control of Mogadishu and defeated the warlords. Moreover, the same month the ICU changed its name to Somali Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SSICC). This victory

made Al–Shabaab stronger and allowed the fighters to possess armory which belonged to the warlords. The TFG was threatened by the takeover in Mogadishu by the SSICC. Furthermore, this takeover threatened Kenya and the Somali city of Baydhabo, as well as the TFG's international supporters, especially the U.S., which expressed concern that the SSICC would provide a haven for Al–Qaeda. 2006 was an intense year, as international intervention came. Analytically, a U.S. backed Ethiopian force united with TFG troops to attack the SSICC, which was hastily defeated and dissolved.

 # 3: Map showing Somalia, Kenya and Uganda

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[6] Clandestinely: secretly

Al – Shabaab, however, stayed unblemished and started a campaign of bombings and attacks against the TFG and Ethiopian Forces in Somalia. Local people, journalists, international aid workers became targets for attacks, so did the African Union in Somalia (authorized by the Security Council in February 2007). Al–Shabaab's dissent slowed down when Ayro died in 2008 in a U.S. airstrike.

In October 2008 a power–sharing agreement was signed between the TFG and members of SSICC, supporting the inclusion of moderate Islamists inside the governmentAl–Shabaab opposed to any compromise with the TFG, even though it set a schedule for the retraction of Ethiopian troops from Somalia. In 2009, Al-Shabaab started banning behaviors that it considered un–Islamic and implementing punishments, such as beheading, stoning and amputations. Later, in July 2010, suicide bombers made the group's first big attack outside Somalia (approx. 75 people died), in Kampala, Uganda. The groups claimed the attack as a revenge for the troops Uganda gave to AMISOM.

In August 2011, the group abandoned Mogadishu as it was worn down by repeated clashes with AMISOM forces. When a thousand Kenyan soldiers invaded Southern Somalia in answer to several acts and kidnappings in Kenya from Al–Shabaab, the group had to fight on a second front. In October 2012, Al– Shabaab was driven out Kismaayo, the group's last urban bastion from an AMISOM offensive. In February of the same year, Al–Shabaab announced through video that it had made an alliance with the Al–Qaeda network.

The deadliest attack of the group after several years was on the 21st of September 2013, outside of Somalia. Militants from the group carried out a mass shooting in a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 65 people. The last event occurred on the 2nd of April 2015 on a university campus in Garissa, Kenya, where 140 people died and dozens were injured.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Somalia

Somalia is the country Al-Shabaab originates from. The group is Somalia's youth wing and with the ICU it has controlled Mogadishu in 2006. Furthermore, it has been noted that foreign jihadists go to Somalia to help the group, not only from neighboring countries but from the U.S. and Europe.

Kenya

Kenya is a very common target of the group, as it has been attacked many times. The latest event occurred on the January 2nd, 2017, when an ambassador for Al-

Shabaab, who has been fighting a rebellion in Somalia for over a decade now, announced that on Friday, January 27th 2017 some fighters of the group killed 57 Kenyans redistributing regional peacekeeping missions near the Kenyan border.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia has given a lot of troops to the AMISOM and it immediately became a target of Al-Shabaab. Most of the attacks happened between 2011 and 2016 where the group has said that it has killed over 250 Ethiopian soldiers during several raids at an African Union base in central Somalia.

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is an active, regional peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with the approval of United Nations' Security Council. As AMISOM is a multidimensional Peace Support Organisation, it has 13 goals, which all have one thing in common: the rout[7] of Al - Shabaab and the future political stability. (http://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/)

Islamic Courts Union (ICU)

Al - Shabaab is an outgrowth of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which then split into several smaller factions after its defeat in 2006 by Somalia's TFG and the TFG's Ethiopian military allies.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS[8]

Description of event	Description of event
June 2004	An alliance of eleven Sharia courts form the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) with Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as a leader.
October 2004	Somalia's internationally-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is banished in Nairobi with representatives from the country's largest clans.
June-July 2006	The Islamic Courts Union takes over Mogadishu after

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[7] rout: decisive defeat

[8] "Timeline: Al-Shabab violence." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera Media Network, 30 Aug. 2010. Web. Winter 2017.

"Timeline: Al-Shabab." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. Winter 2017.

	violent clashes with warlords. It becomes an alternative to the internationally recognised TFG.
December 2006 - January 2007	Troops from Ethiopia intervene against the ICU and in support of the TFG. ICU leaders flee but Al-Shabaab stays to fight and chaos returns to the capital Mogadishu.
6 March 2007	The first units of an African Union (AU) force begin arriving in Mogadishu, amid heavy fighting.
26 October 2008	The government and moderate fighters reach an agreement on a ceasefire and the progressive withdrawal of Ethiopian forces.
February 2008	The U.S. state department designates Al - Shabaab a Foreign Terrorist Organization.
January 2009	The last Ethiopian troops pull out of the country. Sharif Ahmed, the former leader of the ICU, is elected Somalia's new president by parliament.
18 April 2009	Parliament endorses a plan to introduce Islamic law, sharia, which was a key demand by anti-government groups for their co-operation with the government.
7 May 2009	The beginning of a major offensive by Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam aimed at overthrowing the president.
17 September 2009	A double suicide attack on the AU force in Mogadishu, claimed by al-Shabab, kills 21, including 17 African soldiers.
January 2010	More than 250 civilians are killed over the month in fighting between government forces and fighters in the centre of the country.
12 July 2010	Al-Shabab claims responsibility for bombings in the Ugandan capital Kampala that killed 76 people, after the movement warned that Uganda would face vengeance for contributing to the AU force.
25 -27 July 2010	African countries pledge 4,000 extra troops to the African Union's force, which previously had about

	6,000 troops from Uganda and Burundi.
24 August 2010	Two Al-Shabaab fighters disguised as government soldiers go on a mass shooting in a Mogadishu hotel, killing at least 35 people, including eight parliamentarians, before committing a suicide bombing.
October 2011	Kenya invaded southern Somalia in Operation Linda Nchi.
February 2012	Ayman Al - Zawahiri formally announces the merger of Al - Shabaab and Al - Qaeda.
17 January 2013	U.S. formally recognizes the government of Somalia after more than 20 years of hiatus.
21-24 September 2013	In a multi-day raid at a Nairobi mall, Al - Shabaab militants kill dozens in the deadliest terrorist attack in Kenya in 15 years.
2 April 2015	Attack in Kenya where 140 people died. (One of the deadliest attacks after years).
27 January 2017	Dozens killed in Al - Shabaab attacks on Kenyan troops.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

30 September 2011 S/RES/2010

"Security Council extends mandate of African Union Mission in Somalia until 31 October 2012"

7 November 2012 S/RES/2073

Decides the authorization of the Member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment until 7 March 2013 of the AMISOM.

18 November 2013 S/RES/2125

Tightens anti-piracy measures and agrees to agrees in the creation of specialized courts in Somalia.

24 October 2014 S/RES/2182

Extends mandate of AMISOM for one year and it amends sanctions regime.

7 July 2016 S/RES/2297

This is an unanimously adopting resolution that extends the mandate of AMISOM.

Report of the Secretary General S/2013/623

The report was endured compatible to Security Council resolution 2077 (2012) and adds an update on extensive developments on attainable ways to accelerate international efforts to combat the issue of piracy and armed robbery at sea and linked hostage - taking off the coast of Somalia. The evaluation and observations in this report are based on information supplied by Member States and regional organizations.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

As far as the United Nations are concerned, there have been a lot of resolutions adopted from the Security Council that have to do with Somalia and more specifically with Al-Shabaab and piracy. (S/RES/1801, S/RES/1831, S/RES/1863, S/RES/1910, S/RES/1964, S/RES/2072, S/RES/2073, S/RES/2093). With these resolutions, the Security Council affirmed the African Union Mission in Somalia, which has made a great effort on reclaiming ground and limiting Al-Shabaab's power in the region. However, since many regional countries give troops to AMISOM they have become targets of the group and some of them face attacks. These Security Council resolutions have to do mainly with Al-Shabaab and piracy as aforementioned. Even though they provide solutions, they could be characterized as utopian, as they have not been successfully implemented. Thus, it is a matter of great importance for delegates to read these resolutions and think beyond them.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Despite all these efforts, Al-Shabaab still has a lot of power and is inflicting damage and destruction with its attacks. There are several measures to be taken in order for the countries involved to embark on a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), that will help them to combat the group more effectively:

Political Stability

As previously stated, there is severe political instability in Somalia. Different militias are attempting to seize power. As a result, measures should be established in

order to ensure a new democratic transition and a stable government. Democratization of the state is essential. All Somalis should have the right for access to power and the right to exercise their power - to participate in the process of reconstructing their country. That should be achieved by all means, preferably without resorting to violence.

Economic Development

Economic development is inextricably linked with a ceasefire and a stable government. Measures concerning economic development should target the corruption of the economy, in order to ensure that Somalia's economy (natural resources, livestock, remittance/money transfers, telecommunications) will be safe from Al - Shabaab. In addition, after the tension is ceased, Somalia should be reintegrated into the global marketplace, in order for imports and exports to take place and for people to return to the country.

Meeting Basic Humanitarian Needs

Concerning the humanitarian aspect of the situation, international assistance should be given to Somalia. Human rights should be reserved, standard living conditions as well, violence must end (in order for people to return to the country as many live the country). Moreover, more humanitarian missions can be proposed.

Rebuilding of infrastructure

The group's attacks are destroying the infrastructure of Somalia and other countries as well. Hospitals, schools, public transportation hubs, military bases, along with large residential areas have been destroyed. After the countries begin the reconstruction programme, a large part of it should be targeted towards rebuilding the ruins the attacks have left behind.

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