

Security Council extends support for African Union force in Somalia

The Security Council on Tuesday gave its backing to the African Union force in Somalia, AMISOM, extending its deployment until at least the end of July.

In the resolution, unanimously adopted, the Council also recalled its earlier decision to authorize the AU to reduce the Mission's level of uniformed personnel to 20,626 by 30 October this year from 22,126 now; but to include a minimum of 1,040 AMISOM police personnel, including five specialist Formed Police Units.

It also requested that the UN Secretary-General continue to provide logistical support for AMISOM, its 70 civilian personnel; the 10,900-strong Somalia National Army jointly operating with AMISOM, and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).

The Council resolution adopted at the end of August last year, requested the AU and the UN to conduct a joint assessment of AMISOM's operations – but this assessment has been delayed, leading to Tuesday's decision to extend the deployment of AMISOM for just over two months, in order to assess the merits of a longer extension.

Briefing the Council, Michael Keating, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, said that AMISOM continues to play [an indispensable role](#), "at great human cost", in protecting population centres, main supply routes and Somalia's overall political progress.

"Suffice to say that successful security transition will require not just deep reform of the Somalia security forces but also, as the AU Commission Chairperson and UN Secretary-General's Envoys noted, transformation of AMISOM," he said.

Such transformation would entail more flexible joint operations and combat mentoring; greater emphasis on policing; adequate enablers and force multipliers, together with stronger accountability.

More flexible operational support by the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) will also be needed, along with predictable financing.

"The AU-UN joint review is likely to underscore that the foremost requirement for success is the need for unity of purpose among Somali actors, as well as between the Somalis, the AU, the troop-contributing countries, and principal security partners," he said.