



## St Catherine's British School Model United Nations | 2026

**Forum:** United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

**Topic:** Addressing Transnational Armed Militias destabilizing the Horn of Africa

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**Position:** Deputy President

### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Arina Ostapenko, I am an IB1 student at St Catherine's British School of Athens, and it is my absolute pleasure to be serving as the Deputy President of the Security Council at this year's St Catherine's MUN. My experience in MUN over the last two and a half years has been filled with new knowledge gained, new friendships made, and new memories created. I hope that this conference will evoke likewise experiences for all of you, and that many new lifelong connections and bonds will be made.

During this year's conference I will be your expert on the fascinating topic of "Addressing Transnational Armed Militias destabilizing the Horn of Africa". This study guide should be used to gain some general knowledge on this topic, and aid you in your own research and preparation for the conference, essentially providing you with the needed basis on this topic.

For this reason, I also strongly urge all of you to conduct your own research and not rely solely on the information within the study guide, as the study guide is meant only for introduction purposes. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to email me at: [arinaa.ostapenkoo@gmail.com](mailto:arinaa.ostapenkoo@gmail.com), or alternatively the president of the Security Council at: [domikout@gmail.com](mailto:domikout@gmail.com)

### TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa encompasses 4 countries: Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia. However, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda are considered to be part of the



greater Horn of Africa.<sup>1</sup> It is the easternmost point of Africa, with its coastline going along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, additionally with access to the Gulf of Aden.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the horn of Africa is a region extremely rich in natural resources like critical minerals, gold, oil, gas, and livestock, with its strategic positioning between the Red sea and the Bab El Mandeb Strait making it a key transit point for commercial vessels coming from Asian, European, and African markets through the Suez Canal.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1: Map depicting the horn of Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Civil militia groups in Somalia emerged after the failure, collapse, and eventual disintegration of the Somali state since 1991. Additionally, around 1993 the Security council became involved with Somalia as they led peace talks between the parties relevant to the Somali civil war, which started in 1991, also establishing a peacekeeping mission which they later withdrew in 1995. Further in 2013, they established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) with the mandate of supporting the

<sup>1</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Horn of Africa | Countries, Map, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 Feb. 2019, [www.britannica.com/place/Horn-of-Africa](https://www.britannica.com/place/Horn-of-Africa).

<sup>2</sup> GISGeography. "Horn of Africa Map Collection." *GIS Geography*, 27 Dec. 2023, [gisgeography.com/horn-of-africa-map/](https://gisgeography.com/horn-of-africa-map/).

<sup>3</sup> "Ports, Power, and Proxy Wars: GCC Engagement in the Horn of Africa." *Grc*, 2025, [www.grc.net/single-commentary/265](https://www.grc.net/single-commentary/265).

<sup>4</sup> Misachi, John. "Horn of Africa." *WorldAtlas*, 4 June 2021, [www.worldatlas.com/geography/horn-of-africa.html](https://www.worldatlas.com/geography/horn-of-africa.html).



Somali government in the peace and reconciliation process and providing additional advice on peace and state building.<sup>5</sup> These militias operate under the pretense that they are providing security to their militiamen. However, in the process of doing so, they have created a potential security dilemma, as these clans arm themselves in preparation for attacks from rival combatants.<sup>6</sup>

Transnational militia activity in this area is leading to high levels of political violence and instability, and several civil conflicts.<sup>7</sup> For example, militia related violence in the Sahel region and Somalia has caused a large increase in the amounts of fatalities by 60% since 2023.<sup>8</sup>

It is vital to address these militias, as they are often influenced by their political views or ethnicity, often leading to the undermining of state sovereignty.

Militias thrive in the horn of Africa due to weak or absent governments<sup>9</sup>, porous borders<sup>10</sup>, and ethnic divisions. Additionally, things like climate change can be a contributing factor to fueling militia growth, seen when during Somalia's drought, lasting from 2020-2023, Al-Shabaab enforced harsh constraints on humanitarian aid to areas under its control, as well as purposefully destroying water infrastructures in those areas, increasing tension within the region.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Africa | Security Council." *Un.org*, 2020, [main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/repertoire/africa](https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/repertoire/africa).

<sup>6</sup> "Understanding Civil Militia Groups in Somalia." *ACCORD*, [www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-civil-militia-groups-somalia/](https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-civil-militia-groups-somalia/).

<sup>7</sup> "Conflict in the Horn of Africa." *ACLEDD*, 13 Dec. 2024, [acleddata.com/region/conflict-horn-africa](https://acleddata.com/region/conflict-horn-africa).

<sup>8</sup> the. "Africa Surpasses 150,000 Deaths Linked to Militant Islamist Groups in Past Decade – Africa Center." *Africa Center*, 30 July 2025, [africacenter.org/spotlight/en-2025-mig-10-year/](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/en-2025-mig-10-year/).

<sup>9</sup> "Rule by Militia - Boston Review." *Boston Review*, 26 June 2024, [www.bostonreview.net/articles/rule-by-militia/](https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/rule-by-militia/).

<sup>10</sup> "Criminality in Ethiopia - the Organized Crime Index | ENACT." *The Organized Crime Index*, 2023, [africa.ocindex.net/country/ethiopia](https://africa.ocindex.net/country/ethiopia).

<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group. "Fighting Climate Change in Somalia's Conflict Zones | Crisis Group." *Crisisgroup.org*, 9 Dec. 2024, [www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/316-fighting-climate-change-somalias-conflict-zones](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/316-fighting-climate-change-somalias-conflict-zones).



Furthermore, Militias in the horn of Africa are linked to organized crime through various different activities, namely human smuggling, drug trafficking, piracy<sup>12</sup>, and weapons trafficking.<sup>13</sup> With the most active militias in the Horn of Africa including the militia faction in Tigray and Oromia areas in Ethiopia, groups in Somalia like Al-Shabaab, and other external arms groups,<sup>14</sup> which come in the form of other regional powers such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey, and Qatar.<sup>15</sup>

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Militias

“A band of civilians trained to do army type business, without officially joining the army”<sup>16</sup>. In the horn of Africa “these militia groups operate under the pretext of providing security to their clansmen”<sup>17</sup>.

### Terrorism

“Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public” with its purpose often being to “ advance a political, religious, or ideological cause.” Within the horn of Africa transnational militias often commit attacks which can be interpreted as acts of terrorism<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). *TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME in EASTERN AFRICA: A Threat Assessment*. 2013, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/TOC\\_East\\_Africa\\_2013.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/TOC_East_Africa_2013.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> “Criminality in Ethiopia - the Organized Crime Index | ENACT.” *The Organized Crime Index*, 2023, [africa.ocindex.net/country/ethiopia](https://africa.ocindex.net/country/ethiopia).

<sup>14</sup> “Conflict in the Horn of Africa.” *ACLED*, 13 Dec. 2024, [acleddata.com/region/conflict-horn-africa](https://acleddata.com/region/conflict-horn-africa).

<sup>15</sup> Terefe, Fekade, and Mulugeta Tesfaye. “Militarisation of the Horn of Africa and What This Means for Regional Security | Good Governance Africa.” *Good Governance Africa*, 9 Oct. 2023, [gga.org/militarisation-of-the-horn-of-africa-and-what-this-means-for-regional-security/](https://gga.org/militarisation-of-the-horn-of-africa-and-what-this-means-for-regional-security/).

<sup>16</sup> “Militia.” *Vocabulary.com*, 2025, [www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/militia](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/militia).

<sup>17</sup> “Understanding Civil Militia Groups in Somalia.” *ACCORD*, [www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-civil-militia-groups-somalia/](https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-civil-militia-groups-somalia/).

<sup>18</sup> Educate against hate. “Terrorism Definition UK - What Is Terrorism?” *Educate against Hate*, 20 Dec. 2016, [www.educateagainsthate.com/terrorism-definition/](https://www.educateagainsthate.com/terrorism-definition/).



## Arms Embargoes

"Arms embargoes are a type of sanction that can be used to coerce states and non-governmental actors to improve their behaviour in the interests of national peace and security"<sup>19</sup>.

## State sovereignty

"A state that possesses full autonomy and self-determination over its affairs and territory"<sup>20</sup>, being something that militias often undermine.

## Extremism

"Advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives".<sup>21</sup> Here the term "extremism" refers to violent extremist ideologies which are associated with groups like Al-Shabaab.

## Arms proliferation

"The spread of both weapons and the components required to manufacture them"<sup>22</sup>.

## Ethno-nationalist groups

"Ethnic nationalism defined nation and its membership with cultural features such as language, religion, ancestry, or traditions" and is "usually developed among ethnic groups whose survival was threatened by assimilation or which were lived across several states"<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Arms Embargoes | SIPRI." *W*[www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org), [www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes](http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes).

<sup>20</sup> Nash, Hazel Ann. "Sovereign State | EBSCO." *EBSCO Information Services, Inc.* | *W*[www.ebsco.com](http://www.ebsco.com), 2023, [www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/sovereign-state](http://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/sovereign-state).

<sup>21</sup> "Blocked Page." *Unodc.org*, 2025, [www.unodc.org/e4j/fr/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html](http://www.unodc.org/e4j/fr/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html).

<sup>22</sup> *Study.com*, 2021, [study.com/academy/lesson/weapons-proliferation-concerns-actions.html](http://study.com/academy/lesson/weapons-proliferation-concerns-actions.html).

<sup>23</sup> What is Ethnic Nationalism? | Examples of Ethnonationalism Video. "What Is Ethnic Nationalism? | Examples of Ethnonationalism - Video & Lesson Transcript | Study.com." *Study.com*, 2015, [study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-ethnic-nationalism.html](http://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-ethnic-nationalism.html).



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Historical Background

Militarisation in the horn of Africa happened as a result of post-colonial and post-cold war rivalry of global powers.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s regimes within the Horn of Africa tried to manipulate the flows of weapons and financial resources by superpowers, who consequently attempted to deny strategic locations within the Horn of Africa, to their opposing superpowers.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, in the 1970s after Ethiopia overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie and adopted Marxist-Leninism under the Derg regime, the Soviet Union became its main source of support. Specifically during the Ogaden war against Somalia, from 1977 to 1978, where the USSR provided Ethiopia with extremely extensive amounts of weapons and military aid, greatly helping them face the Somali invasions.<sup>26</sup>

During the later stages of the cold war and the 1990s, the Horn of Africa became known for its role in destabilizing activities. Involving authorities which undermine the ability of another by providing a variety of different support systems to the rebel groups<sup>27</sup>, such as the Eritrean government providing support to Ethiopian militias, causing additional tension between the two countries.

In the mid 1990s Ethiopian federal forces attempted to intervene in Somalia to remove the threats to Ethiopia's Somali region, which were posed by islamist groups along the border.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Terefe, Fekade, and Mulugeta Tesfaye. "Militarisation of the Horn of Africa and What This Means for Regional Security | Good Governance Africa." *Good Governance Africa*, 9 Oct. 2023,

[gga.org/militarisation-of-the-horn-of-africa-and-what-this-means-for-regional-security/](https://gga.org/militarisation-of-the-horn-of-africa-and-what-this-means-for-regional-security/).

<sup>25</sup> "Red Lines: Upheaval and Containment in the Horn of Africa." *ACLEDA*, 15 Apr. 2025, [acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa](https://acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa).

<sup>26</sup> Kingston-Cox, Will. "How Important Was Soviet Support for Ethiopia's Derg Regime?" *Kleio His Journal*, 4 July 2022, [www.kleiohistoricaljournal.com/post/how-important-was-soviet-support-for-ethiopia-s-derg-regime](https://www.kleiohistoricaljournal.com/post/how-important-was-soviet-support-for-ethiopia-s-derg-regime).

<sup>27</sup> "Red Lines: Upheaval and Containment in the Horn of Africa." *ACLEDA*, 15 Apr. 2025, [acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa](https://acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa).

<sup>28</sup> "Red Lines: Upheaval and Containment in the Horn of Africa." *ACLEDA*, 15 Apr. 2025, [acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa](https://acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa).



In November of 2020 the Ethiopian government started military operations inside the Tigray region against the region's ruling party, the Tigray People's liberation front.<sup>29</sup> T

External involvement within the horn of Africa has been very common over the past hundred years due to major powers, and regionally influential state and non-state actors find the region a strategically important area. As a result, these different external bodies have entered power rivalries intending to influence the political, economic, and social development of these states. Although this external involvement has benefited the area economically in some aspects, the constant rivalry between these bodies and the local actors' exploitation of these rivalries has contributed to the constant political instability within the region.<sup>30</sup>

Historically, Ethiopia has always suffered from food insecurity, causing the Ethiopian government to address some of its causes through the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)<sup>31</sup>, with the lack of large scale conflicts also benefiting its resolution. However, due to the outbreak of conflict in 2020 of Tigrayan authority against the federal Ethiopian government, the Eritrean military, and various other militias caused Tigrayan agriculture and food systems to be destroyed together with the Ethiopian government, in support of its military campaign, establishing a blockade of Tigray, cutting of their basic services and humanitarian aid.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Human Rights Watch. "Tigray Conflict | Human Rights Watch." *Wwww.hrw.org*, 2024, [www.hrw.org/tag/tigray-conflict](http://www.hrw.org/tag/tigray-conflict).

<sup>30</sup> Ylönen, Aleksi. "A Scramble of External Powers and Local Agency in the Horn of Africa." *Notes Internacionales CIDOB*, no. 280, 18 Oct. 2022, pp. 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.24241/notesint.2022/280/en>.

<sup>31</sup> "Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Integrating Disaster and Climate Risk Management : Case Study." *World Bank*, 1 June 2013, [documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/893931468321850632/ethiopias-productive-safety-net-program-psnp-integrating-disaster-and-climate-risk-management-case-study](http://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/893931468321850632/ethiopias-productive-safety-net-program-psnp-integrating-disaster-and-climate-risk-management-case-study).

<sup>32</sup> "We Were Warned: Unlearned Lessons of Famine in the Horn of Africa." *Refugees International*, [www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/we-were-warned-unlearned-lessons-of-famine-in-the-horn-of-africa/](http://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/we-were-warned-unlearned-lessons-of-famine-in-the-horn-of-africa/).





## Consequences of militia related conflicts within the Horn of Africa

Arms proliferation in the Horn of Africa is driven by illicit trafficking, regional conflicts, and the militias within the area which cause instability of the region. One of the most contributing factors to arms proliferation are Small Arms and Light weapons (SALWs) which are a high threat to peace and security in the horn of Africa, as they exacerbate ongoing conflicts, fuel terrorism, and make it easier for transnational organized crime to happen.<sup>33</sup>

The War in Tigray and other areas along the Sudan-Ethiopia border are concerning for a number of factors, for example in both of these wars neither side has shown any hesitation in their attacks, such as the accusations made by the authorities in the Ethiopian Afar region that the Tigray People's liberation front bombed civilians with mortars and entered their territory by force.<sup>34</sup> Although they are currently separate conflicts, if these conflicts were to escalate or merge, it would create a risk for Sudan and Eritrea who could strain the capacities of neighboring states and heighten regional insecurity and sustain long military conflict without aid from external forces.<sup>35</sup> With conflicts in Sudan and Ethiopia having resulted in mass loss of life, such as the 61,202 deaths in Khartoum State between April of 2023 and June of 2024<sup>36</sup>, destruction of property and large-scale displacements<sup>37</sup>, with an estimated total of 9,584,349 Internally displaced persons (IDP's) across all 18 states of Sudan, as of the 30th of September 2025.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, in Sudan and Ethiopia humanitarian operations have

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<sup>33</sup> "Forging a Path to Peace: Navigating Transitional Justice amidst the Proliferation of Small Arms in the Horn of Africa | Wilson Center." [www.wilsoncenter.org](http://www.wilsoncenter.org), [www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/forging-path-peace-navigating-transitional-justice-amidst-proliferation-small-arms-horn](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/forging-path-peace-navigating-transitional-justice-amidst-proliferation-small-arms-horn).

<sup>34</sup> Center for Preventive Action. "Conflict in Ethiopia." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 20 Mar. 2025, [www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia](http://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia).

<sup>35</sup> "Red Lines: Upheaval and Containment in the Horn of Africa." *ACLED*, 15 Apr. 2025, [acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa](http://acleddata.com/report/red-lines-upheaval-and-containment-horn-africa).

<sup>36</sup> Dahab, Maysoon, et al. "War-Time Mortality in Sudan: A Multiple Systems Estimation Analysis." *The Lancet. Global Health*, vol. 13, no. 9, Sept. 2025, pp. e1583–e1590, [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40845884/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40845884/), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(25\)00228-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(25)00228-1).

<sup>37</sup> *Horn of Africa: Impunity Fueling Abuses* | *Human Rights Watch*. 11 Jan. 2024, [www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/horn-africa-impunity-fueling-abuses](http://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/horn-africa-impunity-fueling-abuses).

<sup>38</sup> "Displacement Report | Displacement Tracking Matrix." *Iom.int*, 2024, [dtm.iom.int/report-product-series/displacement-report-1](http://dtm.iom.int/report-product-series/displacement-report-1).





been obstructed by attacks on aid workers, looting of assistance, and bureaucratic requirements which have set a ban on supplies.<sup>39</sup> Contributing to the deteriorating relations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Somalia.<sup>40</sup>

Both Kenya and Uganda have become victims of terrorist acts which governments claim to be results of refugee flows from Somalia. The constant hostility between the refugees and host communities, environmental degradation, and the illegal movement of small arms within Kenya and Uganda have also been accredited to the flow of refugees, and are seen as major factors causing the destabilization of the region.<sup>41</sup>

Related conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia are likely to further worsen food insecurity, malnutrition crises, and disease outbreak risks by contributing to displacement, disrupting health services, causing shortages of food items, disrupting surveillance, and blocking humanitarian access and delivery of aid.<sup>42</sup>

Maritime insecurity in the red sea region reached a critical point in early 2024, when Houthi attacks on ships in the gulf of Eden, red sea, and Bab el-Mandeb Strait, further threatening regional and international stability, and disrupting trade and local markets.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Horn of Africa: Impunity Fueling Abuses* | Human Rights Watch. 11 Jan. 2024, [www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/horn-africa-impunity-fueling-abuses](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/horn-africa-impunity-fueling-abuses).

<sup>40</sup> Kurtz, Gerrit, et al. *Escalations Risks in the Horn of Africa: Threats from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Somalia Exacerbate Local Conflicts*. [www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/306283/1/1907183272.pdf](https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/306283/1/1907183272.pdf), <https://doi.org/10.18449/2024C50>.

<sup>41</sup> Ayoti, Linet. "Evaluation of Refugees' Contribution to Regional Insecurity: Case Studies of Uganda and Kenya." *Uonbi.ac.ke*, 2017, [erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/101802](http://hdl.handle.net/11295/101802), <http://hdl.handle.net/11295/101802>.

<sup>42</sup> "Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA) Food Insecurity and Health Crisis: Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), 12 September 2024 - Sudan." *ReliefWeb*, 8 Oct. 2024, [reliefweb.int/report/sudan/greater-horn-africa-ghoa-food-insecurity-and-health-crisis-public-health-situation-analysis-phsa-12-september-2024](https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/greater-horn-africa-ghoa-food-insecurity-and-health-crisis-public-health-situation-analysis-phsa-12-september-2024).

<sup>43</sup> "Navigating the Red Sea: Addressing Threats and Harnessing Potential." *SIPRI*, 2 Sept. 2024, [www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2024/navigating-red-sea-addressing-threats-and-harnessing-potential](https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2024/navigating-red-sea-addressing-threats-and-harnessing-potential).



## Most prominent Militias within the Horn of Africa

Al-Shabaab are currently the strongest, and most active military group in Somalia, threatening the peace and security of Somalia, but are mainly active in Mogadishu - the capital of Somalia. Their main goal is to establish a state governed by their interpretation of Islamic law across the country, violently opposing the “western” government and their allies. They continuously carry out high profile attacks in Mogadishu, which challenge government authority, additionally putting civilians at extremely high risk.<sup>44</sup> Al-Shabaab is also known to be one of Al-Qaeda's strongest affiliates, after formally announcing their affiliation in 2012.<sup>45</sup> They are also responsible for several terrorist attacks in the past several years, for instance, in 2009 Al-Shabaab carried out attacks and suicide bombings against military checkpoints, politicians and peacekeeping officers.<sup>46</sup>

Additionally, Al-shabaab is considered to be a transnational militia due to its spreading of fear and terror not just within Somalia but within its neighbouring countries as well, such as Kenya.<sup>47</sup>

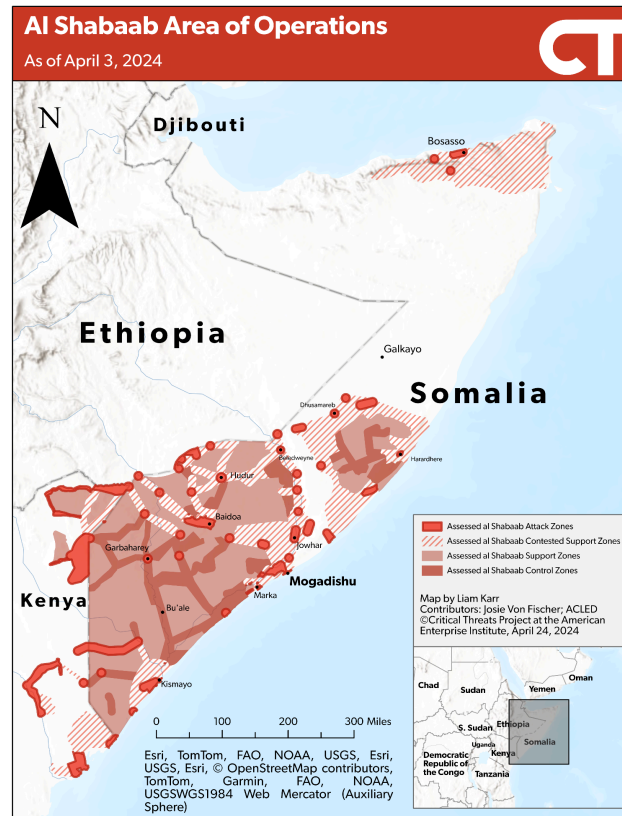
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<sup>44</sup> UK. “Country Policy and Information Note: Mogadishu: Al Shabab and the Security Situation, Somalia, July 2025 (Accessible).” *GOV.UK*, 17 July 2025, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/somalia-country-policy-and-information-notes/country-policy-and-information-note-mogadishu-al-shabab-and-the-security-situation-somalia-july-2025-accessible](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/somalia-country-policy-and-information-notes/country-policy-and-information-note-mogadishu-al-shabab-and-the-security-situation-somalia-july-2025-accessible).

<sup>45</sup> *Congress.gov*, 2023, [www.congress.gov/crs\\_external\\_products/IF/HTML/IF10170.web.html](https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/HTML/IF10170.web.html).

<sup>46</sup> “Al-Shabaab – the Jihadists in the Horn of Africa | Ústav Mezinárodních Vztahů - Expertise to Impact.” *Www.iir.cz*, [www.iir.cz/al-shabaab-the-jihadists-in-the-horn-of-africa](https://www.iir.cz/al-shabaab-the-jihadists-in-the-horn-of-africa).

<sup>47</sup> “Al-Shabaab – the Jihadists in the Horn of Africa | Ústav Mezinárodních Vztahů - Expertise to Impact.” *Www.iir.cz*, [www.iir.cz/al-shabaab-the-jihadists-in-the-horn-of-africa](https://www.iir.cz/al-shabaab-the-jihadists-in-the-horn-of-africa).



**Figure 2:** Shows the detailed areas in which Al-Shabaab operates, and the different purposes each area is used for.<sup>48</sup>

Fano Militias in Ethiopia are an ethno-nationalist group who claim they represent the Amhara region, a regional state in the north of Ethiopia.<sup>49</sup> ,most active within the Tigray region of Ethiopia which is the northernmost region in Ethiopia. The Eritrean government is believed to be working with members of the Fano militias - which are fighting against the Ethiopian government in the Amhara region - in order to attack the government.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, the government in Addis Ababa accuses the Tigray Peoples liberation front of “funding, mobilizing, and directing armed groups” in the Amhara

<sup>48</sup> “Africa File Special Edition: External Meddling for the Red Sea Exacerbates Conflicts in the Horn of Africa.” *Critical Threats*, 2024, [www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/africa-file-special-edition-external-meddling-for-the-red-sea-exacerbates-conflicts-in-the-horn-of-africa](http://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/africa-file-special-edition-external-meddling-for-the-red-sea-exacerbates-conflicts-in-the-horn-of-africa).

<sup>49</sup> Vera, Simon. “Who Is Fano? Inside Ethiopia’s Amhara Rebellion.” *The New Humanitarian*, 12 Nov. 2024, [www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2024/11/12/who-fano-inside-ethiopia-amhara-rebellion](http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2024/11/12/who-fano-inside-ethiopia-amhara-rebellion).

<sup>50</sup> “News Brief: The Possibility of War between Ethiopia and Eritrea.” *ACLED*, 30 Apr. 2025, [acleddata.com/update/news-brief-possibility-war-between-ethiopia-and-eritrea](http://acleddata.com/update/news-brief-possibility-war-between-ethiopia-and-eritrea).



region, which the federal army has been trying to fight against for several years already.<sup>51</sup>

The Rapid support forces (RSF) in Sudan play an extremely significant role in cross-border smuggling across their porous borders, specifically stolen cars, but also including other illicit goods. Sudan has now become a source for stolen-cars, however there is still a history of car theft and cross-border smuggling in Sudan. Although there are various different entities involved in the trading of stolen cars the RSF are considered to be lead players in this trade.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, due to the RSF's control over known production sites, their long record of profit coming in from illicit and informal economies, and history of drug trade, it is suggested that they are involved in or enabling the production of captagon in Sudan<sup>53</sup>, with these illicit economies also funding conflict by financing warfare, and undermining the Sudanese economy by enabling those gaining profit from these corruptions.<sup>54</sup> Further, the amount of attacks linked to RSF's in each region can be seen in figure 3 below.

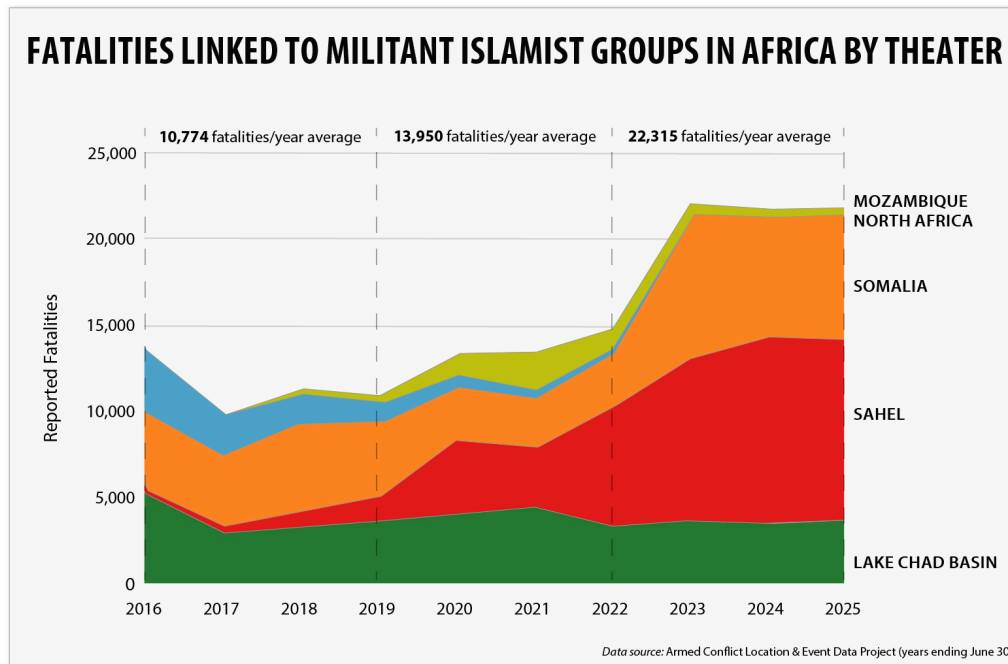
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<sup>51</sup> AFP. "Ethiopia Accuses Eritrea of "Actively" Preparing for War." *Arab News*, Arabnews, 8 Oct. 2025, [www.arabnews.com/node/2618149/world](https://www.arabnews.com/node/2618149/world).

<sup>52</sup> "Sudan's Civil War Reignites the Illicit Car Trade into Chad | ISS Africa." *ISS Africa*, 2025, [issafrica.org/iss-today/sudan-s-civil-war-reignites-the-illicit-car-trade-into-chad](https://issafrica.org/iss-today/sudan-s-civil-war-reignites-the-illicit-car-trade-into-chad).

<sup>53</sup> rkremzner@newlinesinstitute.org. "Sudan's Emergence as a New Captagon Hub - New Lines Institute." *New Lines Institute*, 12 Aug. 2025, [newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/sudans-emergence-as-a-new-captagon-hub/](https://newlinesinstitute.org/nonstate-actors/sudans-emergence-as-a-new-captagon-hub/).

<sup>54</sup> *On the Road to War the Role of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) in Sudan*. 2024.



**Figure 3:** Depicts loss of life within Africa linked to relevant militias within the horn of Africa.<sup>55</sup>

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of the Event	Event
January 1991	Hawiye-based United Somali congress forces led an uprising that overthrew Siad Barre, a Somalian dictator, causing him to flee and seek asylum. Leading to the collapse of central government authority. <sup>56</sup>
October 2009	Al-Shabaab recaptures the Southern port of Kismayo after defeating the

<sup>55</sup> the. "Africa Surpasses 150,000 Deaths Linked to Militant Islamist Groups in Past Decade – Africa Center." *Africa Center*, 30 July 2025, [africacenter.org/spotlight/en-2025-mig-10-year/](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/en-2025-mig-10-year/).

<sup>56</sup> Lewis, Ioan M, and H.A. Janzen. "Somalia - Civil War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 Mar. 2019, [www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war](https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war).



	rival Hizbul-islam militia. <sup>57</sup>
November 4th 2020	Tigrayan troops were accused of attacking a federal military camp in Mekelle. Consequently, the Ethiopian National Defence Force moved north, with alleged involvement from Ethiopian militias. <sup>58</sup>
August 2nd 2022	The US and European Union delegate for the horn of Africa to urge Ethiopia's government to resume essential services in Tigray, which has been struggling with food and basic necessity shortages. <sup>59</sup>

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### United States of America(USA)<sup>60</sup>

Historically, the US has been a key donor of the Horn of Africa by providing funding for humanitarian aid, healthcare and security programmes. This assistance to the Horn of Africa usually ranges between 7.7 billion to 8.3 billion dollars annually<sup>61</sup>, accounting for humanitarian aid specifically in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia from the year 2012 to 2022. Due to this large amount of aid, the Horn of Africa is considered to be the key

<sup>57</sup> BBC News. "Somalia Profile - Timeline." *BBC News*, 4 Jan. 2018, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632)

<sup>58</sup> Center for Preventive Action. "Conflict in Ethiopia." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 20 Mar. 2025, [www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia](http://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia).

<sup>59</sup> Al Jazeera. "Two Years of Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict: A Timeline." *Www.aljazeera.com*, 10 Nov. 2022, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/10/two-years-of-ethiopias-tigray-conflict-a-timeline](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/10/two-years-of-ethiopias-tigray-conflict-a-timeline).

<sup>60</sup> "Somalia, February 2024 Monthly Forecast : Security Council Report." *Www.securitycouncilreport.org*, [www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-02/somalia-34.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-02/somalia-34.php).

<sup>61</sup> "U.S. Freezes Foreign Aid: Consequences for the Horn of Africa." *Horninstitute.org*, 2025, [horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/](http://horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/).



beneficiary of the US security assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa, with Somalia receiving a total of 219.5 million dollars for peace and security.<sup>62</sup>

Although the US typically provides large support in needed fields, recent pauses in U.S. foreign assistance worldwide have impacted humanitarian operations in the Horn of Africa.<sup>63</sup> Such as potentially exacerbating food insecurity, disrupting their assistance with combating HIV, and affecting humanitarian efforts within the region.

### United Kingdom(UK)

To support reconstruction efforts after conflicts in Tigray from 2020 to 2022, the UK provided 16 million to help 75, 000 Tigrayan military personnel the ability to return to civilian life with cash. The UK also provided 6.9 million, over the course of three years, with the aim of aiding Ethiopia's textiles and garment sector.<sup>64</sup> The UK is also considered to be the United Nations "penholder" for Somalia, meaning it is in charge of drafting and introducing relevant resolutions.<sup>65</sup> The UK also has a special envoy for the Red Sea and Horn of Africa, namely Alison Blackburne, who is in charge of leading the UK's response to events within that region.<sup>66</sup>

### Turkey

Turkey has begun to implement a variety of economic and political incentives, with the aim of uniting Somalia. For instance, in 2024 Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding with Somalia to be able to equip, reconstruct, and train the Somalian navy, in return for a 30 percent share of Somalia's Exclusive Economic Zone revenue. This exchange would benefit both Turkey and Somalia economically if they can tackle the illegal activity and informal economy within Somali waters.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> "U.S. Freezes Foreign Aid: Consequences for the Horn of Africa." *Horninstitute.org*, 2025, [horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/](https://horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/).

<sup>63</sup> "U.S. Freezes Foreign Aid: Consequences for the Horn of Africa." *Horninstitute.org*, 2025, [horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/](https://horninstitute.org/u-s-freezes-foreign-aid-consequences-for-the-horn-of-africa/).

<sup>64</sup> Goddard, James. "Tensions in the Horn of Africa." *House of Lords Library*, 24 Oct. 2024, [lordslibrary.parliament.uk/tensions-in-the-horn-of-africa/#heading-6](https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/tensions-in-the-horn-of-africa/#heading-6).

<sup>65</sup> "The UK's Role in the Horn of Africa - British Foreign Policy Group." *British Foreign Policy Group*, 18 Feb. 2025, [bfpg.co.uk/2025/02/the-uks-role-in-the-horn-of-africa/](https://bfpg.co.uk/2025/02/the-uks-role-in-the-horn-of-africa/).

<sup>66</sup> "The UK's Role in the Horn of Africa - British Foreign Policy Group." *British Foreign Policy Group*, 18 Feb. 2025, [bfpg.co.uk/2025/02/the-uks-role-in-the-horn-of-africa/](https://bfpg.co.uk/2025/02/the-uks-role-in-the-horn-of-africa/).

<sup>67</sup> guillermo. "Turkey's Return to Africa - Foreign Policy Research Institute." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 2025, [www.fpri.org/article/2025/03/turkeys-return-to-africa/](https://www.fpri.org/article/2025/03/turkeys-return-to-africa/).





Additionally,

## Ethiopia

From 1998 to the year 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia were at war, which was followed by a twenty year frozen conflict, which greatly affected both countries politically and economically. Furthermore, between 2020 and 2022, Ethiopia fought a war with militants from Tigray, which during that time was under the control of the Tigray People's liberation front. This conflict was one of the deadliest in recent history, and drew a lot of international attention to potential war crimes, human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing.<sup>68</sup> In November of 2021, Tigrayan troops and their allied Oromo militants marched within eighty-five miles of the capital, but were forced back north by ENDF forces, this conflict resulted in the division of Ethiopia across Ethnic lines.

## RELEVANT UN TREATIES CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

### The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

This treaty was adopted by the UN in 2013, and it regulates the international trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, which are the usual weapons of choice used by the militias in the horn of Africa. One limitation of this treaty is that implementation is limited due to capacity gaps, a lack of reporting, and ongoing weak border control within Africa.

### United Nations Security Council resolution 2628 (2022)

Reinforced Somalia's responsibility for security and efforts to weaken militia capabilities and decrease their funding and access to weapons. However, there is limited funding available to implement the African Union transition Mission in Somalia(ATMIS)<sup>69</sup> and other solutions that this resolution proposes.

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<sup>68</sup> Center for Preventive Action. "Conflict in Ethiopia." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 20 Mar. 2025, [www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia](https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia).

<sup>69</sup> "Briefing on Financing for ATMIS - Amani Africa." *Amanifrica-Et.org*, 2022, [amanifrica-et.org/briefing-on-financing-for-atmis/?print=print](https://amanifrica-et.org/briefing-on-financing-for-atmis/?print=print).



### United Nations Security Council Resolution 733 (1992)

This resolution is a Somalia arms embargo, and it also urged things like all parties involved to “immediately cease hostilities and agree to a cease-fire”.<sup>70</sup>

### United Nations Security Council Resolution 2182 (2014)

Renewed the partial lift of arms embargoes on Somalia in order to develop the Security Forces of the federal government of Somalia and the humanitarian exemption to the assets freeze. In addition, it authorized, for 12 months, the maritime interdiction of charcoal and weapons, or military equipment being shipped that is in violation of the charcoal ban and arms embargo, consequently affecting Al-Shabab's illegal weapons trafficking.<sup>71</sup>

### The UN Security council resolution 2767 (2024)

Supports the African Union's peace and security council's decision to replace the African Union Transition mission in Somalia (ATMIS) with the African Union Support and stabilisation mission in Somalia(AUSSOM), with this new mission being implemented 1st of January 2025.<sup>72</sup> This transition was significant because it moved from a combat-heavy mission to a stabilization and capacity-building model, which focuses on creating long term stability and reduces dependency on foreign intervention.

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

### African Union and UN peacekeeping missions

AMISOM, otherwise known as The African Union Mission in Somalia, has been the largest regional peacekeeping force, aiming to weaken the militias and stabilise Somalia. It supports the Somali government by using military force to fight back against these armed groups. However, external support and financing is in decline which is further

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<sup>70</sup> “Document Viewer.” *Un.org*, 2025, [docs.un.org/en/S/RES/733%20\(1992\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/733%20(1992)).

<sup>71</sup> “S/RES/2182 (2014) | Security Council.” *Un.org*, 2020, [main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2182-%282014%29](https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2182-%282014%29).

<sup>72</sup> “Home.” *African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)*, [atmis-au.org/](https://atmis-au.org/).



weakening Somalia's defenses.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, AMISOM's mandate was authorized by the Security Council, with its successor the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (later becoming the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia or AUSSOM), operating under the Security Council in partnership with the African Union to gradually hand over security responsibilities to Somali security forces. Further research can be found at this link: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIYB20c07sIV.pdf>

### **Sanctions and arms embargoes enforced by the UN**

The UN has imposed sanctions and arms embargoes for any individuals or other body's, which fuel militia violence. However, these arms embargoes in Somalia have failed to account for the lack of full control the Somali government has over their ports, which further complicates the situation. If these arms embargoes would be prematurely lifted the open arms market in Somalia would pose another extremely significant risk, as the lifting of arms embargoes could increase the ease of access to these markets, leading to increased violence and instability in the region.

### **Peace settlements between and within nations**

After taking power Mr Abiy implemented a policy of reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, after the years of tension and border disputes between the two nations. This led to a peace settlement between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018. However, this deal with Eritrea was a contributing factor to disintegrating relations between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which escalated into the consequent conflict in the Tigray region between 2020 and 2022. Following that, in 2022 a peace settlement was reached between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, but even despite the formal termination of hostilities, there have been recent outbreaks of violence in the Tigray region and in other areas of Ethiopia.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> "Helping Somalia Move beyond a Shaky Status Quo | International Crisis Group."  
*Crisisgroup.org*, 16 Oct. 2025,  
[www.crisisgroup.org/africa/somalia/helping-somalia-move-beyond-shaky-status-quo](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/somalia/helping-somalia-move-beyond-shaky-status-quo).

<sup>74</sup> <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/tensions-in-the-horn-of-africa/#:~:text=On%20taking%20power%2C%20Mr%20Abiy,the%20peace%20deal%20with%20Eritrea>.



## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Preventing militia funding and arms flows**

This would happen through methods such as imposing stricter UN sanctions which specifically target any companies, individuals, or states which help supply or fund militias, and sending trained UN monitoring teams which would ensure that these sanctions and security systems are upheld. Additionally, enhancing cross-border security, and maritime security in the Red sea and Gulf of Aden in hopes of reducing arms smuggling, so militias arms flows are significantly reduced.

### **Expanding UN peacekeeping and enforcing other monitoring mechanisms**

Deployment of a UN Monitoring Mission to the states within the horn of Africa, and the greater horn of Africa. The monitoring mission will report on any militia activities between borders. Furthermore, peacekeeping forces would be deployed, if in line with policies of the state, to create humanitarian corridors to provide aid to the injured.

### **Pushing for the strengthening of arms embargo enforcement**

The UN should reinforce existing arms embargoes, for example those on Somalia. They would do this by authorizing naval interdiction operations (NIOs), for the purpose of them being able to intercept any illegal weapons shipments. Which would be located by creating more meticulous maritime patrol mandates. Member states involved would be required to report on effectiveness and progress to an Arms embargoes monitoring board, created by the UN.

### **Mechanisms that investigate conflicts**

The Security Council could consider referring certain cases to the ICC, such as those related to war crime along the borders and within the state itself, or establishing an independent UN Fact-Finding Mission, which would look into how militias operate within the frameworks of the state, in order to find more suitable methods to fight against them.



## **Urging the creation of DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration) programmes for militias within the horn of Africa**

These programmes would involve disarming combatants, removing members from within the militias, then providing them with assistance for their social and economic reintegration in society, through methods like vocational training, education, and support in their livelihoods.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, the UN Department of Peace Operations could help lead and support DDR processes by providing technical assistance not only in states with peace keeping missions, but also non-mission settings, further, coordination with national governments could be achieved through UN-led integration units, and formal partnerships through which the national government would take the lead on cases that would involve high amounts of consultation with stakeholders.

## **Strengthening the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD's) mediation role**

Enhance coordination between members by implementing structured frameworks to increase collaboration between stakeholders to ensure a unified approach to the issue. Further, strengthen partnerships with institutions like the UN, the EU, and the AU in order to gain more support for mediation efforts. Additionally, the Security Council could support the IGAD through political backing, or funding via the Peacebuilding Commission or the UN-AU frameworks. Finally, strengthen the mediation support unit through more efficient allocation of resources within the structure of the IGAD.

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<sup>75</sup> United Nations. "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration." *United Nations Peacekeeping*, United Nations, 2017, [peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration](https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration).



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