

## Navigating the Transition Tightrope: Challenges Posed by African Union Mission in Somalia Transition on Kenya's National Security

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined Kenya's national security threats resulting from the withdrawal of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). This was in light of previous Peace Support Operation Transitions (PSO) in Iraq and Afghanistan, where regional instability resulted from troop withdrawals. Therefore, it analysed the impact of PSO experiences on national security, aiming to identify potential threats to the national security of Troop-Contributing Countries (TCC) resulting from PSO involvement. The study was a descriptive survey design, and it adopted a mixed-methods approach. The sample size for the study was 400 respondents and 49 key informants. The survey was informed by functionalist theory and strategic theory. Kenyan border counties are predisposed to the security effects of the KDF transition from AMISOM. The study's findings indicated a complex security landscape; that is, weak Somali security forces, insufficient funding for the transition, a short time frame, and the likelihood of a resurgent Al-Shabaab all present significant threats to Kenya's national security. These issues are exacerbated by increased border security problems, such as smuggling and unresolved territorial conflicts. However, the studies indicated that Kenya could mitigate these risks. Influencing the Security Transition Plan (STP) to prioritise strong border security measures can strengthen Kenya's defences. Strengthening the Jubaland buffer zone and helping Somalia's disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) initiatives can help weaken terrorist organisations. Furthermore, efforts in Kenya's border counties' socioeconomic development can reduce the attraction to extreme ideas. Implementing comprehensive border security measures provides an additional avenue for improving overall security. According to the analysis, AMISOM's transition represents a complicated security tightrope walk for Kenya. To counteract the problem, Kenya must address the highlighted dangers while capitalising on existing opportunities. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated an F statistic of 139.893 and a p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , implying that the transition of the Kenyan contingent in the African Union mission in Somalia significantly predicts Kenya's national security. The regression weights model showed that the transition of the Kenyan contingent in the African Union mission in Somalia had a negative and significant influence on Kenya's national security ( $\beta = -0.368$ ,  $P = .000 < .05$ ). Recommendations include actively shaping the STP, strengthening the Jubaland buffer zone, and stationing enough security personnel along the border. Promoting bilateral and multilateral engagement with Somalia is critical for resolving lingering concerns and maintaining regional stability. By taking these steps, Kenya can protect its national security throughout AMISOM's handover.*

**Keywords:** Al-Shabaab, AMISOM, Security, Transition

### I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council has focused on departure strategies, both for individual missions and more broadly. This worry prompted an open debate on November 15, 2000, during which the Council addressed the decision-making process for ending various peacekeeping missions, particularly in light of difficult operations during the previous decade (Caplan, 2006). Consequently, the Council requested the secretary-general provide an analysis and recommendations on this topic, which was presented on April 20, 2001, in a report titled "No Exit Without Strategy" (Annan, 2001). A well-formulated exit strategy relies on effective entrance and interim strategies. It cannot adequately address significant deficiencies in territorial administration design or implementation. Conversely, a poorly conceived exit strategy could undermine the accomplishments of an international administration and endanger the sustainability of the newly established state or territory. Political factors can also influence exit strategies, potentially dictating their timing based on domestic and international considerations unrelated to the territory's readiness (Caplan, 2006; Nzau, 2018).

To date, there has been fairly limited experience with the termination of international territorial administrations. Ligawa (2018) asserts that the termination of international territorial administrations has only affected the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES), the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), and the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). However, one could also consider the UN Temporary Executive Authority in West New Guinea/West Irian (Indonesia) and aspects of the UN Operation in the Congo (UNOC) from 1962–63 and 1960–64, respectively. The two other contemporary administrations—BiH and Kosovo—are still operational.

Despite these experiences' limitations, they provide some valuable insights. Notably, the concept of a phased exit strategy emerges as a useful tool. This strategy advocates for a gradual transfer of control, with the speed of devolution directly linked to the local leadership's capacity to meet established goals (Kagwanja et al., 2020). The work of UNTAES in Eastern Slavonia serves as an example of this approach's potential effectiveness. This UN mission governed the region, the last Serb-held territory in Croatia during the Yugoslav Wars, for two years (1996–1998) with the objective of eventual reintegration with Croatia (Yannis, 2004; Crisis Group, 2024).

Similarly, the United Nations (UN) approach in Kosovo adopted a comparable strategy, although unlike UNTAES, the administration in Kosovo did not have fixed time constraints. Michael Steiner, the transitional administrator, set benchmarks in April 2002 for the UN to meet before initiating negotiations on the final status of Kosovo, an Albanian-populated province of Serbia under UN administration since June 1999. This approach, known as 'Standards before Status', sets targets for progress in eight policy areas. These areas included the establishment of functioning democratic institutions, the rule of law (police and judiciary), freedom of movement, returns and reintegration, economic development, property rights, dialogue with Belgrade, and the Kosovo Protection Corps. Steiner acknowledged that these standards marked the initial steps towards an exit strategy for Kosovo (Steiner, 2002).

From 2003 to 2018, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) maintained a continuous presence throughout the country. The mission's activities and its evolution from a mission-oriented setting to a non-mission context are regarded as positive examples of the UN's capacity to assist countries during conflict and post-conflict phases (Benson, 2021). However, member states, UN officials, and international partners can learn numerous lessons from UNMIL's transition to improve future UN peacekeeping transitions.

UNMIL's initial transition planning, spanning from early 2010 to June 2016, underscored the imperative for the UN to effectively balance and comprehensively integrate civilian and military transition planning. Initially, there was a disproportionate focus on the security handover, driven by the belief that Liberians must assume responsibility for their own security before the UN can contemplate withdrawing its peacekeeping mission (Benson, 2021; Forti & Connolly, 2018). As a result, UNMIL's final transition mandate did not significantly influence subsequent planning for the civilian transition, nor did it receive commensurate attention. After receiving this mandate in December 2016, the UN and the Liberian government embarked on numerous planning processes and exercises to facilitate the transition.

Two key instruments played pivotal roles in shaping the transition: the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, which was the first comprehensive peacebuilding planning framework mandated by the Security Council for a transition; and the capacity mapping exercise initiated by UN leadership in Liberia and conducted by the UN country team to assess capacities and identify gaps that would emerge upon UNMIL's departure. While the Peacebuilding Plan delineated the substantive priorities intended to guide the UN's actions during the transition, the capacity mapping exercise evaluated the UN's ability in Liberia to fulfil those commitments post-UNMIL. Collectively, these initiatives substantially influenced transition planning processes at both the UN headquarters and in the field (Forti & Connolly, 2018).

The mission in Rwanda, initiated in 1993, stands out as having perhaps the most significant and far-reaching implications stemming from a mandate centred on elections, yet it remains emblematic of tragic failure. Initially, its objective was to facilitate a peace process by overseeing the ceasefire and preparing for elections. Originally, Hirschmann (2012) envisioned the mandate to conclude following national elections. However, the outbreak of renewed hostilities led to an extension of the peacekeeping mission with revised mandates that acknowledged the organisation's failure to protect civilians and omitted any mention of elections. Despite the presence of UN peacekeepers, a resurgence of civil war and genocide erupted in 1994. In this instance, the glaring disparity between the organisation's idealistic goals and the catastrophic outcomes of its actions was starkly evident.

In Angola, the unfolding events starkly contradicted the United Nations' rhetorical and normative assertions about ensuring peace. Initiated in 1991 to implement the Angolan Peace Accords, the peacekeeping operation, United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), initially scheduled its conclusion "on the day after the election." However, following the 1992 presidential election results, violence resurged. In 1993, the then-Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali reported that "Angola has reverted to civil war and likely finds itself in a direr situation than before the signing of the Peace Accords." Consequently, multiple mandate extensions ensued, culminating in the establishment of a new peacekeeping mission, UNAVEM III, in 1995. A small observer mission replaced UNAVEM

III in 1997, reflecting the material pressures within the UN to curtail peacekeeping activities, despite the persistent insecurity in the country (Hirschmann, 2012).

Redefining the criteria for its peacekeeping exit strategy became crucial for the UN as its rhetoric shifted towards sustainable peace. To reconcile rhetoric and action, the organization started to adapt its decisions by changing the mandates for peace operations. Although mandates after 2000 still included elections as a mission objective, they no longer linked elections to the mission exit. Rather, numerous missions incorporated a diverse array of non-military, institution-building responsibilities or came into existence following an election. According to van-der Lijn (2010), of the ten missions established between 2000 and 2007, nine were mandated to pursue tasks such as Disarmament and Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) for former combatants and Security Sector Reforms (SSR); five of them explicitly mentioned peacebuilding as a central goal for mission achievement.

Scholars have posited that the transition of PSOs portends challenges to immediate neighbours owing to the stability of states in the country of intervention. Studies have observed that the transition of USA-led allied forces from Iraq created a security and governance vacuum that Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) exploited (Kanat, 2019; Hamasaed & Nada, 2020). Jackson and Amiri (2021) posited that the USA's precipitous exit from Afghanistan resulted in the dramatic collapse of Ashraf Ghani's administration and the Taliban's takeover. The two scenarios in Iraq and Afghanistan led to more instability in the respective regions. They were globally characterized by the spread of ISIL and the threat to the security of immediate neighbours such as Syria and Pakistan.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states in Kenya and Somalia are wary of AMISOM's hasty departure, fearing it could trigger instabilities similar to those in Iraq and Afghanistan (Kagwanja et al., 2020). Weakness in Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Somalia Security Forces (SSF) capacity is a significant risk factor in the ability to contain the potential resurgence of Al-Shabaab in post-AMISOM Somalia, particularly in the border counties of Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, and Lamu, which continue to experience attacks despite the deployment of Kenyan contingents in Somalia (Abdille, 2019; Otieno, 2019). Moreover, Al-Shabaab could use the transition to score propaganda points for 'defeating the KDF' to overshadow the achievements of the latter. Therefore, the paper set out to examine the impacts on Kenya's national security from the transition of the Kenyan contingent in the African Union Mission in Somalia, and the resultant research question was: What are the impacts on Kenya's national security from the transition of the Kenyan contingent in the African Union Mission in Somalia?

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although AMISOM has been instrumental in supporting the peacebuilding efforts in Somalia, the protracted nature of the operations, coupled with geopolitical intricacies, stretches the resource capacity of states and partners. The fact that, ultimately, the future of Somalia is the responsibility of its people and government requires that such responsibilities be transferred gradually and measuredly. AMISOM made significant progress in pursuit of its strategic objectives, which include, *inter alia*; reducing the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups; providing security to enable Somalia's political process and efforts at reconciliation; and handing over its security responsibilities to the Somali security forces. The PSO has been mooting to exit Somalia since 2017 with various plans broached for implementation. However, deadlines have lapsed without key exit milestones being attained, leading to revisions of plans and extensions of mandate. It indicates a shortcoming in the alignment of ends and means. This raises the concerns about the hurried manner of the AMISOM exit plan, the preparedness of FGS and SSF to assume security and governance responsibilities and the possibilities of *Al Shabaab* resurgence.

With the examples of USA operations in Afghanistan and the disorganised exit in 2021, the AMISOM transition requires careful implementation through a realistic strategy. Considering reservations on FGS and SSF's capacity to assume governance and security responsibilities of Somalia, bungled exit is inimical to the national security and stability of neighbouring states like Kenya and beyond. Aspects of the implication of AMISOM transition to Kenya's national security are given urgency and credence, *inter alia*, in the context of frosty historical relations with Somalia, which will likely shape future relations, including maritime and terrestrial borders. Furthermore, Kenya is experiencing the spillover effects of conflicts from Somalia. The effects will likely escalate if the transition does not result in a stable Somalia, thus leading to warring factions. This study, therefore, sought to contextualise the transition implications of Kenyan Contingent in AMISOM on Kenya's National Security.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

- i. Assess the challenges to Kenya's National Security from the transition of the Kenyan Contingent in the African Union Mission in Somalia.
- ii. Examine mitigation measures to address national security challenges to Kenya from the transition of the Kenyan Contingent in the African Union Mission in Somalia.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The transition of PSOs portends challenges to immediate neighbouring states. It emanates from the stability conditions in the country of intervention post-PSO. The exit of the USA from Iraq created a security and governance vacuum that was exploited by ISIL (Kanat, 2019; Hamasaeed & Nada, 2020). It caused the reign of terror after the defeat of Al Qaeda. ISIL spread its tentacles into Syria, Libya, African Maghreb, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Affiliations of terror groups to ISIL, such as *Al Shabaab* and Boko Haram, increased the reach of ISIL. In Afghanistan, the exit of the USA in a huff led to the dramatic collapse of the government of Ashraf Ghani and the takeover by the Taliban, threatening the security of countries such as Pakistan.

These challenges of PSOs' exits to neighbouring countries apply to Kenya post-AMISOM. Whereas scholars have identified some challenges, they largely remain conjectural without statistical descriptors for policy decisions. As Otieno (2019) note, IGAD member states are cautious that hasty withdrawal from Somalia will repeat earlier experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. The exit of AMISOM (KDF) from Somalia, coupled with the weaknesses of SSF and Jubaland Security Forces (JSF), will likely give *Al Shabaab* more freedom to manoeuvre and strike into Kenyan territory. Even with the current force posture on both sides of the common border, *Al Shabaab* still manages to infiltrate and perpetrate attacks on crucial infrastructure and civilian populations in Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu (Abdille, 2019; Otieno, 2019). It will likely escalate post-AMISOM as *Al Shabaab* seeks to score propaganda points by a possible claim of victory against KDF as they withdraw under the STP framework.

Bartlett (2021) was of the view that the border securitisation programme would likely face more sabotage activities for lack of security forces buffer across in Somalia. *Al Shabaab* was likely ratchet up vandalism on the border fence to keep the infiltration roots open. The border programme is a suitable propaganda selling point for *Al Shabaab*, who may claim that Kenya illegally annexes Somali territory. Similarly, in the scenario of stable FGS, the border fence issue is likely to brew territorial dispute, especially with the memory of the *Shifita* era and the maritime dispute.

To manage security in the Northern Frontier Districts (NFD), the Kenyan government must ratchet up force numbers and adjust deployment to cover gaps exploited by *Al Shabaab* to perpetrate terrorism within Kenya. However, Haider (2020) and Demissie (2021) aver that such adjustment may lead to discontent from locals misled to believe that the government is suspicious of them and treating them as a security threat. It is in the context of previous claims of discriminative profiling by security agencies. Conversely, the proximity of military forces along the common border with Somalia will likely attract FGS to claim aggressive intentions by KDF, especially given the outstanding Maritime dispute.

Regarding the smuggling of goods and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), a weak SSF and JSF increase the inflow of contraband items into Kenya. Notably, the lack of border control mechanisms, corruption, expansive territory and long-porous border make it easy for smuggling activities across the Kenya-Somalia border (Jubat, 2019; Chumba, 2016). Smuggling is likely to persist in the post-AMISOM owing to the lack of proper border control mechanisms. The consequence will increase criminality due to SALW proliferation, loss of exercise duty for the government and unfair price competition for locally manufactured goods.

Regarding Somalia, scholars have noted that the transition of AMISOM has faced challenges likely to unravel a successful handover. However, most identified challenges remain conjectural without statistical backing for policy decisions. William and Hashi (2016) identified four broad challenges to AMISOM's exit from Somalia *viz* lack of political settlement, the threat of *Al Shabaab*, AMISOM internal problems, internal problems of Somalia National Army (SNA) and poor perception of AMISOM by the locals. The political process in Somalia lacks a long-term strategic outlook; instead, it is focused on the political elites' short-term capture of state resources.

Besides, the clannism problem is pervasive, thus affecting political settlement in the country. It is stressed in the argument by Nzau (2018, p. 546) that the current Somalia conflict is rooted in a mismanaged post-colonial legacy that mostly polarised the country along clan-based lines for regime sustenance and survival, thus breeding political exclusion and concomitant grievances within the wider Somali society. Therefore it affects the transition of Kenyan Contingent (KENCON) from AMISOM and thereby posing potential national security challenges.

The asymmetric threats by *Al Shabaab* employing Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), blending and operating within the population has posed a challenge to AMISOMs ability to pacify environs of liberated areas and also self-sustenance through logistics provision by United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) (Williams & Hashi, 2016). Though weakened, the *Al Shabaab* terror outfit still retains the advantage derived through its highly decentralized command structure that is instrumental in choosing when and where to attack targets of high symbolism through the employment of barbaric means and swarming tactics. Such was evident in attacks against AMISOM bases between 2015

and 2020 in areas of *Leego, Janale, El Adde, Halgan, Kolbiyow, Golweyn, Ceel Saliin, Quryoley* and *Asasey Hotel in Kismayo*, US base in *Baledogle* as well as *Simba Camp* in Manda (Kagwanja et al., 2020, p. 88-98). Such attacks point to the fact that even a weakened *Al Shabaab* is still a potent foe that threatens post-AMISOM Somalia as well as the security of Kenya.

Regarding AMISOMs internal problems, AMISOM suffers from a lack of critical operational enablers such as offensive air resources. However, this has since been remedied by including aircraft from KENCON in Contingent Owned Equipment (COE). William et al. (2018) highlight the lack of unified command as a critical operational hindrance for AMISOM. The argument is about having the Force Commander (FC) drawn from the force with the most significant number of troops. However, this militate against the geopolitical interest of having the FC rotational among the TCC on a biannual basis. Furthermore, UN missions such as UNMISS did not necessarily obtain FCs from TCCs with large contingents. Thus, the AMISOM Force Commander (FC) versus Unity of Command debate is more driven by regional hegemonic interest (Oluoch, 2018, p. 534); since implementation ensures that Uganda always produces the FC.

The capacity of SNA to assume security responsibilities post-AMISOM is in doubt, even as the STP rollout is underway. According to William et al. (2018, p. 70), AMISOM transition is heavily pivoted on SSF and some international partners picking up the security responsibilities from AMISOM. Ligawa (2018) noted this weakness when he submitted that the SNA could not contain and defeat *Al Shabaab*, and the terror group may resurge on AMISOM's exit. Clannism and political squabbles beleaguer the SSF and adversely affect the professionalism and dependability as guarantors of Somalia's. The STP portrays this whereby the security forces of federal member states such as JSF or Ras Kiamboni Brigade (RKB) are not considered within the CONOP due to political considerations. It will likely flare up post-AMISOM, further denting SSF's capacity to secure Somalia.

Perceptions and support by the local population of the host country are essential in any PSO such as AMISOM. Such population support helps in what Ligawa, Okoth, and Matanga (2017, p. 5) refer to as 'cultural intelligence' that enables the collection of information about *Al Shabaab* and the isolation of the terror group from the populace. However, William and Hashi (2016, p. 37) claim that the operations of AMISOM caused public support to wane. It was partly an exacerbating factor leading to swarming attacks on AMISOM bases between 2015 and 2020. However, the public support claims lack statistical backing and rely on unverifiable claims. For AMISOM transition under the STP framework, public support is critical. Madeira (2022) is optimistic that public support for AMISOM has improved, thus facilitating transition activities. These challenges require concerted efforts by all the stakeholders to resolve as the AMISOM transition continues.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

### 2.2.1 Functionalism Theory

This theory is associated with sociologists such as Durkheim (1984) and Parsons (1971), Spencer (1993), and Merton (1968), who dominated American social theory in the 1950s and 1960s with the structural-functionalist paradigm. These social theorists were interested in how possibilities of social order and how society remains relatively stable (Gómez-Diago, 2020). Functionalist theory posits that society is more than the sum of its parts; instead, each aspect of it works for the stability of the whole (Durkheim, 1984).

According to Gómez-Diago (2020), functionalist theory focuses on the functions of social structures such as institutions, hierarchies, and norms. Functionalist theory operationalizes the term 'function' as the extent to which a given activity promotes or interferes with the maintenance of a system (Gómez-Diago, 2020). This structural perspective views society as a system where constituent parts have a role to play in adequately functioning the whole system within a consensus of norms and goals (Brown, 1965).

When dysfunction exists in one or more constituent parts of society, the rest of the system is functionally affected and has to adjust or remedy the anomie (Levin, 2021). According to functionalist theorists, the various components of society entail the institutions that perform various interdependent role (Crossman, 2020). The institutions include, inter alia, family, government, economy, media, education, and religion.

This theory provides the broad context within which this study will be set. While functionalist theory looks at the macro aspects of sociology within a state (Crossman, 2020), the study expanded this paradigm to multilateral levels within regionalism. To contextualise the implications of AMISOM transition to Kenya's national security, the study construed society as the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the various AMISOM TCCs, and international organizations such as the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), and European (EU), among others. These states and institutions function within the context of PSO and work to restore peace and stability of states that affect the national security of other neighbouring states, such as Kenya.



Thus, functionalism theory was apt for this study since it set the broad context within which the problem was understood in line with the rational realist philosophy that required consideration of internal and external environments within which a state exists and functions to appreciate their responses. However, the theory has been criticized for being pro-status quo and opposed to disturbances of social order (Crossman, 2020), which is inevitable, more so in the form of conflicts. Besides, the theory does not advise how a state can identify, define and respond to social disturbances through conflicts in a multilateral context. The strategic theory remedied it.

### 2.2.2 Strategic Theory

The strategic theory was propounded through the works of Schelling (1984), a classical strategic theorist. The theory posits that to optimize outcomes, all the possibilities and forces at play, including costs and risks, and decisions and consequences, should be considered against those of adversaries or allies. It requires planners to adjust ends to means in employing resources to attain national security objectives.

Scholars note that strategic theory studies correlations between ends and means (Smith, 2008). It implies the use, threat of use, of armed forces as a conscious choice of political actors' intent on rationally pursuing their national security objectives. Yager (2006, p.2) notes that strategic theory is anchored on seven key assumptions, viz: the importance of considering ends and means; the centrality of the political actor as the unit of analysis; understanding the political actor's value system and preferences; the more comprehensive strategic environment will influence an actor's interest; the actor behaving rationally in pursuit of aims; the acceptance of clashing interests and the observance of moral neutrality.

The strategic theory is vital in comprehending the decision-making process concerning military power and its use in pursuing national security objectives. Thus, the theory was suitable for the study since it explained the need for careful planning that considers all possible permutations and combinations when pursuing national objectives in the context of multinational engagements and military operations. It includes careful planning through the continuum of conflicts, including transitions and terminations. The theory complimented the functionalist theory by emphasizing the need for detailed but rationalistic plans that aid a state in attaining its interests and objectives in multilateral and bilateral engagements.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey research design adopting a mixed methods approach. The study was conducted in Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu counties. The target population was 3,340 respondents comprising Security Personnel, County officials, Kenya National Police Service (KNPS) officials, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) officials, Immigration Officials and community elders. The study used cluster and purposive sampling to select respondents and key informants. A sample of 400 respondents and 49 key informants were selected for the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for quantitative data and thematically for qualitative data. The results were presented using descriptive statistics such as percentages, charts, graphs, frequency distribution, and thematic analysis of the excerpts.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Response Rates

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect responses to primary data from the selected respondents. The response rate is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Response rate*

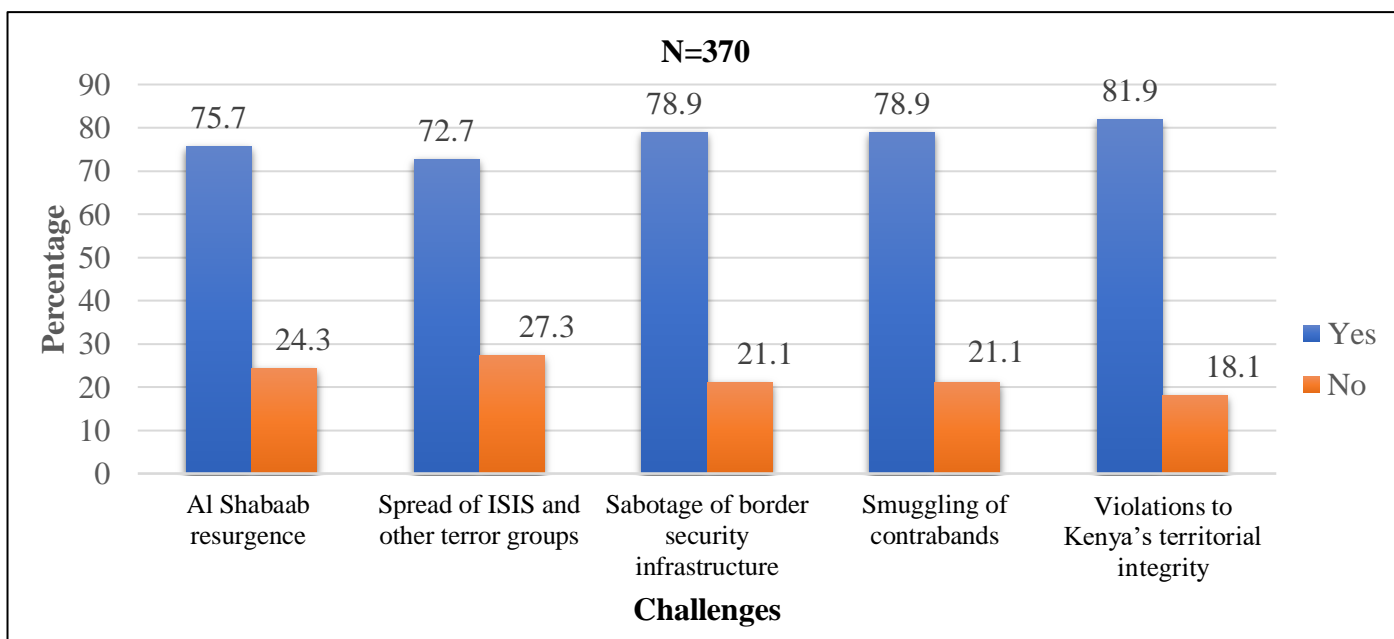
	Frequency	Percentage
Returned Questionnaires	370	92.5%
Unreturned Questionnaires	30	7.5%
Total	399	100%

Table 1 indicated the response rate being at 92.5%. The response was adequate to represent the target population. Kumar (2014, p. 141) advised that in social sciences, a response rate of at least 50% is adequate for producing accurate

estimations when using questionnaires. Therefore, the response rate for this research was significantly high; thus, the data could provide a reliable generalization to the study population.

#### 4.1.1 Challenges to Kenya's National Security from the Transition of the Kenyan Contingent in AMISOM

Presented in Figure 1 is the respondents' perception of challenges to Kenya's national security arising from the transition of the Kenyan contingent in AMISOM.



**Figure 1**  
*Challenges to Kenya's National Security Arising from the Transition of the Kenyan Contingent in AMISOM*

Study findings in Figure 1 indicate a majority concurrence in Kenya's national security challenges from the AMISOM transition. These challenges are consequentialist in orientation, although most have been existing and are persistent through the instabilities in Somalia. In regards to the Al-Shabaab resurgence, a majority 75.7% of the respondents identified it as a challenge to Kenya's national security ensuing from the AMISOM transition. The findings support the observation by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Strategic Direction South Hub (NSD-S HUB) (2020) that, like other terrorist organizations, Al-Shabaab poses resilience and the ability to resurface after the exit of AMISOM from Somalia. The examples from Iraq and Afghanistan also motivate Al-Shabaab. With a weak FGS and SSF post-AMISOM, Al-Shabaab's resurgence will threaten Kenya and beyond security.

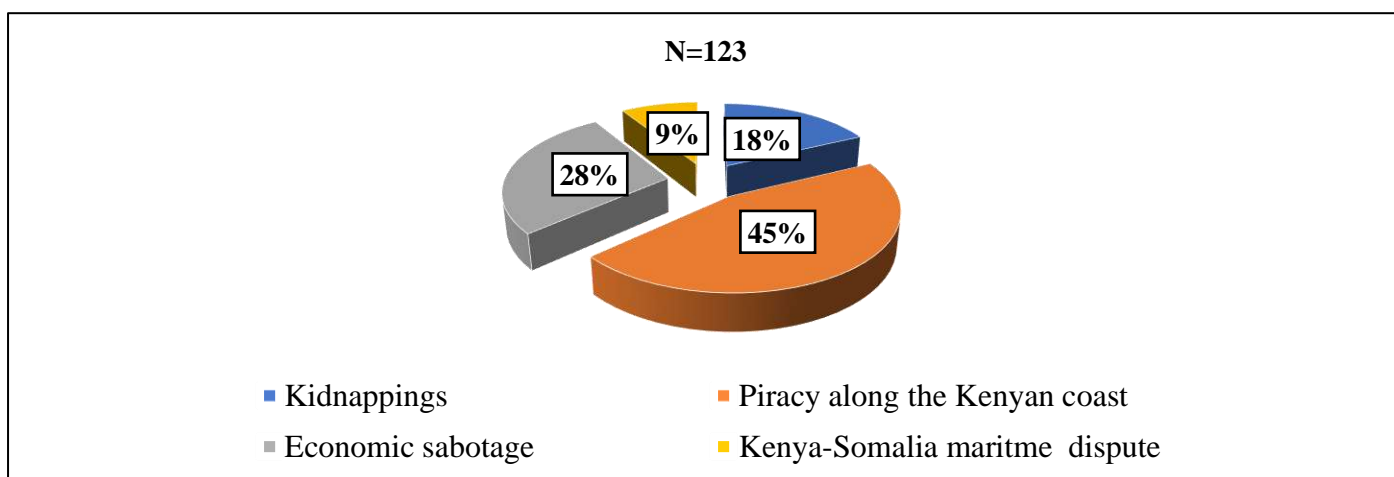
Al-Shabaab's resurgence connects with the spread of terror groups such as ISIL into the African enclave. It was affirmed by 72.7% of the respondents. Sections of Al-Shabaab have pledged allegiance to ISIS/L and are working to establish an Islamic in Central Africa Province (ISCAP). It includes the geographic areas defining Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and DRC, among others, compounding the effects of transboundary insurgency in the greater Horn of Africa (HoA), as Okoth (2018) observed. Operations of ISIL and affiliates close to Kenya will be a security challenge, especially in NFD areas.

Notably, 78.9% of the respondents identified the sabotage of border management infrastructure as a challenge to national security ensuing from the AMISOM transition. Border security management infrastructure is lacking at the shared border, thus characterizing it as porous. This finding supports the observation by Bartlett (2021) that the border securitisation programme will face challenges in terms of sabotage activities upon the exit of the KDF from Somalia. Moreover, it lends credence to the findings by Chumba (2016) that Kenya's strategy of building a wall along parts of the border is a short-term strategy that cannot solve the underlying problems of terrorism. Mutisya (2017) and Opon (2015) advocated for a comprehensive border security management infrastructure leveraging, inter alia, on technology and community engagement. The construction of a border wall at the shared border between Kenya and Somalia has not progressed as expected, and there are significant portions where the construction materials have been vandalised. The Al-Shabaab and the community are implicated in the vandalism, and it will likely escalate in post-AMISOM Somalia, posing continuation in weak border controls.

Weak border control facilitates the smuggling of contrabands, SALWs, illegal immigration, and uncontrolled movements across the border by pastoralists, occasioning conflicts (Opon, 2015). As a challenge to Kenya's national security, 78.9% of the respondents identified contraband smuggling. Illegal trade has characterized the NFD due to instabilities in Somalia and the lack of border controls. Jubat (2019) estimated that about 15,000 bags of sugar worth more than seventy-two million Kenya shillings are smuggled daily through the porous border of Somalia, occasioning an estimated 5 million loss in tax revenue daily for Kenya. This impact negatively on economic security as a component of national security through unfair pricing competition, the collapse of local industries, poor quality controls, and loss of jobs, among others. Moreover, it validates the argument by Opon (2015:5) that illegal transboundary activities provide funding for terrorism besides availing opportunities for security officials to engage in corruption, thereby aggravating National security risks.

In totality, the challenges bear negatively on the territorial integrity of Kenya. Al-Shabaab threats and incursions, the spread of ISIL, weak borders and smuggling impinge on the sanctity of Kenya's territorial integrity and national security. Violation of territorial integrity was identified as a challenge to Kenya's national security by 81.9% of the respondents. Besides the identified challenges, *Agence France-Presse* (AFP) noted that the federal forces of Somalia have been implicated in an aggressive incursion into the Bula Hawa area of Mandera county in 2020 (AFP, 2020). The disrespect of international provisions relating to international borders by SSF indicates their level of professionalism and aggression tendencies. It poses threats not only from Al-Shabaab and other criminal entities but also from the SSF that may occasion diplomatic rows.

In order to expand the discourse on challenges to Kenya's national security from the AMISOM transition, the study sought additional challenges from the respondents. The findings were as depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2**

*Additional Challenges to Kenya's National Security Arising from the Transition of the Kenyan Contingent in AMISOM*

The respondents pointed to four additional significant challenges to Kenya's national security from the AMISOM transition: Kidnappings, piracy along the Kenyan coast, economic sabotage and maritime dispute, all of which are consequentialist. As indicated in Figure 2, a higher proportion (45%) of the respondents noted that piracy along the Kenyan coast would be a challenge, while 28% of the respondents revealed that economic sabotage would be a challenge, 18% indicated that kidnappings would be a challenge and 8% indicated that maritime border dispute would be a challenge.

The findings support Mutisya's (2017) and Opon's (2015) arguments that the border's porosity and scarcity in security deployment exacerbate insecurity in NFD. Moreover, the findings corroborate those depicted in Figure 1 in that weak FGS/SSF, poor border management, and the threat of Al-Shabaab resurgence will be facilitative factors for the challenges. Piracy along the coast was effectively dealt with after Kenya entered Somalia and captured Kismayu (Migue et al., 2012; Kagwanja et al., 2020). Post-AMISOM, weak SSF and Al-Shabaab resurgence and recapture of liberated areas may result in the resumption of piracy at the coast of Kenya, especially in the areas of Lamu.

Kidnappings for ransom in the NFD and coastal areas and piracy will precipitate economic sabotage in Kenya, compounding the effects of other economically damaging activities such as smuggling contraband goods. Although International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered a ruling, the issue of maritime dispute technically remains outstanding since Kenya did not recognize ICJ's ruling (Elias, 2021). With a scenario of stability in post-AMISOM Somalia, the



maritime dispute will remain a cause of disagreement between Somalia and Kenya. The identified challenges are supported by views expressed by a key informant as follows:

Al-Shabaab will increase their attacks, forced recruitment and kidnappings after KDF leaves Somalia. The effects of Al-Shabaab are minimal due to our forces being in Somalia. However, they still get through and threaten the community (Interview with a Community elder in Buji Garas, Wajir County, on 15 December 2022).

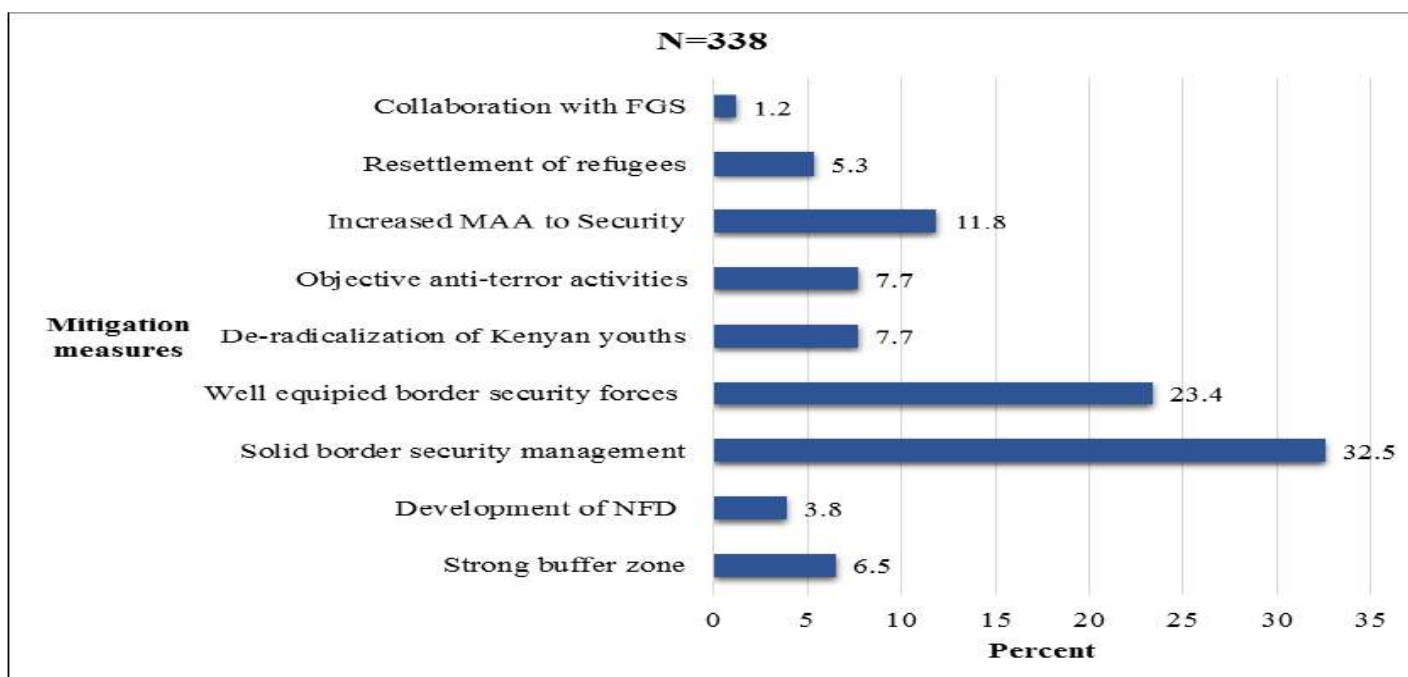
Correspondingly, another key informant observed that: The operations by KDF in Boni Forest have enabled the communities within to continue with daily activities, although there is still much fear. The expansive forest offers hiding places for the Al-Shabaab, and they can strike at any time. The navy has done well in the ocean, and our fishermen are well protected. The community fears that when KDF leaves Somalia and Boni forest, Al-Shabaab will take over the forest and ocean. We hope permanent bases will be established here to contain Al-Shabaab and other security threats (Interview with a County Administrator in Kiunga, Lamu County, interviewed on 16 November 2022).

The opinions of the Key informants sum up the fears of the communities proximal to the border with Somalia. These communities are the ones who will face the immediate impacts. This assertion finds support from observations by scholars that border communities characterized by socio-cultural homogeneity and marginality tend to suffer the negative security impacts of porous borders (Gurganus & Rumer, 2019; Starr & Thomas, 2010; Zondi & Réjouis, 2006). All the identified challenges will have national security implications. Therefore, mitigation measures are essential in the face of the challenges and taking a cue from responses to national security implications, which is the subject of the following subsection.

#### 4.1.2 Mitigation Measures for Challenges to Kenya’s National Security from AMISOM Transition

The concept of mitigation measures for challenges to Kenya's national security due to the AMISOM transition lends credence to securitisation and strategizing within a functionalist context and guided by rational realism. At the state level, the function rests with the government and its parliament, as espoused by Opondo (2018, p. 377). The government and its agencies have the latitude of means to engage at bilateral and multilateral levels to advance its interests. This latitude is structured along the concept of DIME as an instrument of national power.

Mitigating the challenges to national security requires a proactive approach by strategists and responsible government agencies. It is in the context of the OODA loop and flexibility in plans for engaging the Diplomatic, Information, Military Economic (DIME) of national power (Luft, 2020; Nzau, 2018). In this perspective, the study sought respondents' views on what mitigation measures were required for the challenges to Kenya's national security arising from the transition of the Kenyan contingent from AMISOM. An open-ended question was posed, and the responses aggregated around common themes. The findings were as depicted in Figure 3.



**Figure 3**  
*Mitigation Measures for Challenges to Kenya's National Security from the AMISOM Transition*

Study findings in Figure 3 infer some ranked preference in the mitigation measures, with a higher proportion (32.5%) of the respondents indicating the need for solid border security management. This was followed by well-equipped border security forces as proposed by 23.4% of the respondents, increased Multi-Agency Approach (MAA) as an approach to national security espoused by 11.8% of the respondents and the need for a strong buffer zone as opined by 6.5% of the respondents.

The findings support the propositions by Kagwanja et al. (2020) on the need for proper border security management and a buffer zone in Jubaland free of Al-Shabaab for the security and stability of Kenya. Moreover, Mutisya (2017) and Kibusia (2020) identified the need for well-structured and inclusive border security projects meaningfully engage the community in an MAA framework. It further supports the recommendation by Kimokoti (2016, pp. 224-225) for the need to establish control over porous borders through coordinated and integrated inter-ethnic for, strengthening peacebuilding blocs, dealing with perpetrators of conflict, improving security personnel and strengthening capacity building.

Most of the responses were introspective with respondents indicating mitigation measures that should be implemented within Kenya. Besides the first four in terms of ranking, respondents suggested de-radicalisation of youths (7.7%) and objective anti-terror activities (7.7%), respectively. In comparison, 3.8% believed that the NFD's socioeconomic development would mitigate challenges to national security from the AMISOM transition. These propositions by respondents lend credence to the submission by Breidlid (2021), as well as Chitembwe (2021), on the need to recast the approach to counterterrorism and radicalisation from a theological perspective (Islam as a risk factor) to a multi-causal lens that allows objective mitigation approaches. Rink and Sharma (2018) observed de-radicalisation similarly after establishing that economic marginalisation contributed 29% among the drivers of extremism in Kenya's Coast and North Eastern Regions. The findings further support the hypothesis of marginality predisposing NFD to impacts of AMISOM transition and Somalia instability. Similarly, it was established in a study by Chumba (2016) that socioeconomic and political marginalisation of youth, lack of inclusivity and ethnic discrimination led to a perception of oppression by state agencies while executing counterterrorism in North Eastern Kenya.

Besides a buffer zone in Jubaland- as espoused by 6.5% of the respondents, outward-looking mitigation measures for challenges to Kenya's national security from the AMISOM transition entailed: the resettlement of refugees as suggested by 5.3% of the respondents and collaboration with FGS as put forward by 1.2% of the respondents. The Kenyan government securitised the issue of resettling refugees from Dadaab as harbourers for terrorists who threatened NFD and Kenya's hinterland, such as Nairobi. It is a notion supported by Matanga and Muchilwa (2018) as well as Mativo (2014) when they posited that in the case of Kenya, refugees had posed a threat not only to conventional state security but also to human security evidenced by undue pressure depleting socioeconomic resources and amenities. Furthermore, Iteyo (2018, p. 399) surmised that while refugees have resulted from conflicts in East Africa, they pose a humanitarian challenge and security concerns.

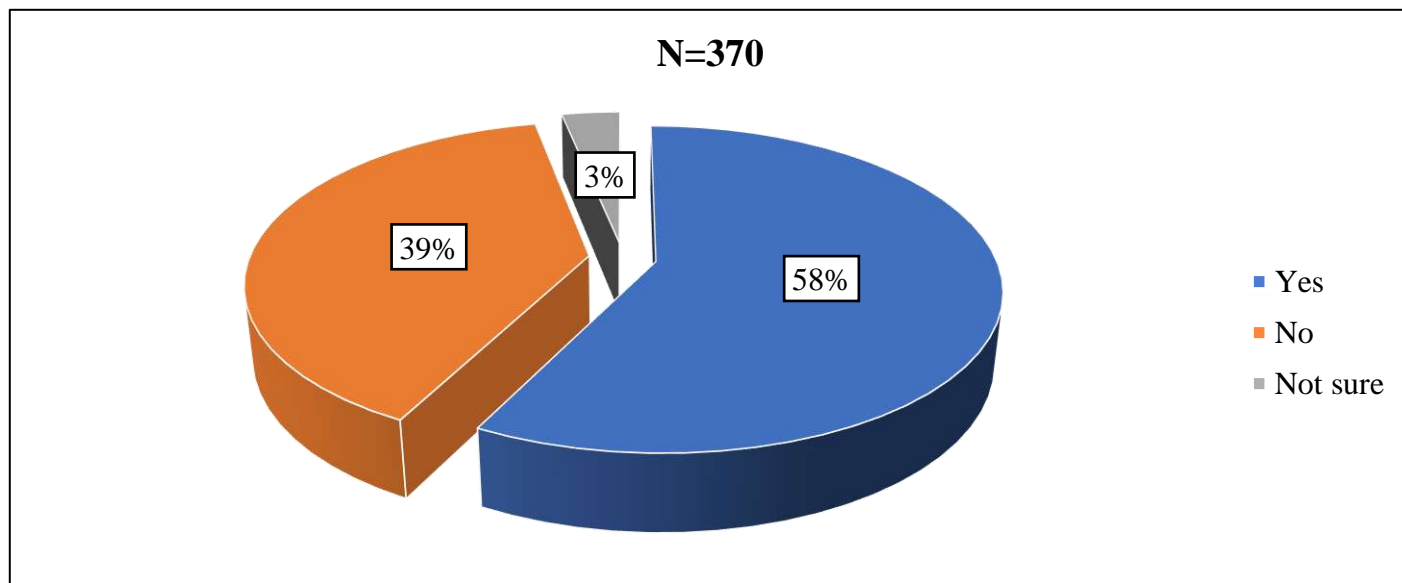
In consultation with United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Kenyan government asserted the resettlement of refugees as a mitigation measure to national security challenges arising from AMISOM. After a 14 days ultimatum to close the Dadaab refugee camp complex in March 2021, a sustainable right-based plan was presented by UNHCR with projected closure by June 2022 (UNHCR, 2021). Kagwanja et al. (2020) indicated that suitable Somalia refugee's resettlement areas would include Kismayu, Dhobley and Hosingo due to the marked improvement in security. Inter alia, the issue of refugee repatriation and resettlement requires collaboration with UNHCR, FGS and relevant stakeholders. Collaboration with FGS in a stable scenario will transcend issues of refugees and incorporate diplomacy, economy, and security in a bilateral context. Whether Kenya's government realizes the challenges and institution mechanisms remains uncertain. In the following subsection, the study sought to establish respondents' perceptions on whether the mechanisms are available for mitigation.

#### **4.1.3 Mechanisms to Mitigate Challenges to Kenya's National Security from the AMISOM transition**

As noted by scholars, strategy is the correlation between ends and means (Smith, 2008). In this sense, the national security objectives (ends) and the means (mitigation and responses) to achieve them have to be correlated by mechanisms in the form of structures and measure for the implementation of the means. While the problem of challenges and implications to national security ought to be defined and the mitigation measures determined through strategy and bargaining, mechanisms such as force deployments, intelligence gathering and sharing, border security management, Winning Hearts Minds (WHAM) in the form of de-marginalisation, collaborative diplomacy, anticipatory measures for border conflicts, among others, are essential for national security.

The existence of such mechanisms in the context of Kenya and Somalia has remained uncertain, and where they exist, they are feeble. Therefore, the study sought respondents' perceptions of mechanisms for mitigating challenges to Kenya's national security due to the AMISOM transition. The findings depicted in Figure 6.8 indicate that 58% of the

respondents affirmed the existence of such mechanisms, 39% indicated that such mechanisms do not exist, and 3% were unsure.



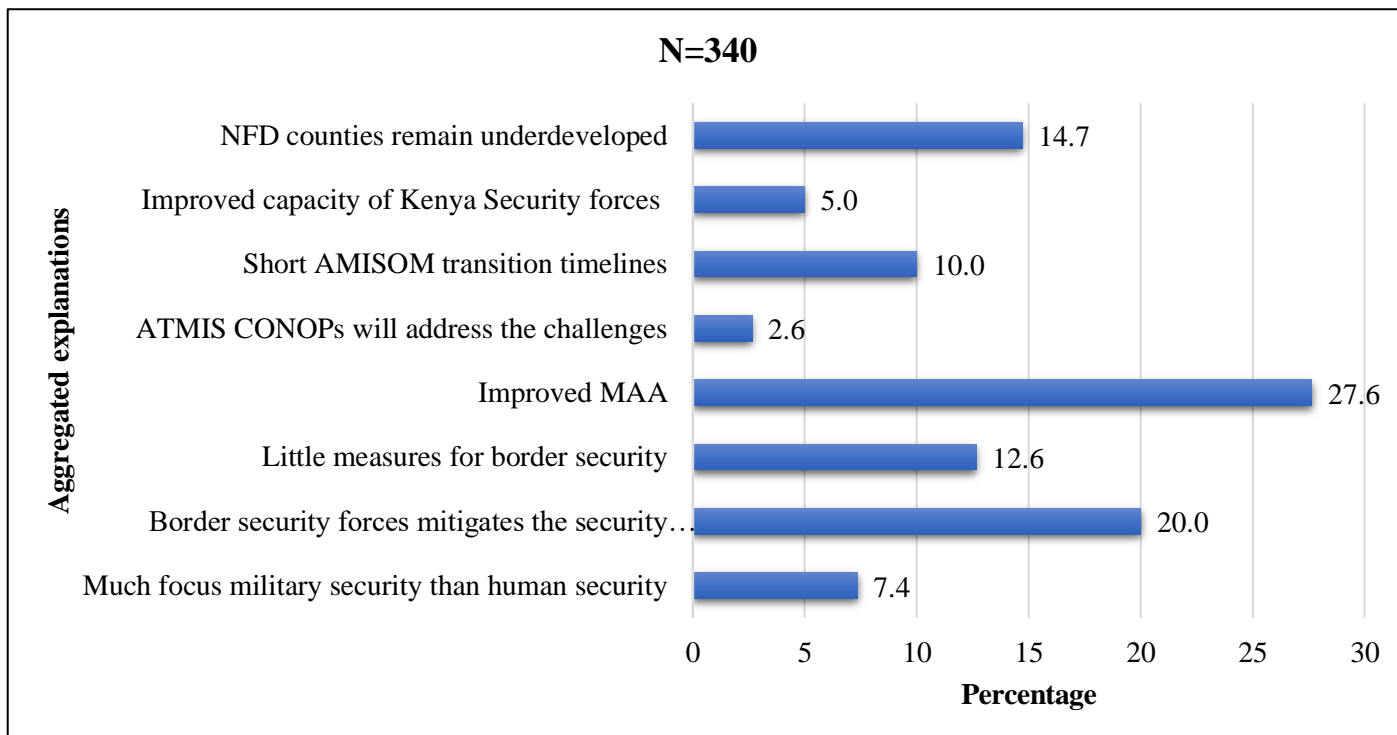
**Figure 4**  
*Existence of Mechanisms to Mitigate Challenges to Kenya's National Security*

The findings support the assertion by Ligawa (2018) and Chumba (2016), who advocated the importance of instituting mechanisms for operational and logistics coordination, intelligence sharing, maintenance of institutional memory, monitoring and reporting, and funding, among others. While Ligawa's (2018) arguments were made in the context of peacebuilding in Somalia, they remain relevant for this study since they telegraph AMISOM PSO national security implications and challenges from Somalia through the shared border into Kenya. Thus, such mechanisms within Kenya and in a bilateral and multilateral context remain critical for national security.

The affirmation by the majority of the respondents owes to the fact that there are security bases in the NFD and Boni, as well as the engagement of KDF in AMISOM since 2011. Besides, there are plans for border security infrastructure in the form of a border fence. However, these measures remain weak, as indicated by the infiltration of Al-Shabaab into Kenya almost at will. The expansive NFD and Boni terrain makes it impossible for total domination (Haider, 2020). The same scenario ails AMISOM deployments and is aggravated by reduced forces and redeployments that result in abandoning liberated areas (Williams et al., 2018).

The border securitisation programme also has technically stalled due to sabotage by Al-Shabaab and the community (Bartlett, 2021). The lack of security along the border makes it impossible for the establishment and operation of border control measures such as customs and immigration. These can only be found in minimal versions deployed in secured significant towns such as Garissa, Liboi, Kiunga, Gherille, Diif, Wajir, Elwak, and Mandera. Most of these locations are up to 200 kilometres away from border points, thus making it easy for evasions. Inter alia, these observations support the hypothesis of feeble mechanisms for mitigating national security challenges and, therefore, the negation of such existence by 39% of the respondents.

In order to expand the discourse further, the respondents were asked to explain their responses regarding the presence of mechanisms to mitigate challenges to national security from the AMISOM transition. The findings are depicted in Figure 5.



**Figure 5**  
*Explanations of the Existence of Mechanisms to Mitigate Challenges to Kenya's National Security*

Study findings presented in Figure 5 revealed that those who affirmed the existence of such measures based their views on improved MAA as an approach to security (26.7% of the respondents), deployment of security forces along the border (20% of the respondents), improved capacity of Kenya security forces through modernization programme (5% of the respondents) and ATMIS CONOPs (2.6% of the respondents). The affirming explanations align with Kibusia's (2020) submissions on the significance of MAA as an all-inclusive approach to national security, entailing the collaboration of government departments and agencies, Civil Societies Organizations (CSO), and Non-Government Organizations (NGO), among others. Besides, the findings support Mutisya's (2017) proposal for a meaningful border security management programme that does not alienate the community or disrupt their socioeconomic and cultural activities. Partly, the explanations advanced by the respondents correspond to the need for layered security measures, as espoused by Kagwanja et al. (2020), entailing deployments, border fences, trenches and roads, and surveillance systems, among others. Besides, it reflects the recommendation by Kimokoti (2016, p. 224-225) for the need to establish control over porous borders through coordinated and integrated inter-ethnic fora, strengthening peacebuilding blocs, dealing with perpetrators of conflict, improving security personnel and strengthening capacity building.

The refuting respondents based their perspectives on the fact that: NFD remains underdeveloped (14.7% of the respondents), there are few measures for border security (12.6% of the respondents), and AMISOM PSO transition timelines have been short (10% of the respondents). As noted earlier, mechanisms for mitigating challenges and implications to national security along NFD and Lamu remain scanty. The deployments are far apart, and some are temporary, thus unable to cover the expansive areas. The border securitisation programme is technically stalled (Bartlett, 2021). The development of the NFD, as in most Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) areas, still lags. It reinforces a sense of marginalisation and thus weakens faith in the government (Mowat, 2015; Chumba, 2016).

Furthermore, the marginality argument is supported by 7.4% of the respondents who noted that measures in the NFD focus much on militaristic approaches rather than adopting the broader concept of human security entailing economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. Most of these aspects contribute to marginality and have been observed that they are not catered for in ASAL areas.

As part of strategizing and bargaining responses and mitigation for challenges to national security, having mechanisms and structures in place remains essential in actualizing the strategies. On mitigation measures and the presence of mechanisms, the aspects are introspective, requiring the strengthening of homeland defences in the understanding that KDF must exit Somalia eventually (Kagwanja et al., 2020). With the passage of time and marginal



improvements in Somalia's stability conditions, homeland defence has become the best strategic option. MAA approach to security is thereby essential (Kibusia, 2021). Key agencies include the National Security Advisory Council (NSAC), the national assembly, relevant ministries, KDF, NPS, National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), National Intelligence Service (NIS), KRA, immigration, relevant CSOs and NGOs. The role of County Governments has to be mainstreamed in the national security architecture and policy since they form critical but omitted stakeholders.

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

This section presents results of the correlation between the transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia and Kenya’s National Security. Results are captured in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Correlation Matrix*

		Kenya’s National Security	Impacts to Kenya National Security
Kenya’s National Security	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Impacts to Kenya National Security	Pearson Correlation	-.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N =370			

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia ( $r = -.525, p = .000 < .05$ ) had a negative and significant relationship with Kenya’s National Security. This implies that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia negatively influences Kenya’s National Security.

#### 4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent of prediction of independent variable on the dependent variable. Model summary, ANOVA, and coefficient results are presented in Table 3, Table 4, and Tables 5 respectively.

**Table 3**  
*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.525a	0.275	0.273	0.687

a Predictors: (Constant), Impacts to Kenya National Security

Table 3 shows an R square of 0.275, which means that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia explained 27.5% of variations in Kenya’s National Security. The validity of the model is also validated using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Analysis of Variance*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.078	1	66.078	139.893	.000
	Residual	173.824	368	0.472		
	Total	239.903	369			

a Dependent Variable: Kenya’s National Security

b Predictors: (Constant), Impacts to Kenya National Security

Table 4 indicates an F statistic of 139.893 and a p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This implies that the study model was statistically significant (excellent fit) in predicting the dependent variable. This confirms that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia significantly predicts Kenya’s National Security. The regression weights in the model are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Regression Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.531	0.133		26.559	0.000
	Impacts to Kenya National Security	-0.368	0.031	-0.525	-11.828	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Kenya's National Security

Table 5 indicates that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia had a negative and significant influence on Kenya's National Security ( $\beta = -0.368$ ,  $P = .000 < .05$ ). The results implied that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia negatively influences Kenya's National Security.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that Kenya's troop withdrawal from AMISOM presents a security tightrope walk. While there are opportunities to strengthen border security and weaken terror groups, significant challenges exist that could impede a smooth transition. Weak Somali security forces and a fragile government leave Kenya vulnerable; insufficient funding for the transition and AMISOM itself hamper effectiveness; the short transition timeline raises concerns about Somalia's readiness; resurgence of terror groups like Al-Shabaab poses a direct threat to Kenya and border security issues like smuggling and territorial disputes add to the strain.

A number of opportunities emerge. These include influencing the Security Transition Plan (STP) to prioritize border security; strengthening the Jubaland buffer zone to create a safe zone along the border; supporting Somalia's DDR efforts to weaken terror groups; investing in the development of border counties and implementing comprehensive border security measures to improve overall security. By addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities presented by the AMISOM transition, Kenya can navigate this security tightrope and enhance its national security.

Correlation analysis indicated that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia ( $r = -.525$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ) has a significant negative relationship with Kenya's National Security; which implied a negative effect on Kenya's National Security. Regression analysis indicated an R square of 0.275, which means that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia explained 27.5% of variations in Kenya's National Security. It was validated by ANOVA which indicated an F statistic of 139.893 and a p value of  $0.000 < .05$ . This implies that the study model was statistically significant (excellent fit) in predicting the dependent variable. This confirms that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia significantly predicts Kenya's National Security. Finally, the regression weights model showed that transition of Kenyan Contingent in African Union Mission in Somalia had a negative and significant influence on Kenya's National Security ( $\beta = -0.368$ ,  $P = .000 < .05$ ). The study thus concluded that Kenya's National Security is negatively affected by Transition of Kenyan Contingent from AMISOM.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommended that Kenya consider and securitise the impacts of the AMISOM transition on national security. The platform afforded by Kenya's membership and participation in UN, AU, IGAD and AMISOM ought to be utilised to shape the transition and ensure a capable JSF and stable Jubaland. Besides, homeland defence measures should be instituted through solid border security management, deployment of security forces with the right mix of capabilities in the border counties, de-marginalisation measures for border counties, engaging Track 3 diplomacy for community participation, as well as cross-border collaboration. The border security programme should be actualised as a matter of national security. These measures should be implemented in the framework of multiagency approaches to security and development.

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