

## **What Can We Learn from Qualitative In-depth Case-studies of External Interventions: Insights from Somalia (2006-2010)**

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The rise of the islamist movement- the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)- in Somalia in 2006 was particularly significant for Ethiopia, as it had the potential to revive Pan-Somali solidarity and for the United States for the presence within the ICU of hard-line islamists linked to al-Qae'da Eastern Africa's cell.

Ethiopia's forcible intervention in the follow-up to the invitation issued by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in December 2006 led to the ousting of the ICU from the capital by the combined forces of Ethiopia and of the Somali interim government headed by President Abdillahi Yusuf. Ethiopia's intervention was contested and resisted by a myriad of actors within Somalia. Indeed, during its ascendancy between June and December 2006 the ICU had managed to restore some order in the capital and in other areas under its control, mainly in southern Somalia. The United Nations Security Council authorised the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM, under a Chapter VII Resolution (UNSC/RES/1744) on 20 February 2007. The African Union deployed the first contingent of peacekeepers in the capital on 6 March 2007. AMISOM has managed to mobilize a contingent of 3126 and 5200 peacekeepers from Burundi and Uganda respectively.

Al-shabaab (which is on the US list of terrorist organisations since 2008) justified the insurgency on the basis of the presence of foreign forces in Somalia (the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) and AMISOM), on the illegitimacy of the former TFG led by Abdillahi Yusuf and on its aim to implement sharia (Islamic law) across Somalia. The election of President Sharif in the context of the Djibouti political process addressed these grievances. However, ever since 2007 insurgency has remained unabated leading to an escalation of violence and to an estimated 18,000-20,000 casualties.

This paper argues that the combined external interventions of both a regional actor and extra-regional actors led to the radicalization of the militant islamist movement. The case-study shows that in order to understand the rise and fall, and subsequent radicalization of the militant islamist movement in Somalia a more nuanced understanding is needed. By doing so the paper will discuss the constraints and limits of quantitative based assessments of external interventions. Indeed without complementary insights from in-depth case-studies the coding of external interventions fails to capture the intricacies of the interplay between the domestic, regional and global political arenas.