

ETHIOPIAN MILITARY IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS



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ABBREVIATIONS

AIAI	Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ATMIS	African Transition Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EPDM	Ethiopian People Democratic Movement (EPDM)
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESAF	Eastern Africa Standby Force
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FGDs	Focus group Discussions
FOBs	Forward Operating Bases
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo.
NARC	North African Regional Capability
OAU	Organisation for African Unity

OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PSO	Peace Support Operation
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
TFGS	Transitional Federal Government of Somalia
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
TTCs	Troop Contributing Countries
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPKOs	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: CLARITY ON CONTEXT, RATIONALE, AND PURPOSE

Background

Aggregating how African Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) executed their participation in international peace operations, it is tempting to poke into the weakness of the realist or neo-realist explanations (as well as other mainstream explanations of Western theoretical positions) of the motive and rationale behind African states' commitment to the continent's peace and security agenda. Drawing from the Ethiopian example and other instances, it is increasingly evident that we need to develop new lenses, thinking, and explanations that draw from African contributions to aid strategy/policy development and operational approaches. It is important to note that the African-ness of a contribution speaks to the nature and character of its content. This will benefit the African-led solutions and African ownership approach track.

This publication highlights Ethiopia's participation in international peace operations to capture lessons learned and call for the peace and security community to do the same for other African contributions to successful international peace operations. Although this publication does not seek to engage in a theoretical debate, it serves a dual purpose to a reasonable extent to aid both policy and academic communities. On the one hand, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) institutions (policy-wise), for example, need to continually enrich their knowledge of lessons learned and valuable practices by African states to improve the impact and sustainability of peace intervention. On the other hand (academic), knowing about and understanding the practice of an African state in international peace operations, its premise, and origins for critical interrogation is essential for theory development by African scholars. Note that a theory cannot be a theory if it is divorced from reality.

Ethiopia's active participation in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions began in the 1950s. By 2024, the East African country was already one of the top peacekeepers and civilian personnel contributors to peacekeeping missions, and its contribution to peacekeeping extends beyond Africa. Even though Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions are not without criticism, it developed as an essential force for stability, security, and peace in its region, the continent, and beyond over the decades.

The Imperial Ethiopian Government under Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930–1974) sent peacekeeping troops to Korea, Congo, and the Jammu and Kashmir contested regions between India and Pakistan. Ethiopia also participated in peacekeeping missions in Sudan and South Sudan for almost a decade: the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Ethiopia was the only troop contributor to the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) at the disputed border region between South Sudan and Sudan. It also joined the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in 2014 and deployed troops under a bilateral agreement with the Somali government to support its troops under AMISOM. It continued the same arrangement under the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Ethiopia played a complex role in conflict and peace, proven by its contribution to peacekeeping intervention (Sigatu, 2024).

The demand for peacekeepers, especially in Africa, and especially for robust peace enforcement missions, is high due to violence and instability, which offers entry points for active terrorist organisations like al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and ISIS, which have links with global terrorist networks. It will likely increase with the re-emergence of civil wars, coups on the continent, and other possible root and proximate causes. Thus, we must take the lessons-learned approach more seriously while equally continuing to invest in early warning and conflict prevention. In this vein, this publication may serve as a motivation to go deeper into understanding the contribution of African TCCs. Africa and African institutions need such an approach now more than ever; specifically, APSA institutions need as much intellectual support as relevant stakeholders can provide.

Context and Rationale

This publication is a collection of three interlinked policy papers. They were developed within a broader context of research conducted by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) as part of the project titled ‘A Human Security Approach to Peace Support Missions: Lessons from AMISOM’. The research was supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and done in close collaboration with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Defence War College. The study focuses specifically on the military principles and practices of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), with a particular focus on the Ethiopian contingent deployed in Somalia under AMISOM.

The aim of this publication is not to endorse the efforts of the Ethiopian contingent specifically but to demonstrate (1) a potentially effective implementation model of the principle of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) at the operational/grass-roots levels and (2) the need to pay more attention to African TCCs’ contributions in peace missions. The ENDF’s practical experience in AMISOM and ATMIS can serve as valuable instances from which relevant institutions may draw best practices, and other TCCs probably offer similar value. Despite the recent internal conflict, Ethiopia’s contribution to AU-led peace operations has been crucial for mitigating threats to regional stability. This fit is owed to extensive efforts by the Ethiopian military to implement its doctrines at the operational level. Also, note that contexts and armed actors evolve and adaptability and responsiveness, or the lack of one or both, of TCCs in this regard can make or mar peace missions.

The conversation of this publication begins with the policy paper titled “*Doctrines and Principles of the Ethiopian Military in International Peace Operations*”; followed by “*Contesting Norms and Doctrines in Peace Support Operations: The Ethiopian Perspective and Experience*”; and concludes with “*What You Need to Know: The Experience of Ethiopian Contingent in AMISOM and ATMIS*”. The rationale behind this arrangement is to move from origins to its distinction between the popular approach to peacekeeping and the conclusion with practical experience, citing the Ethiopian contingent’s role in AMISOM and ATMIS. Thus, we offer a starting point to trace Ethiopia’s contribution to PSOs from origin to practice. By this, reference points for lessons or a snow-balling approach to harvesting lessons may commence.

In “*Doctrines and Principles of the Ethiopian Military in International Peace Operations*”, the authors indicate how the Ethiopian culture, history, religion and people serve as the roots of the overall principles and operational doctrines of the ENDF. These roots inform the mode of operation of its different deployments. These operational doctrines have been in use since its first mission to Korea in the 1950s and have not changed. To a large extent, successful trust-building with local communities in host countries and mission successes can be traced to those roots.

The authors further the discussion in *Contesting Norms and Doctrines in Peace Support Operations: The Ethiopian Perspective and Experience* by highlighting the point(s) of divergence between the principles of the United Nations and the ‘ENDF model’. To an extent, the UN and the ENDF models converge on some essential principles, like protecting civilians and addressing humanitarian crises. However, their focus varies when implementing the principles on the ground. The ENDF model emphasises the protection of civilians at the operational and tactical levels. In addition to guaranteeing physical protection from attacks by insurgents and other violent groups, it provides essential services to communities ravaged by conflicts.

On the contrary, the UN model places more emphasis on the state, which often leads to neglecting the local population's needs. Ergo, the ENDF model may not be the best. However, it is a more constructive approach to secure human security and long-term solutions to conflict as it moves from a state-centric approach to a people-centred one, which is more likely to yield a more nuanced understanding and response to conflict dynamics. For comparison, one may assess some of the underlying factors responsible for the rejection of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In the last paper, *What You Need to Know: The Experience of Ethiopian Contingent in AMISOM and ATMIS*, the authors recount the experience of the Ethiopian troops in Somalia deployed under AMISOM and ATMIS. It shows the pivotal role the contingent played in contributing to an environment of relative peace and stability for the people of Somalia. In addition to the battle-hardened, adaptive, and resilient nature of the Ethiopian troops that proved to be pivotal in the fight against Al-Shabaab, the central principles of the people-centred approach, humane character, and mission effectiveness were instrumental in fostering socialisation. Fostering socialisation helped the Ethiopian contingent to amass trust with local communities and build acceptance. The Ethiopian contingent kept frequent contact with the local people and conducted routine patrols to ward off potential attacks from Al-Shabaab. Unfortunately, these approaches are only duly recognised by local communities and the host state. Ethiopia's contributions are yet to be appreciated by the international community.

ENDF developed a strong peacekeeping capability with a high standard of training and experience. This was gained through previous international peacekeeping deployments and complimented by active participation in regional peace operations. Ethiopia's contribution contrasts (in various aspects) with other troop-contributing countries (TCCs) that strictly follow the UN mandate's stipulated operational principles. Perhaps the divergence with the UN model is responsible for the lack of international attention. Contingents of other TCCs remain largely barricaded in Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and follow the basic principle of non-use of force. This is a dearth Al-Shabaab has effectively exploited.

The Editors acknowledge a fundamental difference in institutional character. Ethiopia is a sovereign independent state, while the UN and AU are multilateral institutions. Therefore, contextual peculiarities may exist in the origin and evolution of the doctrines and principles that guide peace missions. However, Ethiopia and other AU member states have contributed immensely to peacekeeping but the extent to which we learn from these African examples is (substantially) weak. Emerging contextual realities on the continent necessitate African institutions to pay greater attention to African examples. We must learn from the African countries that are becoming or may become more involved in robust peace enforcement missions with politically volatile undercurrents. Furthermore, it is essential to seriously review UN peacekeeping doctrines and philosophies from the 60s/'70s, which must now be revisited to be fit for contemporary purpose.

Harvesting insights from African TCCs, active or ended, will be helpful. This will not only aid policy and strategic understandings. It can also serve as a valuable tool for theorising in academic spaces to enhance the support they offer relevant institutions like the AU and RECs (and their member states). A proactive action at the policy and strategic level might be to engage with think tanks to conduct longitudinal studies on TCCs successes and failures to develop best practices and enhance the responsiveness of African-led peace interventions. An example that quickly comes to mind is a practical engagement with the AU Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace). This will, of course, require the support of AU and RECs member states, especially from their military institutions like the ENDF War College has availed itself to IPSS.

Finally, the three submissions of this publication went through a long and rewarding process of internal and external reviews.

DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS

Authors: Siraw Demas (PhD) & Tilahun Demissie (Col.)

Executive Summary

Ethiopia was the first African country to contribute peacekeeping contingents for the United Nations (UN), which mandated international peace intervention for collective security in the Korean peninsula from 1951 to 1954. Whether the Korean mission was peacekeeping or peace enforcement remains debatable; it is not this paper's scope to analyse such debates. Although the Ethiopian peacekeeping contingents were deployed in challenging places and conditions in most cases, they have been effective and successful. Between the 1950s and 2024, Ethiopia deployed in more than seven African countries for peacekeeping operations. Such commitment of the Ethiopian contingents has gained international recognition. However, existing knowledge and analyses of the reasons behind its success are weak.

The operational doctrines or norms and principles of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) in general and the Ethiopian peacekeeping contingent in particular are entrenched in the Ethiopian people's history, culture, social fabric, religion and political orientation. The ENDF has identified and conceptually defined four core values or doctrines that every member of the institution (rank and file) is expected to abide by and apply strictly to help others do the same in all places and at all times and conditions. These doctrines are *"People and Nation Before Oneself"*; *"Integrity at All Times"*; *"Unwavering Democratic Attitude"*; and *"Effectiveness in All Missions"*. Evidence suggests that successive generations internalised the core values or doctrines before they were written and systematically codified.

The doctrines guide planning, training, and preparing forces across various missions. The ENDF does not support a distinct doctrine solely for international peace operations. Prospective contingent troops undergo pre-deployment training, emphasising integrating and synchronising these doctrines with the United Nations peacekeeping operational doctrines and norms.

Key Points

- The *"people and nation before oneself"* doctrine enabled Ethiopian contingents primarily to win the hearts and minds of the local population so that their service and the mission mandate earn legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership at grassroots levels.
- The *"integrity at all times"* doctrine emphasises strict discipline and commitment to institutional norms, principles and values. This doctrine helped bolster preparedness against hardships in the theatre of operation in the theatre of operation.

- The *"Unwavering democratic attitude"* refers to the tolerance and respect for diversity and the ability to manage differences in values, beliefs, traditions, religions, and opinions. Adaptation and socialisation with the host population regardless of cultural, religious and linguistic differences is an outcome of the operationalisation of this doctrine.
- The ENDF and its international peacekeeping contingents have a strong culture of performing compelling missions under minimal resources and hardships, primarily attributed to its *"effectiveness in all missions"* doctrine.

Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the oldest sovereign states in Africa. It is one of the founding members of the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), which later morphed into the African Union (AU). Ethiopia was also one of the member states of the League of Nations. This was "symbolic of her independence and equality" among the then-independent states of the world (Skordiles, 1954, p.12). Ethiopia has actively participated in the UN (and AU)-mandated peace operations (PSOs) since the 1950s as part of its commitment to collective security or international peace and order. It was the first country in Africa to contribute peacekeeping contingents for the UN-mandated international intervention for collective security on the Korean peninsula from 1951 to 1954.

Ethiopia also participated in international peace operations in the Congo (1960 – 1964), Rwanda (1993 – 1996), Burundi (2004 – 2006), Liberia (2003 – 2018), Côte d'Ivoire (2003 – 2004), Sudan (2007 – 2020), Abiye (2011 – 2021), South Sudan (2011 to present), and Somalia (2007 to present). The following data from the ENDF Peacekeeping Center shows the number of troops Ethiopia deployed across various instances.

Table 1: A Summarised Data on Ethiopian Troops Deployment in PSOs (1950s to 2023)

Year	Mission	Number of Troops Deployed
1951 – 1953	Korea	6,037
1960 – 1963	Congo	10,425
1993 – 1995	Rwanda	1,696
2003 – 2010	Liberia	17,714
2004 – 2006	Burundi	2,789
2007 – 2020	Sudan (Darfur)	24,136
2011 – 2021	Sudan (Abyie)	45,835 *Mono-National Force
2014 – 2023	South Sudan	14, 540
2014 – 2023	Somalia	45,552
Total		168,724**

*The term *"mono national force"* is used here to indicate that the whole mission was under the Ethiopian peacekeeping contingent, and no other TCCs had participated in the period.

**The figures indicate Ethiopian troops deployed as peacekeepers not in one round but in different rounds.

Reports (see UN, 2008 & 2018) show that Ethiopia once became the top troop-contributing country (TCC) for multidimensional UN and AU peace support operations. Furthermore, when examined through a gender lens, very recent data obtained from the ENDF Peacekeeping Center showed that out of 1,490 Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) alone since October 2023, 256 (17.18 per cent) of the contingents were women.

Such commitment to collective security and peace has gained international recognition. Beyond recent official recognition and appreciation given by the UN and AU as well as by the officials and security personnel of other TCCs, the success stories of the Ethiopian Peacekeeping contingent have been told and retold since the Korea mission. In his book, entitled "KAGNEW: The Story of the Ethiopian Fighters in Korea", the Greek war correspondent (and an eyewitness as well) Kimon Skordiles documented the performance of the Ethiopian Kagnew contingent in one of the most challenging missions in the history of the UN. This contingent's performance helped the country win the hearts and minds of the international community. This partially explains the expanded role the UN gave the Ethiopian contingent in the 1960 to 1964 Congo mission.

Unfortunately, the substance that informs and drives the success of the Ethiopian contingents in different missions has not received sufficient attention in policy and academic literature. This paper, therefore, tries to explain the operational doctrines and principles of the Ethiopian contingent and their practical application to positive outcomes, particularly in the AMISOM. By further building on the relationship between the operational doctrines and successes in PSOs, it explores the socio-cultural roots of the operational doctrines and principles of the ENDF.

Methods and Materials

This paper intends to provide an in-depth description and explanation of the doctrines and principles of the Ethiopian Military and their origins. To achieve this end, we sourced primary and secondary data from relevant offices and personnel of the ENDF. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of the doctrines and principles of the ENDF are discussed by analysing and interpreting relevant policy documents of the country and the ENDF. Furthermore, we analysed relevant historical accounts and sociological literature to explain the historical, social, and cultural attributes that inform the doctrines and principles of the ENDF. In addition, we consulted relevant scholarships within the scope of the study to put our analysis in the broad context or framework of existing academic and policy literature.

Furthermore, we gathered primary data about the relevance and practical application of the doctrines and principles from field reports available at the ENDF Peacekeeping Centre and from a roundtable and key informant interviews conducted with the ENDF higher military officers and general officers who participated in different peacekeeping missions at different times and in various positions. Finally, it is important to note that the scope of this paper is not limited to a certain period, place and context. Instead, it analyses the doctrines and principles of the Ethiopian contingents in PSOs based on historical and contemporary experiences.

Socio-Cultural Roots of the Doctrines of Ethiopian Contingents

Ethiopia is a diverse multinational country. It is home to people with distinct cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional identities and attributes. The growing and continuous interactions among them since ancient times produced (to a reasonable extent) commonly shared values, beliefs, norms, and principles that informed the emergence of the doctrines of the Ethiopian military. Internal discontent, divisions, and even civil wars occurred during different regimes. However, Ethiopians often stood together to fight a common external aggressor – due to their socio-cultural affiliation (Zewde, 2002). The Battle of Adwa, the second Italian invasion and five-year occupation, the Ethio-Somalia War, and the Ethio-Eritrean War are examples.

Written or not, Ethiopians' socio-cultural, historical, and religious values, norms and principles define their standards of behaviour and conduct. They show their physical, mental, and emotional convictions for socio-culturally, religiously, and historically approved and sanctioned values, beliefs, norms, and principles. They also prescribe methods and procedures for individuals and groups. One of the founding documents of the ENDF explicitly states that the doctrines of the military are embedded in and explored from the land's history, culture, social values, and fundamental laws (FDRE Ministry of Defence, 2009).

The ENDF has named and conceptually defined four core values or doctrines that every member of the military institution (rank and file) is expected to strictly abide by and apply to help others do the same in all places at all times and conditions. The institution expects that its members make those doctrines a 'second nature' (as human beings and soldiers). ENDF communicated the four core values or doctrines to its members since 2002. However, it would be reductionist to attribute them to the stated period (2002 to 2024) alone: practice emerged before and informed its codification. For instance, these core values or doctrines guided operations in the seventeen-year guerilla struggle (1976 – 1991). Also, the doctrines account for the performance and success stories of the Ethiopian contingents in peace missions since the 1950s.

Doctrine 1: People and Nation Before Oneself

The first doctrine of the ENDF and its peacekeeping contingents is "*people and nation before oneself*" (in Amharic, *hizbawinet*). The ENDF defines this doctrine in terms of readiness to pay the ultimate sacrifice for and create harmonious relationships with people at any time, place and condition irrespective of racial, ethnic, religious, gender, cultural, linguistic, national, and regional differences and/or backgrounds (FDRE Ministry of Defence, 2009). In this regard, the ENDF expects its members (rank and file) to pay every sacrifice not only for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation and the freedom and respect of the Ethiopian people but also for other peoples in other areas.

The "*people and nation before oneself*" doctrine also requires members to sacrifice their lives for their colleagues. The Force believes that the practical application of this doctrine by members of the ENDF begins with paying sacrifice for their colleagues, and this commitment to others before oneself will gradually extend to all humanity through time. In Practice, Ethiopian Defense Force Headquarter reports show that in the Ethio-Eritrea War of 1998 – 2000 and the recent war in Northern Ethiopia, several soldiers sacrificed their life by passing through minefields to enable their attacking battalions to reach and retake areas occupied by the enemy.

ENDF expects its troops to apply this doctrine during peace missions. The Ethiopian contingents primarily work to win the hearts and minds of the local population so that their service and the mission mandate generally earn legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership at the grassroots. To this end, every member must work closely with and give everything to people irrespective of time, place, and context. By extension, the Ethiopian contingents believe that it is only through local engagement that the mission can achieve its broader aims of collective security and lasting peace. As a result, they often looked to create strong bonds with the local population as they spent more time working, eating, caring, and celebrating with them. The ENDF connects this with Ethiopia's socio-cultural capital of hospitality and its people-centred approach. The theatre of operation includes sharing their meals, caring for the elderly, children, and women, contributing money, and celebrating holidays with local people, amongst other engagements. The Ethiopian culture of sharing meals, often expressed in the invitation to join (*Enebla* in Amharic), is a common tradition irrespective of the origin of people and what they think and do. The social significance of sharing meals with others or partaking in communal dining is a symbol of intimacy, love, trust, and respect to Ethiopians.



Figure 1: The Practice of Communal Dining in Ethiopia.

Source: <https://farandwild.travel/wilder/article/ethiopian-food>

ENDF members are socialised to the norms, values, principles, beliefs, traditions, and expectations of Ethiopian society through formal and informal learning processes in their upbringing. These then approve or sanction the actions and reactions of members long before they formally join the institution as soldiers. The Ethiopian contingents are aware of and instinctively adhere to the relevant behaviours and practices at home or abroad. These help them fit better and become effective in missions' accomplishments and social penetration. Establishing close, harmonious relationships and building trust and credibility has its own (intentional or unintentional) reciprocity.

In this vein, the Ethiopian contingents are committed to offering physical protection to civilians. Protection of civilians from Al-Shabaab in the Somalia case is an example. Figure 2 illustrates the Ethiopian contingent of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) providing an armed escort even beyond its area of responsibility to women out in search of firewood and other non-food items. (United Nations, 2017)



Figure 2: Ethiopian Contingent Escorting South Sudanese Women

Source: UN News (2017). 'Ethiopia: A Leading Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Efforts.' <https://news.un.org/en/gallery/1128322>

Operationalising this doctrine was profitable for the Ethiopian contingents in the context of the mission because it aided the recorded successes. Meanwhile, Dodd's (2012) argument supports the linkage between this experience and its outcome. Creating social ties increases engagement through improved information access and social pressure that drives participation of the local population. By extension, increased access to information and active social participation, in turn, creates awareness and commitment to the benefit of the mission. On this premise, the Ethiopian contingent's continuous contact with the local population creates opportunities for both parties to access information, increased participation, mutual understanding, and commitment towards an expected end.

The local population cooperates with the contingent to maintain peace and stability. Such engagements help the contingent gain information easily and quickly, even outside of areas of normal operation. The local population in the host nation wholeheartedly cooperates(d) with the Ethiopian contingents. One interviewee from the Ethiopian contingent of AMISOM affirmed that the local population in Somalia provided them with intelligence information about Al-Shabaaab's positions. The interviewee further confirmed that local militias also fought against this religious extremist insurgent group alongside the Ethiopian contingent.

ENDF higher officers often report that this high level of trust, confidence and commitment is not the outcome of a one-time engagement but the result of long and consistent interaction with the local population. Paying the ultimate price of life is an important sacrifice the local population appreciates. An interviewee who was a brigadier general who once assumed a military observer role in AMISOM stated that:

... at the beginning of our deployment as peacekeeping contingents in Somalia under the umbrella of AMISOM, mainly the diaspora community abroad and the young people of Somalia in the mission area had considered us invaders and some even crusaders. This false allegation had widely circulated and poisoned the minds of the local people about us. Of course, although we had passed through several ups and downs and even made life sacrifices, in the end, we were able to get the trust and necessary support of the people.

Opposed to what was obtainable at the start of the mission, the local community elders and clan chiefs showed a more positive outlook towards them. They consistently provided unreserved support for the Ethiopian contingents. In a focused group discussion, we found that the local population always defended the Ethiopian contingent against ungrounded allegations, not only in Somalia. We also saw the same experience in other instances beyond Somalia. In Liberia, when the Ethiopian contingent was falsely accused, the local population stood on the Ethiopian contingent side and exposed the attempted conspiracy to downgrade its prominence. Again, in Somalia, when human rights actors and some personnel from other TCCs falsely alleged members of the Ethiopian contingent for raping a woman, the clan leaders deeply investigated the case and uncovered the fact that she had received money to intentionally undermine the professional integrity and commitment of the Ethiopian contingent. The discussants further said that this commitment of the local population in the host nation motivated the Ethiopian contingent to make even more sacrifices in defence of the people and the mandate they were given.

Doctrine 2: Integrity at All Times

The central thesis of this doctrine (*integrity at all times*) is discipline. Every soldier has fire in her/his hands; therefore, s/he should know and be committed to when, how, and for whom to use it. ENDF conceptualises this doctrine as creating a professional soldier ready to achieve any mission at any cost. It is philosophically rooted in considering man as a physical, critical, social, and moral being. This means that every member of ENDF is expected to have strong physical fitness to help her/him cope with unavoidable hardships and challenges unique to the profession of arms. She/he should also have a strong mental readiness to accomplish her/his mission at the expected levels of standards and principles. In this regard, the ENDF expects soldiers' readiness to make all sacrifices, including the ultimate one. In the same vein, honesty, loyalty, responsibility, and accountability are required social and professional attributes of each soldier. Operationalising this doctrine, as one of the study's respondents affirmed, contributes to the achievement of the other three doctrines of the ENDF. The respondent is a senior higher officer in the ENDF who was once deployed as a military observer in the AMISOM.

In the first historical account, upon overthrowing the Military government in 1991, the EPRDF was primarily responsible for restoring peace and stability in all corners of the country. It is important to note that from 1991 to 1994, the forces of the EPRDF acted as a National Defence Force mandated by the Council of the Transitional Government and the Transitional Charter. During this period, one of the areas that needed consideration was the eastern part of the country, where religious fundamentalists and other separatist insurgents had established strongholds and began to destabilise the area. The power vacuum created by the political transition produced fertile ground for the insurgents to infiltrate the community and create instability in the region.

Members of the ENDF who participated in the military operation against these insurgents claim that the military had faced one of the most challenging missions in its tenure as a National Defence Force of the provisional government. When the EPRDF combatants entered the area to control the region, they unexpectedly faced severe challenges from the insurgents and the local population. An Ethiopian senior officer who took part in that military operation stated that:

The insurgents had been repeatedly ambushing and killing our soldiers...and one of the main challenges was that if we responded alike to their provocations and attacks, we would be alleged as if we had killed innocent people.

Often, after an attack, it was customary for the military to go there and look for the perpetrators. The interviewee continued to assert that:

When we went to the area, they simply hid their weapons, changed their clothes and assimilated with the local people as if they were innocent ... unfortunately, the local people did not cooperate with us to isolate the enemy from other innocent civilians.

In this context, the military had two choices. The first choice was to act or respond and accept the obvious unavoidable public grievances and allegations. The second option was to patiently continue to pay life sacrifices to isolate the enemy (extremist insurgents) from the local people and dry up the logistics and human resource base of the armed groups before executing an offensive strike. The then-top leadership of the Defence Force chose the latter option as a strategy to bring lasting peace and stability to the area. The military units deployed in the area were ordered not to take any action against the insurgents and to continue working with the local people instead until they won their hearts and minds. Although this resulted in the brutal killing of many soldiers, the troops maintained discipline to the command and continued with readiness to pay the ultimate sacrifice.

The patience or discipline of the military on the one hand and the brutality of the insurgents on the other caught the attention of the local population. Strict adherence to discipline and obedience to the chain of command was important. Eventually, the military penetrated through the social fabric of the local population. This created a fertile ground for them to isolate the insurgent group from the people. It helped the military units to destroy the insurgencies and stabilise the area. Since then, these same tactics have been used by the ENDF in its engagements at home and abroad for international peace operations.

The traditional socio-cultural systems and institutions across Ethiopia in different forms or approaches were categorised and studied based on geographical location (Abdella, 2018). Abdella (2018) identified five clusters: Northern, Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Ethiopia. Each has cultural, social, administrative, legal, justice, political and military components. However, we focus on the socio-cultural systems and institutions in view of cultivating discipline and valour.

There are two practical cases from the country's largest population groups - the Oromo and Amhara traditional socio-cultural systems. The Oromo Gadaa System has different age groups with distinct social roles. The 3rd, 4th and 5th age grades are all related to military training and achieving a warrior discipline and valour. The third age grade (17 to 24) – known as Junior (in its Oromiffa equivalence called *Gaammee-Foolle*) – is the stage at which adolescents officially engage in military training. The fourth age grade (25 to 32) – called Junior Warriors (in its Oromiffa equivalence called *Qondala/Kuusa*). – is the stage of maturity at which members enrol in formal

military service under the direction of the father of the Army (in Oromiffa, called *Abbaa Duulaa*). The fifth age grade (33 to 40) – termed Senior Warriors (in its Oromiffa equivalence called *Raabaa/Doorii*) – is the stage at which members achieve a warrior discipline and valour. In the Oromo Gadaa system, a boy is not allowed to marry until 40. The age before that is considered preparation for a warrior discipline and valour.

Among the Amhara people, a traditional socio-cultural system known as *yegobez Aleka* is prevalent in large parts of the country. You may also find this system in some parts of Tigray and Eritrea (Abdella, 2018). The unique feature of this socio-cultural system is that it closely resembles a traditional state system, which incorporates almost all structural and, to some extent, institutional arrangements. Throughout history, when the state suddenly collapsed or lost control of an area, this system substituted almost all the functions of a traditional state (administrative, economic, legal, social, and security services). In the security component of this system, all men (adolescents, youth, adults and the elderly) – collectively known as *fano* – are expected to be trained and disciplined fighters in times of war and other service providers in times of peace. Training and practising fighting is not limited to a specific age range and time. The society expects every male to be a proficient and disciplined warrior and hero.¹

Also relevant is the traditional information exchange system known as *Dagu* from the Afar people. It is an oral and interpersonal information communication system. Performing *Dagu*'s ritual or information exchange about new events from one person to another is mandatory for every adult Afar. The *Dagu* system helps the Afar people to obtain fresh and secure information about what is happening, where, when, how, why, and by whom to make necessary preparations or take the required actions. One of the reasons – identified by the key informant interviews held with some selected senior higher officers who participated in different peacekeeping missions – for the successful performance of the ENDF has been its reliance on intelligence information gathering by the local people themselves as the military relied on citizen intelligence since the 17 years armed struggle. (Mohammed, 2016).

Finally, it is important to note that these warrior disciplines and valour are not limited to the Oromo and Amhara traditional socio-cultural systems; they are examples. Various other traditional socio-cultural systems share similar elements. These socio-cultural systems and institutions contribute significantly to framing the military doctrine "*Integrity at all times*", emphasising strict adherence to discipline and working under pressure/stress without compromising discipline. We should also account for the history and experience of internal wars, conflict, and repelling external aggression. One of its core implications is the constant need to withstand hardship and work under pressure, within which members of ENDF are naturalised (Adugna, 2001).

Doctrine 3: Unwavering Democratic Attitude

This operational doctrine is conceptualised and operationalised by the ENDF General Headquarters (2009) in terms of: (1) believing in people (respecting fundamental human and democratic rights and unconditional love for the motherland), (2) religious and gender equality, (3) respecting the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples, (4) teamwork; (5) mutual understanding and collaboration; (6) participatory; (7) abide by the opinion of majority; (8) expression of ideas freely; (9) democratic relation; and (10) implementing decisions and policies strictly. ENDF's conception of democracy differs from the popular one, and its emergence was reinforced by the group orientation of rights and privileges in the post-1991 political re-ordering of Ethiopia.

In the white paper of the ENDF, the conceptualisation of this doctrine is expressed in greater detail in terms of tolerance of and respect for diversity, as well as the ability to manage differences in values, beliefs, traditions, religions, and opinions both at individual, group and institutional levels. Ethiopia prioritises ethnic representation as one of the guiding principles in the composition of its National Defence Force. One of the main reasons behind the disbanding of Ethiopia's former National Defence Force in 1991 and the organising of a new Defence Force by the EPRDF leaders of the time was to ensure that the national force aligned with the newly instituted political order regarding its diversity.

¹ The term *fano* was widely used as a mobilisation device by the patriotic fighters during the five years Italian occupation period (1933-1937).

For instance, Article 87 sub-article 1 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution states: "The composition of the national armed forces shall reflect the equitable representation of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia" (FDRE, 1995, p. 32). To achieve this constitutional principle, the EPRDF disbanded the then Defence Force and reorganised it mainly – at least theoretically – based on ethnic representation. As a result, the ENDF has a diversified personnel profile based on ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and regional backgrounds. This, by default, has driven the improvement of diversity management within the Defence Force.

At the beginning of the restructuring of the ENDF based on ethnic representation, some unusual discontent, tensions, and unhealthy competition were seen among uniformed personnel who were closely affiliated with the three main ethnic groups – Oromo, Amhara, and Tigray. EPRDF strategic military leaders acted to ensure redress, predicting the threat such a trend poses to Ethiopia's security and stability. EPRDF leaders had learned the importance of diversity management strategies through practical experience during their previous combat engagements involving direct contact with different population groups. In this vein, they believed that if one can effectively lead diversified military personnel who have fire in their hands, it will not be difficult for them to manage the local population.

During relative peace and stability, officers and subordinates are simply close friends or colleagues who spend their leisure time together playing and sharing anything almost equally. The boundary across the ranks is very loose in terms of relationships or day-to-day interactions. This practice is embedded in the rebel origin of the ENDF. According to strategic leaders who participated in the 17-year armed struggle, the focus is on building cohesive units that look beyond identity differences. This helps the institution (ENDF) to build trust, honesty and unit cohesion at the different levels and hierarchies of the military. This team cohesiveness and/or smooth relationship between each member (rank and file) at different chains of command have helped the Ethiopian contingents be more pragmatic during a mission.

Beyond the ability and practical experience in diversity management at an institutional level (ENDF), the religious background of the Ethiopian society also contributes to the successful performance of the Ethiopian contingent. In Ethiopia, the relationship between the two great religions – Christianity and Islam – has unique historical experiences. The first *Hijira* was made in 615 when a group of Muslims, advised by Prophet Mohammed, had travelled to Ethiopia to escape persecution in Mecca (Abbink, 1998; Ahmed, 1992). The Ethiopian King welcomed them and allowed them to live freely and practice their religion. As a result of this warm welcome and hospitality by the Ethiopian Christian King, Abbink stated that "...on the authority of the Prophet himself, Ethiopia was not to be seen as a target for jihad" (Abbink, 1998, p. 111). This partly explains why Ethiopia has not been the central target of terrorist attacks by religious fundamentalists. Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia live in harmony with great trust, honesty, and respect, as they do in Ethiopia.

Doctrine 4: Effectiveness in All Missions

This doctrine primarily concerns technical and tactical skills to accomplish any given mission effectively and efficiently (FDRE Ministry of Defence, 2009). The main principle of warfare for the ENDF is to finish a war in a short period with the minimum possible cost.¹ This principle suggests two interrelated concepts: proficiency and efficiency. Defeating an enemy and completing the operation in a relatively short period requires, among others, technical and tactical capabilities. Finishing an operation with the minimum possible cost also requires, among others, the capability to work within the context of logistical, hardware, and financial constraints.

Data obtained from the roundtable discussion with the ENDF senior military leaders who once served in different international peace operations showed that the ENDF and its international peacekeeping contingents have a strong culture of performing well under stress (psychological, physical, financial, and material). The military has developed operational tactics to aid good performance under these barriers (limited budgets and hardships). It appears more easily understandable when we expound this operational tactic in a comparative context.

The strategic leadership of the EPRDF often reiterated that their operational tactic was one of the reasons for their victory over the well-trained and equipped forces of the Military junta. As they said, the Military government used an operational tactic to pour bullets in mass in each square meter of enemy positions. This was copied from the military doctrine of the then-East European Marxist states. Contrariwise, the post-1991 Ethiopian military is characterised by the "one bullet for one enemy" – an operational tactic adopted to improve the resource-to-efficiency ratio. This tactic is traced to the traditional socio-cultural systems and the rebel origin of Ethiopia's -1991 National Defence Force. The 17-year guerrilla struggle against the Military government was fought under shoestring resources and hardships. For a guerrilla fighter force, adopting this operational tactic was not a matter of choice; it was a necessity.

Socio-cultural systems were found dispersed across Ethiopia, each having a military component similar to combat ideology. Many Ethiopians get at least a rudimentary military training from their socio-cultural systems. Here, they develop this skill in their day-to-day routines. In addition, having individual or private weapons symbolises social status, respect, and heroism in many Ethiopian societies. In addition, some dances of Amhara and southern parts, like Wolayita and Goma Gofa, portray the handling of weapons – guns or spears, respectively. Firing and hitting the target is a leisure activity and an expression of courage and determination for almost all male youth, adolescents and adults in Ethiopia. As the young folks are trained or semi-trained by their respective parent socio-cultural systems before joining the ENDF, more time and resources are subsequently invested in team building and unit cohesion.

Conclusion

The four ENDF doctrines and principles discussed above are inherently interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Prioritising the nation and the people over oneself necessitates a higher level of integrity. Selfless service demands strong moral values and discipline, which prepare soldiers for ultimate devotion and commitment. The ENDF uses these doctrines to guide planning, training, and preparing forces across various missions. While acknowledging the need for adaptability and adjustments based on specific situations, the doctrines are guiding principles applicable to domestic and international missions.

Moreover, peacekeeping is one of the four missions of the ENDF (Council of Ministers Regulation Number 385/2016). Consequently, the ENDF does not have a distinct doctrine solely for international peace operations. Instead, prospective contingent troops undergo pre-deployment training emphasising integrating and synchronising these doctrines and principles with the United Nations peacekeeping operational doctrines and norms.

Ethiopia has a long history and experience in UN and AU-mandated international peace operations. The ENDF and its contingents have recorded successes in international peace missions. They trace these successes to its operational doctrines discussed in this piece and its historical and socio-cultural backgrounds.

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CONTESTING NORMS AND DOCTRINES IN PEACE MISSIONS: THE ETHIOPIAN PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCE

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Executive Summary

The United Nations (UN) uses peacekeeping operations to fulfil its mandate to maintain and promote international peace and security. The UN relies on the cooperation and contribution of its member states to plan and implement peace missions.¹ In this regard, the UN developed norms and doctrines to guide these missions. The first three norms and doctrines conceptualised and still in use are consent of the parties in conflict, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The UN later introduced legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership as accompanying factors for the success of international peace(keeping) missions. UN missions lack consistency regarding the recorded successes with the local population on the continent. Existing literature links this lack of consistency with the gap between what they draft at the headquarters level for Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and individual peacekeepers to implement. The missions tend to be state-centric and seldom resonate with the local population. The authors also observed tensions and contradictions between policy premises expressed in mandates and practical realities at the grassroots.

Owed to the hizbawinet doctrine ("people and nation before oneself") of the ENDF, the Ethiopian contingent performed well in defence of the local people and mandate. They also enjoy support from the local population during missions. ENDF's military doctrine requires the Ethiopian contingent to prioritise building trust and cordiality with the local population during a mission. It is considered an integral element for success: refer to the first paper, "Doctrines and Principles of the Ethiopian Military in International Peace Operations". Assessing the UN peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mali, for example, trust, cordiality, and support from the local population is essential for such a mission. The hizbawinet doctrine is a bottom-up approach that prioritises the protection of the local population. Thus, this paper looks into the Ethiopian perspective and experience to capture how peace missions may better serve the people directly affected by the horrors of violence in conflict-affected societies.

Key Points

- Human security (people-centred security) is at the heart of all peace operations, at least in rhetoric, particularly since the 1994 UNDP Report. In practice, however, UN-led/mandated peace missions are yet to produce the anticipated results in missions.

¹ Note: There are conceptual and technical differences between the United Nations (UN)-led missions and those led by the African Union (AU). UN-led missions are called peacekeeping missions while those led by the AU are called Peace Support Operations (PSOs). PSOs are intervention instruments under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

- The UN's top-down approach to making norms and drafting doctrines and the uneven power distribution among funders and TCCs threaten a people-centred approach to peace missions.
- Owing to its unique "people-first" operational doctrine and the rebel origin of the military, the Ethiopian contingent provides the maximum (possible) protection for the grassroots population despite risks and losses.
- Protection (physical, psychological, social, and emotional) from actual and perceived threats which endanger their life chances is essential to ensure that peace missions are meaningful to the local population.

Introduction

A critical assessment of doctrines or norms and principles of the UN (see Appendix 1) and African Union (AU) against the Ethiopian model or doctrine (Appendix 2) shows points of convergence and divergence. Moreover, the ENDF cannot violate the relevant doctrines, norms and principles that guide UN peace missions. Thus, the ENDF's approach should not be considered a contradiction to the UN norms and principles for peace missions.

Commitment to Ethiopian military doctrines and norms may occasionally diverge from the established rules of engagement of the UN peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, the core objectives of UN peacekeepers, which include prioritising civilian protection and addressing humanitarian crises, remain paramount. Despite potential misalignments with specific operational regulations, local communities are likely to recognise and appreciate the presence of contingent troops in their villages as a dedicated effort to shield them from fear and imminent danger. This was found to be true of the Ethiopian experience, and similar instances are observed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where there was pushback and protest against the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

It is essential to note that no significant conceptual disparity exists between the two sets of core values or doctrines. For instance, the paramount objectives of UN peacekeeping operations are centred on civilian protection and the prevention of humanitarian crises. Similarly, the ENDF doctrine or norm called *nation and people before oneself* aligns directly with this, emphasising the equivalence of importance between the people at home and those in the host nation. However, there is a point of divergence in implementation.

One of the fundamental beliefs of the ENDF concerning people underpins the divergence in implementation. This includes the commitment to 'respect the people's human and democratic rights without precondition' (FDRE National Defence Force General Headquarters, 2009). While the provision of humanitarian aid may not fall directly under the responsibility of contingent troops unless specified in the mandate, it is considered ethically unsound for Ethiopian contingents to discard or destroy excess food items and other essentials when local populations are facing starvation. Many contingent areas of responsibility are situated in remote and under-served regions lacking adequate medical services. Despite restrictions by the UN rules of engagement on providing such assistance to the local population, Ethiopian contingents have utilised their medical supplies and specialists to help the local population when necessary and at no additional cost to the mission. Such actions have proven to foster trust and stronger relationships with them. The Ethiopian contingent's mission in Somalia, South Sudan, and other instances are a testament and examples of how the local population benefited and appreciated such an approach. Beyond humanitarian support, the Ethiopian contingent also put their lives on the line to defend the local population. However, such commitments and their rationale are missing in relevant policy discourse.

Methodology

This study focuses on the fundamental similarities and differences between the doctrines and principles of the ENDF, which guides Ethiopian contingents and the UN and AU approach. Furthermore, it highlights the gaps the Ethiopian approach may fill in African-led peace missions. To this effect, the article critically analysed the

areas of convergence and divergence in making and drafting doctrines by the UN and AU against the norms and principles of the ENDF in the context of PSOs. Accordingly, the UN and the ENDF documents carrying the norms and doctrines that inform international peace operations were analysed for their perceived relevance and practical applicability in fragile contexts.

Roundtable and key informant interviews were conducted with the ENDF General officers and higher military officers who were once members of the Ethiopian contingents in different AU and UN-mandated peace missions in various positions. Furthermore, field reports on the performance of the Ethiopian contingent in some specific missions across time in other host nations were also extracted from the ENDF Peacekeeping Centre. The authors consulted relevant conceptual and theoretical literatures within the scope of the study to situate the analysis in the broad context or framework of existing academic discourses and policy provisions.

Norm-Making and Doctrine Drafting at the AU and UN

Peacekeeping has evolved as an essential intervention within the UN system to achieve international peace and security. To govern the standards and objectives of peacekeeping operations, the UN has developed some basic norms, doctrines and principles on which the actions and reactions of TCCs and peacekeepers (as individuals and groups) primarily depend. These norms have both *prescriptive* (to encourage specific desired behaviours) and *proscriptive* (to discourage some undesirable behaviour) dimensions. The UN also developed clearly defined guidelines for their strict implementation by the respective TCCs and peacekeepers. The three basic norms and principles were conceptualised in 1958. Still, they used to serve the United Nations peacekeeping operations with the *consent of the parties*, *impartiality*, and *non-use of force* except in self-defence and protection of the mandate (UN, 2008, p. 21).

The assumption is that the application of these doctrines and principles by peacekeepers will contribute to building credibility and legitimacy in favour of the mission's mandate at all levels. However, the study finds that the UN doctrines and principles instead focus on the main parties to the conflict and overlook other significant sections of society (the bottom millions) in the host nation. This is so because when the UN introduced "consent" and "impartiality" as norms or guiding principles for the deployment of peacekeepers, it assumed that the *consent* of the main parties to the conflict and the *impartiality* of the peacekeepers to the main parties would respectively guarantee consent and impartiality at grassroots. Such generalisation has turned out to work against the success of the missions. Hence, there is a need to interrogate contextual (local) factors in norm-making and doctrine drafting for peace missions.

With this understanding, the UN later introduced three additional norms and principles, such as *legitimacy*, *credibility*, and *national and local ownership*, under the tag "other success factors" (UN, 2008, pp. 27-28). In practice, however, the status quo remained as they have yet to penetrate the grassroots while conceptual ambiguities persist (Bardalai, 2022). One would, therefore, observe a lack of comprehensiveness concerning how the peace missions serve the concerns, needs, interests, cultures, values, beliefs and traditions of the local population in host nations.

Two possible explanations exist for the responsiveness gap mentioned above concerning peace missions and the local population. The first explanation is that norm-making often tends to promote and preserve some ideological and political positions in the UN and AU systems. For instance, the UN doctrines prepared for peacekeeping missions are largely entrenched in liberal or neo-liberal thoughts (Abdenur, 2019; de Coning, 2019). As a result, the primary focus of the UN and its organs, directly or indirectly, serves "... as agents for the dissemination, implementation, and enforcers ..." of the liberal ideology with little or no room for revision to accommodate ones that may perhaps better resonate with the local population (de Coning, 2019; p. 300). In many instances, this path remains an Achilles heel to the success of UN peace missions in Africa.

Similarly, the question of whose peace, norms, principles, structures, and institutions persist. Norm-making in the UN for peace missions follows top-down processes and deprives the local population of an entry point for ownership of their peace. The doctrines and principles assume that the context in the host nation is uniform.

This oversimplification undermines the mission, as there is a significant sense of detachment between the norms and principles prepared at the strategic level and local realities in the theatre of operation.

The second explanation for the responsiveness gap is related to the UN missions' financial (and logistical) sensitivity and the primary concern of the mandate for legitimacy. Missions are dependent on funds mobilised from member states. Furthermore, almost 87 percent of the funds come from liberal or liberal-oriented member states (Abdenur, 2019). Japan and the Western states were (and still are) the principal funders of UN-mandated peacekeeping missions, contributing almost 87 percent of the total fund (Abdenur, 2019). This provides an entry point for affluent member states to influence norm- and agenda-setting, even though top TCCs contributions are from member states that are not as affluent. There is a structural divide between the dominant funders and the main contributors of peacekeepers (de Coning, 2019). Combining this asymmetry with the top-down approach in designing norms and principles guiding peace operations often amplifies the gap between the strategic decision-making and operation levels, which deals directly with grassroots (Abdenur, 2019).

Similarly, there is an emerging context we must account for in such a debate as this. This includes the ongoing global "tectonic shifts" (in Abdenur's depiction) from a unipolar world system that makes neo-liberal ideology a global norm. The transformation of the UN and its bodies as agents for international governance based on this ideology to a multipolar system challenging the global balance of power has implications for peacekeeping operations' legitimacy, credibility, ownership, and effectiveness (Abdenur, 2019, p.46).

Through ENDF's Lens

The ENDF has a strong culture of working with the local population at home and abroad in peace missions. Unlike the UN and AU, norm-making in the ENDF follows a bottom-up process. Its guiding operational doctrines primarily evolved from its historical origin and continuous interactions with the local population. The 'people-centred' (in Amharic, *hizbawinet*) doctrine of the ENDF guides this approach. While common practices are often respecting the norms and guiding principles of the UN, Ethiopian contingents engage at the grassroots level, even beyond their area of responsibility (to the extent of paying life sacrifices), to help the local population.

The Ethiopian contingents go beyond merely respecting the norms and guiding principles of the UN to engaging the local population. They often provide care and services to the local people. They escort vulnerable people (mainly women) to fields and markets beyond their area of responsibility, sharing meals, digging water wells, harvesting crops, providing healthcare services, caring for the elders and women and children, and contributing money for and celebrating (religious) holidays and other traditional festivities with the local population in the host nation. The contingent performs this duty without violating the principles of consent and impartiality as demanded by the UN and AU peace missions, irrespective of time and context. The following figure illustrates the engagement of the Ethiopian contingent in AMISOM and UNMISS with the local population of the respective host nations.



Figure 3: Ethiopian Troops Providing Medical Services, Food Items and Drinking Water for Local Communities in Somalia and Sudan (Source: Ethiopian National Defense Force Peacekeeping Center)

Beyond providing essential social services that foster positive social interactions with the local population, the Ethiopian contingent also gives communities in the host nation maximum protection from potential adversaries and casualties. Data extracted from the roundtable with ENDF General officers and higher officers showed that Ethiopian contingents provide physical protection at the grassroots level against any attack. A General officer who once served as a top commander in the Ethiopian contingent of the AMISOM stated that if any attack on the local population by the extremist group, Ethiopian contingents do not remain silent even when that happens beyond their area of responsibility. He continued to affirm that, unlike other TCCs, the Ethiopian contingent does not primarily focus on protecting its positions by staying in barracks detached from the local population.

The other higher officer who participated in the roundtable and was once a military observer in the AMISOM also stated that one of the unique characteristics of the Ethiopian contingent in the field of peace operations is "... when the extremist forces attack our base or the local population in the host nation, we will not sleep until we completely obliterate them wherever they go." The higher officer further attested that "The extremist forces also know the consequences of their actions and ... we forced them to think three times before trying to commit any assault against us." The ENDF often portrays this operational tactic of its contingents as a crucial step to creating confidence (and getting trust) on the part of the local population and other parties who need protection from violence. Although such a commitment of the ENDF may sometimes go beyond the UN guidelines, they practically help the local population gain access to lifesaving options and hope for a better tomorrow. This also directly benefits the UN and AU since the whole mission mandate gains *legitimacy, credibility, trust, and ownership* at the grassroots level. The ENDF believes that the primary reason for the success of its contingents is the recognition and support they garnered mainly from the local population as a result of such a commitment. Arguably, such commitment is a constructive adaptation that facilitates the accumulation of credibility, acceptance, and trust between the international community and the host nations.

Furthermore, a lack of awareness informs incorrect conclusions about the successes of the Ethiopian contingent. The Somalia case is an example. There is a tendency to attribute the effectiveness of Ethiopian contingents in Somalia to the cultural and linguistic relationship between the two countries. It is crucial to note that the reports obtained from the ENDF Peacekeeping Centre and the UN indicate that the Ethiopian contingent troops demonstrated similar effectiveness in other contexts, such as Rwanda, Liberia, Burundi, Abyei, and Darfur, where there were no linguistic ties. In addition, the Ethiopian contingent consists of troops from various backgrounds, most of which are very different from Somalis. In conclusion, the source of this error lies in the absence of documented studies that elucidate the guiding doctrines and principles of Ethiopian contingents.

Priorities

The ENDF trains its personnel to be well-versed in the people-centred doctrines and principles of the military. Expectedly, therefore, they clearly understand the ideals for which they are set to serve in peace missions. One interviewee, An Ethiopian higher officer who returned home from the AMISOM in 2022, has the following to say:

From the very outset, we have a clear understanding of and commitment to the mission given by our government and the AMISOM. We were there to bring peace and security primarily for the Somali people, and we have been practically sacrificing even our lives to achieve this goal. The Somali people are like our people, so we are happy to give them everything we can, including our own life.

Since 2006, Ethiopia has actively participated in Somalia to combat Al-Shabaab, sharing the challenges and hardships faced by the Somali people. The strategic objective of this deployment is to counteract the influence of Al-Shabaab and create conditions for the Somali people to elect their legitimate leaders. This aligns with the interests of the UN, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The contribution of the Ethiopian contingents is rooted in their understanding of this shared interest.

Safeguarding the host nation's sovereignty is a paramount concern for the strategic leadership of UN missions. The pivotal role of peacekeepers is to empower the host leadership to establish appropriate control rather than supplanting it. This commitment is explicitly articulated as the 'Promotion of national and local ownership' in the 2008 United Nations capstone document. In this regard, the human security element, as captured by the *hizbawinet* doctrine, is essential. If PSOs are grounded on human security, their ultimate focus will be on the security of people and communities rather than the imbalanced focus on building state institutions.

Proper security is not only about being safe against objective or physical threats. People-centred security, favoured at least in rhetoric by the UN system and its PSOs, is achieved only when both being and feeling safe exist simultaneously (Booth, 1991). Peace missions can successfully serve their foundational purpose of protecting people in such environments only when there is a meeting point between the "being" and "feeling" of safety and security. Consider that both being and feeling are intricately linked with their aspirations for a better life and future. In other words, peace missions should protect these dual directions: immediate security threats and perceived threats like fear of being killed, kidnapped, displaced, looted, or starved.

In this vein, UN-mandated peace operations often fall short. People-centred security is not new to the UN system (Mahmoud, 2019). The concept of human security emerged in Boutros Boutros-Ghali's "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992. As a policy tool, it was first introduced by the UNDP Human Development Report in 1994. The introduction of the Right to Protect (R2P) in multidimensional third-generation peacekeeping operations also shows – at least in principle - the commitment to people-centred security. However, the effectiveness with which the premise of human security is applied in the host nation, especially concerning the local population, remains highly questionable. Often, the local people are either ignored or feel ignored. The reality of this experience and perception by the local population yields the same outcome: lack of acceptance, distrust, and non-cooperation between the local population and the deployed troops. Thus, it is not just a problem of practice but also image. These issues are scarcely discussed in policy and academic debate.

Peace operations on the continent are now devolving from the previous UN-monopolised mandates to continental, regional and sub-regional authorised missions. Sub-regional blocks such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), North African Regional Capability (NARC), and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) may all assume responsibility for mandates at some point. Thus, it would be more fruitful for the RECs' leadership to prioritise local realities and ensure their guiding norms and principles are adaptive and flexible. This can be done by leveraging the people-centred approach. They cannot afford to be distant from the realities of the local population.

Conclusion

In principle, peace missions recognise the human security premise. Troops are expected to give precedence to protecting individuals and communities in the host nations. Thus, a more precise conceptualisation of human security in peace operations by the UN and the AU will significantly contribute to the successful fulfilment of mission mandates and the ability of robust contribution of the Ethiopian contingent in cooperation with

other Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). A top-down approach is more likely to implement a top-down approach a significant disservice. Unfortunately, evidence shows that this approach often ignores the local population or prioritises state building or the status quo that led to or harboured the conflict in the first place.

The ENDF and its peacekeeping contingents' commitment to "people and nation before oneself" operational philosophy or doctrine and its historical rebel origin have helped the Ethiopian contingents to perform well in defence of the local people and the mandate. Irrespective of place, time and condition, Ethiopian contingents have been characterised by their primary focus on protecting the local people. This can be expressed in their engagement with the local population and perpetrators of violence. Ethiopian contingents have often been sharing meals, digging water wells, harvesting crops, providing healthcare services, caring for the elders and women and children, and contributing money for and celebrating holidays and other traditional festivities with the local population in the host nation. Furthermore, the operational tactic used by the ENDF against perpetrators of violence in the host nations and the ensuing maximum protection from fear and imminent danger helps the local people to feel safe and aspire for a better future.

This strong commitment of the Ethiopian contingent to provide maximum protection for the local people in the host nations has practical reciprocity, as demonstrated, among others, by the recent support it gets from the Southwest and Jubaland states of Somalia. The local people and officials of these two states of Somalia have protested the anticipated withdrawal and replacement of the Ethiopian contingent by other militaries. This highlights the critical role of the Ethiopian contingent and the importance of its approach.

To preserve its underlying doctrine and historical reputation in the field of peace operation, the Ethiopian contingent will continue working at the grassroots level at any cost. This will include life sacrifices and winning hearts, minds, and souls. The services and support the Ethiopian contingent provides for local populations may not formally be considered as part of the mandates of missions. However, the Ethiopian contingents are confident that they can consistently reinforce and promote these principles. In this vein, reporting formats should consider accounting for the performance of deployed troops, especially if they contribute to the successes recorded by the mission, even if they are outside the mission's mandate. As peace operations experience more decentralisation, perhaps the Ethiopian approach will receive more attention as a best practice or at least an entry point. The UN and AU should consider ENDF's approach as an addition, not competing.

Policy Recommendations and Lessons Learned

To The UN and AU

- The UN and AU should develop socially and culturally appropriate mechanisms for peacekeeping operations so that peacekeepers work at the grassroots level with the local people to ensure the ultimate protection of civilians in conflict zones.
- UN and AU should provide mandates that have meaning and significance to the local people and serve their purposes. These mandates should provide protection (physical, psychological, and emotional) for people from actual and perceived threats that endanger their life options.
- Close collaboration with civil society and actors for peace will contribute to mandates with local legitimacy, credibility, trust and ownership to enhance the possibility of successful missions.

To TCCs (with support and guidance from the UN and AU)

- TCCs and other civilian peacekeeping contingents should be structured to focus on peace and security concerns at the grassroots level. Peacekeeping operations cannot achieve their objectives unless they are primarily set to address the cultures, values, customs, beliefs, and values and the needs and interests of the bottom millions.

- The UN-based financial efficiency (life insurance) and reputation must allow peacekeepers to act beyond the mission's mandate to protect civilians even in imminent danger and violence. Ideally, a clear and achievable mandate with resources to match should be tailored to local realities to enable contingents to act within the mandate under all necessary circumstances.
- Working with the local people at the grassroots level does not necessarily mean risking peacekeepers' lives. The level of trust and respect that contingents create by working with the local people in their day-to-day interactions should reduce overall violence and shield contingents from attacks in different ways.
- In line with human security, peacekeepers should be ready to pay every sacrifice to make the local people safe and feel safe.

To African Governments and Civil Society (Supporting UN and AU peace support missions)

- Suppose African governments believe that African problems are unique and that African solutions are required. In that case, they should consider local realities instead of subjecting their people to an alien liberal peace-building. The norms and principles of UN and AU-mandated PSOs, such as consent, impartiality, legitimacy, credibility, and local ownership, will have meaning and significance if they reach and serve the bottom millions at the grassroots level.
- Lessons can be drawn from the experiences of the Ethiopian peacekeeping contingents. The Ethiopian contingents in international PSOs have been helping people in the host nations to define and experience their own 'peace and security' that give meaning and significance to their everyday lives.
- Ethiopian peacekeeping practice contributes to the step-by-step evolution and restoration of the norms, structures, and institutions that could help the bottom millions in the host nations maintain peace and security. This bottom-up approach will serve the often-stated 'African solution for African problems' to become a practical reality rather than simply remaining floated around people in the policy circle as a romanticised rhetoric.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: THE EXPERIENCE OF ETHIOPIAN CONTINGENT IN AMISOM AND ATMIS

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Executive Summary

Implementing the Ethiopian National Defence Forces' (ENDF) doctrine was pivotal in fostering collaboration and trust between its African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) contingent troops and the local Somali population. Despite initial concerns among Somalis regarding AMISOM's deployment, implementing the doctrines was instrumental in bridging cultural divides, facilitating socialisation, and garnering credibility and trust between the troops and local communities. This helped to deter and restrain Al-Shabaab's aggressive expansion. Drawing from experiences like the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) success and the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) failure, it is indeed evident that garnering acceptance, trust, and credibility at the grassroots to support strategic-level objectives is essential for the future of peace operations in Africa.

Key Points

- At the beginning of the involvement of the Ethiopian contingent in Somalia, maintaining consent at the grassroots was challenging, mainly due to Al-Shabaab's dominion over most of Somalia's territory.
- ENDF's doctrines of *"People and Nation Before Oneself"*, *"Integrity at All Times"*, *"Unwavering Democratic Attitude"*, and *"Effectiveness in All Missions"* played a pivotal role in contributing to the success of the Ethiopian contingents.
- The crucial lesson derived from Ethiopian contingents emphasises the significance of garnering trust, acceptance, and credibility at the grassroots to develop and support a peace operation mission's overall objective(s).

Introduction

ENDF initiated its involvement in international peace operation efforts during the 1950s in the context of the Korean War. This engagement reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to international collaboration and collective security. Subsequently, Ethiopia remained consistent in its contribution to peace operations. According to the ENDF Peacekeeping Centre, the cumulative participation of Ethiopian peacekeepers exceeds 168,724, encompassing both contingent troops and staff observers. Insights shared by participants in roundtable discussions involving various peacekeeping operation practitioners highlighted that Ethiopian contingent troops were explicitly assigned to address situations where previous military interventions had failed to establish peace.

In addition to its robust military operational capabilities and engagements, Ethiopian contingents distinguish themselves by cultivating harmonious relationships with local populations and administrations. This constructive adaptation not only enhances the operational effectiveness of the contingents. It also facilitates credibility, acceptance, and trust-building from the international community and the host nations.

Research Method

This paper presents a potentially effective implementation model of the ENDF's principles in peacekeeping operations. On this note, the authors used a case study design to examine ENDF's experience in AMISOM and ATMIS and present them as valuable lessons for developing best practices (Yin, 2018). To achieve this, the authors used focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIs) with past and present members of the Ethiopian contingents in AMISOM and ATMIS missions. This was useful for the authors to capture the individual and group perspectives on the performance of Ethiopian contingents in Somalia. Furthermore, the authors also used field reports from the ENDF Peacekeeping Centre on the specific missions of AMISOM and ATMIS.

Non-Military Efforts Behind the Military One

Almost twenty years ago, ENDF commenced its operation against the religious extremist group that occupied Mogadishu. This was before the international collective security initiatives taken by the UN and AU. The Ethiopian government provided clear justifications for its military intervention in Somalia from 2006 to 2009. The late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, informed the House of People's Representatives of Ethiopia that,

Our intervention in Somalia is a matter of self-defence. Our adversaries are strategically connecting Asmara, Mogadishu, and Addis Ababa. The Eritrea Government supports the Islamic Courts Union (ICU - in Somali, Midowga Maxkamadaha Islaamiga). At the same time, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) have aligned with the ICU's military wing. Furthermore, the ICU has declared a direct jihad against Ethiopia, posing a direct and imminent threat to Ethiopia's national security (ENDF HQ, 2018).

The ICU is not merely a coalition of Islamic courts but also includes the former terrorist group called Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI), which has been a strong ally of the Ogaden National Liberation Front and Oromo Liberation Front in Ethiopia's Ogden region since the 1980s. Additionally, Eritrea, seeking retribution for its losses in the 1998 war against Ethiopia, allegedly supported the ICU and its military wing in a proxy war on Ethiopia. The ICU has garnered international and local support groups and individuals. In response to both direct and indirect threats posed by the ICU and its allies, the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) based in Baidoa requested the ENDF intervention for its protection.

The Ethiopian government's statement went on to say that the military action taken by the transitional government and Ethiopia was a "legitimate exercise of the inherent right of self-defence" (Khayre, 2006). Such an imminent threat led the Ethiopian government to take a pre-emptive attack against the ICU in Somalia. Here, it is essential to note that pre-emptive action was not a novel idea practised by the Ethiopian military.

At the beginning of the ENDF intervention, the response and sentiment of many Somalis was very challenging. They considered the ENDF as "Christian Invaders or Crusaders" against Muslim communities. The initial apprehension among Somalis stemmed from the fear of the unknown. Preserving their cultural identity is a paramount concern, especially given ICU's propaganda against Christian religious practices, influencing their Muslim tradition. However, ENDF's people-centred approach and humane characteristics significantly fostered socialisation between ENDF troops and the local population.

Regardless, the ENDF soldiers continued their support to war victims, the sick, and those facing starvation, even at the expense of their lives, limited food and medical supplies. Recognising the urgency of immediate

needs, ENDF troops demonstrated a willingness to save lives within their capabilities. By sharing the burdens and challenges faced by the local people, ENDF gained trust, acceptance, and cooperation, establishing a foundation to win hearts and minds. As a result, the ICU was defeated relatively within a short time. In line with this, roundtable participants said that ENDF's intervention in Somalia was crucial in saving the then-Transitional Government of Somalia, creating favourable conditions for establishing AMISOM. The rapid recapture of areas and the disruption of Al-Shabaab's advances were instrumental in this context.

On February 20, 2007, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorised the African Union to deploy a peacekeeping mission with a six-month mandate, adopting resolution 1744 (2007) 13 (US Army PKS01, 2023). AMISOM is the first AU mission tasked with peace enforcement (Yohannes & Gebreegzlabher, 2016). It was established with the consent of the Nairobi-based Transitional Government and the international community at the strategic level. Although the first AMISOM contingent troops, which Uganda and Burundi contributed, tried their best to support the then Transitional Government of Somalia alongside ENDF, the remnant militant groups remained challenging.

Following the defeat of the ICU's political leadership, its military wing, comprised of former AIAI members, persisted in the bush, rebranding itself as Al-Shabaab. According to ENDF Headquarters (2018), Al-Shabaab traces its roots to extreme Muslim sects such as Al-Islah, Al-Tebliq, Al-Tofiq, and Al-Ittihad in Somalia, which seek to expand Wahhabism and establish a Salafist state governed by sharia law. Al-Shabaab espouses the ideals of a "Greater Somalia" and a Salafist state, concepts supported by major clans like Habar Gidir.

The complete withdrawal of ENDF from Somalia in January 2009 encouraged Al-Shabaab to regain control over most of Somali territory. "After two years of such fighting that bogged down the Ethiopian army, the Islamist insurgents regained control of most parts of South-Central Somalia, including parts of the capital, Mogadishu" (Solomon, 2009). Although Al-Shabaab used ENDF's withdrawal as a golden opportunity to recapture the former Islamic Courts Union's bases, Ethiopia never stopped its support for the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFGS) and AMISOM peacekeepers. In line with this, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom speaks during a joint news conference with Algeria's Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci in Algiers on June 30, 2013, uploaded by Aaron Maasho, Reuter's World, on July 22, 2013, noted that,

After a 2006-2009 stint, Ethiopia once again sent troops to Somalia in 2011 to fight Al-Shabaab, alongside African Union forces from Uganda and Burundi and Kenyan troops that later incorporated the AMISOM mission after entering Somalia independently to pursue Al-Shabaab.

AMISOM included Djiboutian, Kenyan, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopian Contingents, respectively, from 2011 to 2014 to support the TFGS. From 2010 to 2015, AMISOM contingents, TFGS forces, and Ethiopian independent forces pushed Al-Shabaab from the capital (Mogadishu) and other major towns. Despite suffering significant losses over the course of two decades, Al-Shabaab remains a formidable terrorist group that uses guerrilla tactics in Somalia, posing a challenge to the contingent troops engaged in combating the group's strong base and effective guerrilla tactics. Al-Shabaab also exploits the federal government's weaknesses in controlling the population, engaging in taxation and resource acquisition activities on par with or surpassing the government's. Consequently, AMISOM contingents have faced difficulties in winning the hearts and minds of the populace while conducting effective counterinsurgency operations since 2007.

However, each troop-contributing country's contribution and level of operational success varies. The Ethiopian National Defence Force's (ENDF's) people-centred approach and humane character, coupled with its extensive experience in counterinsurgency warfare, has effectively restrained Al-Shabaab's aggressive expansion in Somalia (Gebresellase, 2014).

Factors for ENDF's Operational Success: Analysis

Every international Peacekeeping Operation is governed by the three prominent United Nations Peace Support Operational principles: *consent*, *impartiality*, and *non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate* (Bellamy & Williams, 2010) and other three additional principles for success (UN capstone, 2008). Many of the challenges and failures of peacekeeping operations emanated from improper implementation of the principles. For example, several United Nations Peacekeeping operations in the past have been initiated with the consent of conflicting parties at the strategic level, only to struggle with maintaining such consent at the tactical level. Often, belligerents have varied interests with the local population. In such cases, the principle of consent faces challenges as the consenting party may not represent the local population (Bellamy & Williams, 2010).

The primary and paramount factor contributing to the success of ENDF contingents in AMISOM and ATMIS lies in the effective implementation of consent and credibility principles at the grassroots. Building a good relationship is an investment that requires a thoughtful allocation of resources. The extent of investment in fostering relationships holds significance. ENDF contingent troops consistently prioritise the protection of local communities. As outlined by one of the ENDF peacekeeping practitioners (a senior officer) who was once in Somalia for an AU mission:

When the enemy launches shells or opens fire in the surrounding areas, indicating an attack on the local population or other UN forces, we refrain from remaining in fortified barracks. Instead, our contingents actively engage with the enemy. We willingly bear the associated costs during these confrontations because our primary mission is safeguarding the people, not just the infrastructure. This approach ensures that the local population comprehends our genuine objectives, fostering a willingness to collaborate.

Such strong commitment may occasionally diverge from the established rules of engagement within the United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly regarding insurance policies. Nevertheless, the core objectives of peacekeepers, which include prioritising civilian protection and addressing humanitarian crises, remain paramount. Despite potential misalignments with specific operational regulations, local communities in Somalia practically recognise and appreciate the presence of Ethiopian contingent troops in their villages as a dedicated effort to shield them from fear and imminent danger.

The primary activities for ENDF contingents in their areas of responsibility in AMISOM were socialising themselves with the local population. The notion of achieving mission success without the active involvement of the local population is considered implausible. The rationale behind deploying peacekeeping forces to specific areas is not shrouded in secrecy; instead, it aims to mitigate humanitarian crises, provide civilian protection, and foster local administration towards sustainable peace and stability. Successfully executing these activities hinges upon the active engagement of the local populace.

The second activity is the commitment to 'respect the people's human and democratic rights without precondition' (ENDF General HQ, 2010). The provision of humanitarian aid may not fall directly under the responsibility of contingent troops unless specified in the mandate. However, it is considered ethically unsound for Ethiopian contingents to discard or destroy excess food items when local populations are facing starvation. They provide timely support to war victims, the sick, and those facing starvation, even at the expense of their limited food and medical supplies. The divergence may stem from the UN principle of 'Impartiality,' emphasising the avoidance of special favours for contingent soldiers. However, for the ENDF, these practices are consistent with their operational doctrines and norms.

During crucial times, such as fasting during Ramadan, Ethiopian contingents actively spent time sharing their food with the local people. Recognising the urgency of immediate needs, Ethiopian contingents demonstrated a willingness to save lives within their capabilities. In support of this position, one of the participants (a general officer once deployed under ATMIS) of the roundtable has emphasised the following:

Ethiopian contingents are renowned for their generosity, engaging in activities such as sharing food, providing medical assistance, donating aid, participating in religious and traditional festivities, and assisting people in times of difficulty. Unlike practices observed in some contingents, Ethiopian forces refrain from disposing of excess food items, opting to share even from their limited supplies.

According to Paul D. Williams, professor of international affairs at George Washington University, Al-Shabaab had conducted six large-scale attacks against six different AMISOM Forward Operating Bases (FOB) from 2015-2022. Al-Shabaab overrun, looted, caused high casualties at Leego, Janaale, El Adde, Kulbiyow, and El-Baraf FOBs garrisoned by Burundian, Ugandan, and Kenyan contingents (Williams, 2023a). However, the Ethiopian troops were prepared and successfully repelled Al-Shabaab's massive attack at Halgan FOB. Although their combat effectiveness was considerable, the Ethiopian contingents had been previously alerted to the possibility of an imminent attack by local sources. Here, Ethiopian contingents' humane characteristics garnered acceptance in the local population and increased operational effectiveness. "The Ethiopian troops made good use of their engagement with the local population to acquire early warning and intelligence about al-Shabaab operations in the area" (Williams, 2023a).

The second success factor for ENDF contingents is their resilience and combat prowess over adversity. "When the Security Council authorises 'robust' missions in high-threat environments without a peace to keep, it should ensure their military component is combat effective" (Williams, 2023b). ENDF's experience, especially in guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency, makes it the most operationally effective force for high-threat peacekeeping environments like Somalia. Many of the contingent troop's areas of responsibility in Somalia were characterised by poor infrastructure, denial, and hostile environments. However, the adaptive, mobile, and self-contained Ethiopian contingent units were effectively functioning even under constrained budgets, emphasising resourcefulness.

According to one of the in-depth interview participants, Ethiopian contingents systematically conducted organised patrols at least twice a week, covering distances of 60 to 100 kilometres through enemy minefields and attempting ambush attacks. This approach aimed not only to defend themselves but also to prevent enemy access to the local community. While Al-Shabaab rarely launched surprise attacks against Ethiopian contingent small units, any fleeting moments of victory were short-lived. Ethiopian contingents ensured the enemy was neutralised before returning to their barracks. "...This will increase mission credibility, reduce the risk of armed groups manipulating the mission, and improve the chances of mandate implementation, including physically protecting civilian populations" (Williams, 2023b).

The Ethiopian contingents often apply the operational art widely known as "Know the enemy and know yourself" (Tzu, 1994: 179). Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group known for employing guerrilla tactics and suicide attacks, establishes a strong base within local communities, swiftly manoeuvring between locations. However, Ethiopian contingents effectively leverage their counterinsurgency experience against Al-Shabaab. As stated by Mehari, "They prioritise a greater use of mobile field headquarters and command centres meshed in the community centres that are primarily designed to support the local communities in their efforts against terrorism and to provide extra muscle when the enemy outguns their efforts" (Taddele, 2015). Similarly, one of the participants (a senior officer who was recently in Somalia under ATMIS) of the roundtable has the following to say:

To mitigate the impact of the enemy's activities, Ethiopian contingents often engage in lengthy patrols, walking for hours and days. When the enemy deploys hit-and-run guerrilla tactics, Ethiopian contingents seize the opportunity to pursue and counteract the threat effectively.

The Ethiopian higher and general officers who participated in the roundtable also reported that the ENDF contingents had maintained their presence and built confidence in the local community. The local communities often fear potential reprisals from Al-Shabaab and seek assurance of their security before establishing a connection with peacekeepers. The perceived weakness or defencelessness of contingents might deter cooperation due to the fear of retaliatory attacks by Al-Shabaab. However, as the discussants said, Ethiopian contingents' operational effectiveness usually avoids vulnerability and a sense of insecurity in the local communities. In most cases, the local community is a crucial information source for Ethiopian contingent troops.

In addition to fostering positive social interactions and shared goals, Ethiopian contingents took credible measures against the common enemy during the operations. "Ethiopian forces conducted further operations against fleeing al-Shabaab fighters the following day, killing dozens more. AU officials heralded the battle as one of al-Shabaab's 'heaviest defeats.'" (Williams, 2023a) Credibility, in this context, extends beyond acceptance from the community. It involves ensuring that the enemy comprehends the consequences of their actions. Ethiopian contingents adopt a proactive stance, never waiting for Al-Shabaab attacks in their barracks. "In preparation, Ethiopian soldiers stationed an element of their force outside the base. This was able to create a killing zone that decimated al-Shabaab's attacking forces" (Williams, 2023a).

Upon receiving information about enemy movements, they advance to engage, demonstrating a readiness to confront threats. For instance, the roundtable participants mentioned one notable incident as follows:

One day, Al-Shabaab launched a surprise attack on Ethiopian contingents in Kismayo, causing casualties. However, another Ethiopian contingent from Beledweyne swiftly advanced, retaliating and successfully neutralising the enemy. Al-Shabaab, caught off guard by forces from a distant location responding promptly, did not anticipate such a swift counteraction.

The common peacekeepers' practice involves staying within fortified barracks until hostile fire subsides, a measure essential for self-protection. However, Al-Shabaab strategically exploited this approach, targeting small contingent units within their barracks. In contrast, Ethiopian contingents proactively responded to credible information, typically from local sources, by advancing to engage the enemy, denying them the initiative. This approach of the Ethiopian contingents coincides with the principles of human security in peace operations.

The priority in most peacekeeping operations is the protection of civilians, which, in most cases, is poorly implemented. An illustrative example of this argument is the case of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo MONUSCO). MONUSCO failed to provide civilian protection to the local population (Nagel, 2021). Nagel argues that "MONUSCO generally fails to protect civilians and respond quickly to alerts; peacekeepers sexually abuse and exploit local women, boys, and girls; peacekeepers are distant from and disrespectful towards local civilians" (Nagel, 2021). Poor operational activities and inhuman behaviours led the local communities to protest against MONUSCO peacekeepers' presence in Congo.

In contrast, Ethiopian contingents in AMISOM, by sharing the burdens and challenges faced by the local people, gained trust, acceptance, and cooperation, establishing a foundation to win hearts and minds. Rather than remaining confined in fortified barracks, living among the local population facilitated access to crucial information. The ongoing struggle between Al-Shabaab and the contingent revolves around manipulating the population rather than controlling specific areas. Ethiopian Contingents refrained from imposing their beliefs on the local population and maintained a respectful and harmonious coexistence with the local culture. This approach, rooted in acceptance from the grassroots, upholds the principle of "consent" and can enhance credibility at the strategic level.

The third success factor for Ethiopian contingents is their commitment to promote local ownership. Firstly, the ENDF facilitated the full participation of the local population in their areas of responsibility, demonstrating a willingness to collaborate with grassroots entities. Clan leaders, elders, religious figures, women, and civilian societies wield considerable influence in resolving disputes, often surpassing the formal political structures. The relationships cultivated with these organisations are perceived as 'impartial'. ENDF troops display patience in attentively listening to the concerns of local actors, addressing issues within their scope while reporting the crises to the chain of command and formal systems of the mission. One of the practitioners from AMISOM highlighted that:

AMISOM's plan to train Somali youths to empower the government was given to several countries to train soldiers in their ways. Feedback from the Somali government indicated that soldiers trained by Ethiopian contingent troops fought bravely against Al-Shabaab. In contrast, most of those taught by others joined Al-Shabaab or returned to their villages. The Ethiopian contingents implemented strict training for Somali youths and involved them in actual operations against the common enemy alongside their Ethiopian colleagues.

The intention here is not to endorse the efforts of the Ethiopian contingent specifically but to emphasise the effective implementation of the principle of 'Promotion of national and local ownership.' Peacekeepers are present to support the host nation's government in fulfilling their mandate. No contingent unit is deployed to serve its interests; instead, it focuses on contributing to the host nation's security and stability. Their roles should be subsidiary, aiming to promote local leadership aligned with the interests of the local people of the host nation rather than the interests of individuals or troop-contributing countries.

The fourth success factor could be the contingents' comprehensive preparation before deployment. As stated by the previous two articles of this publication, the ENDF's operational success emanates from the effective implementation of the four operational principles. However, the ENDF operational principles require a proper integration mechanism with the peacekeeping principles on the ground. According to one of the in-depth interview participants from the Ethiopian Defence Peacekeeping Centre, the selection and recruitment of members for peacekeeping missions is conducted meticulously.

Soldiers with any criminal history are ineligible for assignment to peacekeeping missions. Typically, individuals with exemplary performance and character from various units are selected and sent to the ENDF contingent training centre. Subsequently, the training centre provides specialised training, emphasising the cultures and traditions of the host nation, Somalia, for 3-6 months. Host culture, interest, nature of the conflict, and Al-Shabaab's mode of operandi are the centres of the training. While the contingent units are taking their training at Huro Contingents Training Centre, Battalion leaders and their staff are separately trained in more conceptual skills at the Ethiopian International Peace Support Training Institute in Addis Ababa.

Conclusion

United Nations peacekeeping operational principles such as *consent*, *impartiality*, and *non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate* operate as strategic-level guidelines, serving as agreements between the international community and local conflicting parties. While no peacekeeping forces are deployed without the parties' consent unless specified as peace enforcement, most denials and rejections of peacekeeping operations originate from the grassroots level. In such cases, the top-down principles may not be readily apparent to individuals at the grassroots.

Given that "consent" and "credibility" are complementary principles, parties that have granted consent must comprehend and align with the interests of the local population. This underscores the crucial importance of credibility at the tactical level, which may be equally or even more vital than at the strategic and operational levels. Lack of credibility at the grassroots level may also diminish legitimacy at the strategic level. The UN seems to recognise this concern when it states: "How a United Nations peacekeeping operation conducts itself may have a profound impact on its perceived legitimacy on the ground" (UNPSO Capstone, 2008).

The crucial lesson from Ethiopian contingents emphasises the significance of garnering acceptance and credibility at the grassroots level to maintain consent and legitimacy at the strategic level. ENDF contingents have been implementing their foundational principles effectively: *nation and people before oneself*, *integrity at all times*, *democratic attitude and effectiveness in all missions* as the bedrock for collaboration and cooperation with the host nations' local people and administration bodies.

Regarding operational effectiveness, the agile, mobile, and self-contained nature of ENDF contingent units' organisation enabled them to operate in harsh environments. Although most areas of operations were under enemy pressure, Ethiopian contingents never quit their presence, travelling on foot for days with limited food and water supplies to achieve their mission. Ensuring civilian protection is vital in fostering collaboration, encouraging people to provide information, and facilitating cooperation with contingencies. The traditional adage "seeing is believing" holds weight on the ground, as the local population tends to believe what they observe first-hand.

In general, the humane characteristics and high standards of integrity exhibited by Ethiopian contingents, coupled with their combat effectiveness, significantly contributed to AMISOM's ability to uphold principles of

legitimacy and credibility at the grassroots level. The local credibility and acceptance proved instrumental in supporting AMISOM'S strategic ends.

Policy Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- A people-centred or bottom-up approach is crucial for immediate tactical success (later interpreted into strategic success) in peace operations. Contingent troops must work towards gaining trust, support, and acceptance from the local people. TCCs must recognise and leverage the role of the local communities in the theatre of operation.
- Withstanding hardship and strong fighting capability are the keys to earning credibility at the tactical level. Contingent troops should practically showcase their ability to defend the local population as much as they protect themselves and the mission's mandate.
- Contingent troops should not remain at their fortified barracks for self-defence whenever aggressor entity attacks are reported. They must be responsive and active to repel the attacks, protect the local population, and possibly put measures in place to deter future attacks.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

- Consent of the parties
- Impartiality
- Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

The Core Business of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

- Observation, monitoring and reporting – using static posts, patrols, overflights or other technical means, with the agreement of the parties;
- Supervision of cease-fire and support to verification mechanisms;
- Interposition as a buffer and confidence-building measure

Within this broader context, the core functions of a multi-dimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation are to:

- Create a secure and stable environment while strengthening the State's ability to provide security, with full respect for the rule of law and human rights;
- Facilitate the political process by promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance;
- Provide a framework for ensuring that all United Nations and other international actors pursue their activities at the country-level in a coherent and coordinated manner

Experience has shown that the achievement of a sustainable peace requires progress in at least four critical areas:

- Restoring the State's ability to provide security and maintain public order;
- Strengthening the rule of law¹² and respect for human rights;
- Supporting the emergence of legitimate political institutions and participatory processes;
- Promoting social and economic recovery and development, including the safe return or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees uprooted by conflict.

Security Council play a catalytic role in the following critical peacebuilding activities:

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of combatants; Mine action; Security Sector Reform (SSR)¹³ and other rule of law-related activities; Protection and promotion of human rights; Electoral assistance;

Support to the restoration and extension of State authority

There are a number of areas in which the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations is limited to facilitating the activities of other actors within and outside the United Nations system, when requested, and within the limits of their mandate and available capacity. The promotion of socio-economic recovery and development and the provision of humanitarian assistance are two critical areas in which multi-dimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations play a more limited supporting role.

APPENDIX 2: LAWS, ACTS OF CONDUCT, VALUES, AND BEHAVIOURS OF THE ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

1. The safety of the citizen always comes first.
2. They respect and are acquainted with the culture and norms of the community they are sent to protect.
3. They have a strong commitment to protecting the citizens, even if it means risking their lives.
4. Well-trained in discipline; when dispatched on missions, the trained peacekeeping soldiers also receive the role of engagement. They can then treat forces that surrender or are captured with clarity because of this document.
5. They were trained to follow the motto “Peace at home, Peace for the world” and to treat every country where they are stationed as if it were their own, protecting the citizens at all costs.
6. They respect the cultures and norms of the community and are quite involved in it.

The philosophy has been built around the following:

Behaviours

1. Be inclusive and respectful to others.
2. Act with the intention of defending the nation
3. Put the country and the interest of the nation before personal interests
4. Be extremely active and offer people space to contribute their thoughts
5. Give respect to any citizen
6. Being compassionate
7. Be a courageous
8. Be role models/ live by example

Act of Conduct

1. Target only conflict areas
2. Protect civilians
3. Respect infrastructures
4. Treat war prisoners or those who surrendered humanely

5. Avoid inhumane treatment

Values

1. Putting the needs of the citizens as a main priority
2. Uphold moral principles in any situation and adhere to a soldier's entire code of conduct
3. Upholds and supports democratic principles
4. Contribute to achievement in all difficult circumstances
5. Constitutional loyalty
6. Integrity comes first

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