



ARMS FLOWS AND THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

PIETER D. WEZEMAN*

I. Introduction

International responses to the protracted instability and violence in Somalia have included both general restrictions on arms supplies to the country and arming specific actors. A United Nations embargo imposed in 1992 bans arms supplies to non-state actors. Since late 2006, the UN has supported the use of military force by and in support of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and did not hinder or formally protest at a military intervention by Ethiopian forces in late 2006 intended to bolster the TFG.

This Background Paper discusses recent arms supplies to Somalia and to African external actors involved in the conflict, along with the risks associated with supplying arms to the TFG and its supporters. Section II gives brief background information on the conflict, armed actors in Somalia and the arms embargo. Section III discusses arms flows to Somali opposition groups and section IV to Eritrea, considered one of the main adversaries of the TFG. Section V examines arms supplies to the TFG.¹ Supplies to Ethiopia and participants in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are discussed in section VI. Section VII offers conclusions.

II. Background

Somalia has experienced nearly three decades of instability and intrastate conflict of varying intensity. The many active armed groups in Somalia range from non-state actors with clearly political agendas to local militias and criminal gangs. Alliances between the groups and their factions shift frequently. The main armed Somali opposition group in 2010, al-Shabab (the

¹ For reasons of space, arms flows to the autonomous Somali regions of Puntland and Somaliland are not discussed here. While the distinction between political and criminal violence in Somalia is often unclear, arms flows to criminal groups, including those engaged in piracy, are also not covered. On criminal violence in Somalia see Stepanova, E., 'Armed conflict, crime and criminal violence', *SIPRI Yearbook 2010: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2010), pp. 46–50.

* This paper is part of the SIPRI Project on Monitoring Arms Flows to Africa and Assessing the Practical Regional and National Challenges and Possibilities for a Relevant and Functioning Arms Trade Treaty. The project is funded by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

SUMMARY

● A United Nations arms embargo restricts arms flows to Somalia. However, supplies to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) are allowed and the UN has urged the international community to supply arms to the TFG and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Somali non-state actors continue to obtain weapons from external sources. Eritrea, in particular, is accused of having supported Somali opposition groups since at least 2005. It is now under a separate arms embargo.

Both the TFG and AMISOM need arms, but risks and difficulties associated with providing them put potential suppliers in a dilemma. The TFG has been accused of human rights abuses. Also, TFG arms have gone missing and both TFG and AMISOM materiel has ended up with opposition groups. Neither the TFG nor AMISOM seems to have a system in place for controlling arms stockpiles. The United States and the European Union (EU) both militarily support the TFG, but EU members seem unwilling to supply arms.

Arms supplies to Ethiopia risk complicating the situation in Somalia or being used in internal repression. Supplies to Ethiopia could also aggravate tensions with Eritrea.

AMISOM contributors Burundi and Uganda have both been accused of human rights abuses and diverting arms to conflict areas, and are affected by their own internal conflicts.



Youth), controls much of the country. Both TFG forces and non-state actors have been accused of indiscriminate and targeted violence against civilians.²

From 1992 to 2004 Somalia had no formal national government. In January 1992 the UN Security Council imposed a 'general and complete' embargo on the provision of arms and military equipment to Somalia, which was extended to include military training and assistance in 2002.³ The TFG was formed in 2004 and became the internationally recognized government of Somalia. The TFG continues to have the support of the international community, although it has limited authority inside Somalia.

In 2006 the arms embargo was amended to permit the supply of arms, training and military assistance 'intended solely for the support of or use by' a planned African-led peacekeeping mission to Somalia.⁴ AMISOM was launched in early 2007. Among its tasks was to facilitate the re-establishment of the Somali security forces.

In December 2006 Ethiopian forces entered Somalia to drive back opposition groups who threatened the survival of the TFG.⁵ While not authorizing the intervention, the UN did not formally oppose it, and Ethiopian forces remained in the country until early 2009.

The most significant modification to the arms embargo was made in February 2007, when states were explicitly permitted to supply arms to TFG security forces. Such supplies must have the prior approval of the UN Sanctions Committee on Somalia.⁶ In response to persistent violations of the embargo, the Security Council decided in November 2008 that an arms embargo could be imposed on entities involved in such violations.⁷

III. Arms supplies to Somali opposition groups

Judging by reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, non-state actors in Somalia have acquired arms and ammunition from a variety of sources and by a variety of channels.⁸ In general such acquisitions have involved low volumes of ammunition, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and a few heavier, crew-served infantry weapons such as portable anti-aircraft and

² See Stepanova, E., 'Trends in armed conflicts: one-sided violence against civilians', *SIPRI Yearbook 2009: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009), pp. 46–52.

³ UN Security Council Resolution 733, 23 Jan. 1992; UN Security Council Resolution 794, 3 Dec. 1992; and UN Security Council Resolution 1407, 3 May 2002. UN Security Council resolutions can be accessed at <<http://www.un.org/documents/scres.htm>>. For details of the embargo and its amendments see the SIPRI Arms Embargoes Database, <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes>>.

⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 1725, 6 Dec. 2006.

⁵ See Lindberg, S. and Melvin, N. J., 'Major armed conflicts', *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), pp. 72–78.

⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 1744, 20 Feb. 2007. The Sanctions Committee was established in 1992 under UN Security Council Resolution 751, 24 Apr. 1992.

⁷ UN Security Council Resolution 1844, 20 Nov. 2008.

⁸ The Monitoring Group was established in 2004 to monitor implementation of the embargo. Doubts have been voiced about the reliability of some of its reports as they cite unverifiable 'intelligence sources' and have included some implausible details. Wezeman, S. T. et al., 'International arms transfers', *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), p. 412. Reports of the Monitoring Group are available at <<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/index.shtml>>.



anti-tank weapons.⁹ Some supplies have been provided directly by backers in neighbouring states.¹⁰ In particular, Eritrea is thought to have supplied arms and other assistance to Somali opposition groups. Commercial arms markets in Somalia have flourished openly despite the embargo and are important sources of arms and ammunition for non-state actors and criminal groups. Captured TFG and AMISOM stockpiles are another source of arms and ammunition for opposition groups, and it has been reported that Ethiopian, TFG and AMISOM personnel have sold materiel to non-state groups.

In 2005 the Monitoring Group reported that Eritrea had supported and armed groups in Somalia fighting the TFG.¹¹ The Monitoring Group's March 2010 report also states that Eritrea has provided significant and sustained political, financial and material support, including arms, ammunition and training, to armed opposition groups in Somalia since at least 2007.¹² Eritrea's involvement is generally described as an attempt to counter Ethiopian influence in the region, especially because it perceives the TFG as a proxy for the Ethiopian Government. In 2008 the Eritrean Government claimed that it pursued a policy of non-interference in Somali affairs and denied Monitoring Group allegations that it had armed opposition groups.¹³

Commercial imports are considered to be the most consistent source of arms for Somali opposition groups

The Monitoring Group considers commercial imports, mainly from Yemen, to be the most consistent source of arms and ammunition for Somali opposition and criminal groups, although since June 2008 curbs on domestic arms sales in Yemen have apparently reduced the volume of exports to Somalia and driven up prices in Somali markets.¹⁴ Arms purchases by opposition groups have reportedly been facilitated by financing from Eritrea, private donors and Somali diaspora groups.¹⁵

TFG forces are also considered a major source of arms for non-state armed groups in Somalia. In 2008 the UN Monitoring Group estimated that as much as 80 per cent of the arms, ammunition and other materiel supplied to support the TFG had been diverted for private purposes, to the Somali

⁹ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008), annex to S/2010/91, 10 Mar. 2010, pp. 6, 46–47.

¹⁰ In Nov. 2006 the Monitoring Group reported suspicions that the governments of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria had all been involved in the supply of arms to Somali armed groups. All denied it. United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008), annex to S/2007/436, 18 July 2007, p. 26. In reports from 2008 on these accusations are not mentioned again.

¹¹ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1639 (2005), annex to S/2006/229, 4 May 2006, pp. 10–13.

¹² United Nations (note 9), p. 22.

¹³ Araya Desta, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations, Response of the Government of Eritrea to the Monitoring Group, 20 Mar. 2008, reproduced in United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia submitted in accordance with resolution 1766 (2007), annex to S/2008/274, 24 Apr. 2008, pp. 54–55.

¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 751 (1992), annex to S/2008/769, 10 Dec. 2008, p. 6.; and United Nations (note 9), p. 6.

¹⁵ United Nations (note 14), p. 6.

arms market or to opposition groups.¹⁶ It is alleged that members of the TFG security forces have sold their weapons.¹⁷

In April 2008 the Monitoring Group alleged that officers of the Ethiopian units still present in Somalia and Ugandan officers serving with AMISOM had sold arms and ammunition taken from their own forces' stockpiles, and from stockpiles of captured or confiscated arms, to traders in the Somali arms markets and directly to armed opposition groups.¹⁸ However, these allegations have not been repeated or elaborated on in subsequent reports, raising questions about their reliability.

IV. Arms supplies to Eritrea

Despite persistent allegations of violations of the embargo on Somalia, the UN only took specific action against Eritrea—in the form of sanctions, including an arms embargo—in December 2009.¹⁹

Belarus, Bulgaria and France have all reported making transfers of arms and military equipment to Eritrea between 2006 and 2009. Belarus supplied nine BM-22 multiple rocket launchers in 2007.²⁰ Bulgaria reported the export of items related to light weapons worth €164 429 and unspecified ammunition worth €3 209 383 to Eritrea in 2006, and of items related to light weapons worth €150 000 and unspecified ammunition worth €2.1 million in 2008.²¹ The 2008 deliveries were probably related to the supply of 50 82-mm mortars in 2008 reported by Bulgaria in the UN Register of Conventional Arms.²² Bulgaria was also an important supplier of arms to Eritrea before 2006, supplying 120 T-55 tanks, 10 MT-LB armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and 20 2S1 122-mm self-propelled howitzers in 2005.²³ France reported that in 2006 Eritrea had received unspecified electronic equipment designed for military use related to aircraft worth €0.6 million, although the report lacks sufficient detail to determine whether these could have been dual-use items supplied for non-military use.²⁴

¹⁶ United Nations (note 14), p. 7.

¹⁷ United Nations (note 14), p. 40. Desertions and defections by trained TFG personnel are considered an even bigger problem.

¹⁸ United Nations (note 13), pp. 30–31.

¹⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 1907, 23 Dec. 2009. The Security Council was acting in part under Resolution 1844 (note 6), para 8(b), but the sanctions were also a response to Eritrea's refusal to withdraw its armed forces from territory disputed by Djibouti and Eritrea and to engage in diplomatic dialogue about the matter. The USA banned all arms sales to Eritrea in Sep. 2005 citing what it considered state repression of religious freedom. US Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 'Suspension of defense export licenses to Eritrea', Public notice 5335, 12 Sep. 2005, *Federal Register*, vol. 71, no. 43, 6 Mar. 2006, p. 11281.

²⁰ UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) database, <http://unhq-appspub-01.un.org/UNODA/UN_REGISTER.nsf>.

²¹ Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy, [Report on the implementation of the Law on the Foreign Trade in Military Equipment and Dual-use Goods and Technologies: 2006], 2007, available at <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/transfers/transparency/national_reports/> (in Bulgarian); and Council of the European Union, Annual Report according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C300, 22 Nov. 2008, p. 74.

²² UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) database (note 20).

²³ UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) database (note 20).

²⁴ French Ministry of Defence, *Rapport au parlement sur les exportations d'armement de la France en 2006* [Report to Parliament on exports of armaments from France in 2006], Nov. 2007, available at <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/transfers/transparency/national_reports/>, p. 157.



Other countries may also have supplied arms to Eritrea without reporting it since 2005, when the Monitoring Group first reported allegations that Eritrea had violated the embargo on Somalia. Russia was a significant arms supplier to Eritrea up to 2005, for instance exporting 80 9M133 (AT-14) anti-tank missiles to Eritrea in 2005 and 2 MiG-29SMT combat aircraft in 2004, and may have delivered spare parts and ammunition for these items after 2005.²⁵ Also, in 2005 Isaias Afewerki, the Eritrean President, indicated an interest in buying products from a Pakistani arms factory he visited.²⁶

European countries have supplied arms to Eritrea despite allegations that it had violated the embargo on Somalia

The main Somalia-related concern about arms deliveries to Eritrea before the arms embargo of December 2009 is the risk that the equipment delivered, especially light weapons and ammunition, was or could be diverted to opposition groups in Somalia.

V. Arms supplies to the Transitional Federal Government

Arms had already been supplied to the TFG before the UN Security Council formally lifted the embargo for supplies to government forces in 2007. Some supplies since then have been in technical violation of the embargo as they have not been approved by the Sanctions Committee.

The Yemeni Government stated in 2005 that it had supplied 5000 'personal arms' as aid to the TFG in July 2005, in response to a request from the Somali President, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed.²⁷ The Monitoring Group also reported allegations that arms had been delivered in 2006 from Uganda to the TFG.²⁸

Ethiopia has reportedly been a principal state supplier of arms, ammunition and training to the TFG since 2005.²⁹ Since 2007, Ethiopia has not notified the Sanctions Committee of its supplies to the TFG and reliable information on the materiel involved is not available.

Lifting the embargo in relation to the TFG in 2007 was considered crucial for the TFG's survival following the Ethiopian forces' expected withdrawal, as its forces were badly under-equipped.³⁰ In July 2009, when the TFG once again looked likely to be overrun by opposition forces, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, went further and called on the international community to provide urgent military support, including arms, to the TFG.³¹

In June 2009 the US Government announced that it was facilitating the supply of small arms and ammunition to the TFG.³² The USA has declared

²⁵ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>>.

²⁶ 'Eritrea president appreciates POF [Pakistan Ordnance Factories] arms quality', *Business Monitor*, 26 Feb. 2005.

²⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1587 (2005), annex to S/2005/625, 4 Oct. 2005, pp. 12–13.

²⁸ United Nations (note 27), pp. 14–15; United Nations, Security Council (note 11), pp. 13–14; and United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1676, annex to S/2006/913, 22 Nov. 2006, p. 27.

²⁹ United Nations (note 27), pp. 14–15; and United Nations (note 9), pp. 47, 55.

³⁰ Gelfand, L., 'Donors pledge funds for Somali security reform', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 Apr. 2009, p. 20.

³¹ Lederer, E., 'UN chief urges military support for Somalia', Associated Press, 21 July 2009.

³² US Department of State, 'Background briefing on U.S. assistance to the Somalia Transitional Federal Government', Press Release 2009/649, 26 June 2009, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/index.htm>>.



Ethiopia is thought to have been a key supplier of arms to the TFG since 2005

that it provides limited military support to the TFG in ‘the firm belief that the TFG seeks to end the violence in Somalia that is caused by al-Shabaab and other extremist organizations’.³³ During 2009 and up to March 2010, 94 tonnes of weapons, including rifles, machine guns and 82-mm mortars were delivered to the TFG by Uganda, which reportedly took them from the stocks of its own armed forces.³⁴ The USA reimbursed Uganda for this with an unknown sum of money. In May 2009 the US Government also applied to the Sanctions Committee for an embargo exemption to supply up to \$2 million (€1.4 million) in cash to the TFG to procure weapons and logistical supplies ‘locally’, presumably in part from Somali arms markets.³⁵

The main government-aligned non-state actor in Somalia in 2008–2009 was the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama’a (ASWJ). In June 2009 the TFG reached a cooperation agreement with the ASWJ and in November formally requested arms for the group from Ethiopia, arguably giving it the status of a legitimate security sector institution. However, even before this, Ethiopia had been providing military support to the ASWJ.³⁶

Risks of supplying arms to the Transitional Federal Government

There are several risks associated with the supply of arms to the TFG forces. First, there have been repeated and credible reports that TFG forces have used their weapons in disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks resulting in civilian casualties.³⁷

Second, many of the weapons supplied to the TFG forces have ended up in the hands of non-state actors (as described in section III). It is not known whether or how international suppliers of arms to the TFG have tried to prevent the diversion of TFG arms. For example, weapons from US-funded arms consignments have reportedly ended up in Somali arms markets.³⁸ The US Government has declared that any US military assistance for the TFG ‘is accounted for and audited through mechanisms’.³⁹ However, details of these mechanisms are not public, and it is not known whether they include a system for controlling the weapons supplied. It is also unclear whether the USA has assisted the TFG or AMISOM in investigating alleged thefts and illicit sales of arms by their own personnel. More specifically, it is not known whether the weapons recently supplied by the USA via Uganda were marked and registered before being delivered to Somalia or before they were distributed to individual TFG soldiers, or whether any attempt has been made to monitor their whereabouts subsequently. The notifications by the USA to the UN Sanctions Committee regarding the delivery included information about

³³ US Department of State, ‘U.S. policy in Somalia’, Press Release 2010/296, 12 Mar. 2010, <<http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2010/138314.htm>>.

³⁴ United Nations (note 9), p. 54; and Amnesty International, *Somalia: International Military and Policing Assistance Should be Reviewed*, AFR 52/001/2010 (Amnesty International: London, Jan. 2010), p. 11.

³⁵ Amnesty International (note 34), p.12; and Dickinson, E., ‘Arming Somalia’, *Foreign Policy*, 10 Sep. 2009.

³⁶ United Nations (note 9), pp. 11–13, 55.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Harsh War, Harsh Peace: Abuses by al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia* (Human Rights Watch: New York, Apr. 2010); Amnesty International (note 34); and Stepanova (note 1).

³⁸ United Nations (note 9), p. 54.

³⁹ US Department of State (note 33).



the types of weapon but information about the technical specifications, quantities and markings was insufficient to allow easy tracking.⁴⁰

The risks of supplying arms to the TFG may be the reason for what seems to be reluctance by European Union (EU) member states to supply arms to the TFG. In May 2010 the EU launched a one-year programme, the EU Training Mission (EUTM), providing military training to around 2000 members of the TFG security forces, including in urban warfare. The training took place in camps in Uganda.⁴¹ However, as far as is known, no individual EU member state has supplied arms to the TFG forces trained by the EUTM, and there are signs that this is a deliberate policy. For example, the Dutch Government has stated that it does not deliver weapons to the TFG, even while stressing the importance of an independent Somali Army and police force.⁴²

VI. Arms supplies to external supporters of the Transitional Federal Government

Ethiopia

Although the Monitoring Group considered the Ethiopian military presence in Somalia from 2006 to 2009 to be a violation of the arms embargo, the UN Security Council never formally protested against it.⁴³ Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia included the deployment of armed forces with such equipment as artillery, tanks and combat aircraft.⁴⁴ Since withdrawing its forces from Somali territory, Ethiopia has remained an active supporter of the TFG.

No delivery of complete major weapons to Ethiopia has been reported since 2005.⁴⁵ During 1997–2004—a period that included a major armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia—Ethiopia procured significant numbers of major weapons, mainly from Russia.⁴⁶ It is likely that at least supplies of spare parts and similar from Russia have continued.

EU member states and the USA have provided military assistance, including arms, to Ethiopia

EU member states have reported the delivery of military equipment to Ethiopia in 2004–2008. During that period, Bulgaria reported total exports of military goods to Ethiopia worth €8.3 million, the Czech Republic €12.3 million, France €2.6 million, Hungary €3.3 million and Romania €1 million.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Amnesty International (note 34), p. 12; and Secretariat of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, personal communication with the author, 17 Aug. 2010.

⁴¹ European Union, 'EU military mission to contribute to the training of the Somali Security Forces', Fact sheet, June 2010, <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1872>>.

⁴² Verhagen, M. J. M., 'Nederlandse deelname aan vredesmissies' [Dutch participation in peacekeeping missions], Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the President of the House of Representatives, dossier 29521, no. 129, 12 Dec. 2009.

⁴³ United Nations (note 13), pp. 30–31.

⁴⁴ United Nations, Security Council, 5614th meeting, S/PV.5614, 26 Dec. 2006, p. 3.

⁴⁵ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 25).

⁴⁶ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 25). The major armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia took place between 1998 and 2000. For more information see Seybolt, T. M., 'Major armed conflicts', SIPRI Yearbook 2001: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, pp. 26–30.

⁴⁷ European Union, Annual reports according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, 2005–2008, and 11th Annual Report According to Article 8(2) of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, 2009, available at <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1484>>.

Table 1. Denials of licences for arms exports to four African countries by European Union members, 2004–2008

Figures are numbers of licence denials. Figures in brackets are the criteria on which the refusals were based.^a

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Burundi	2 (3,4)	1 (4)	–	–	–
Eritrea	1 (1)	1 (4)	–	–	–
Ethiopia	1 (4)	5 (2,3,4)	2 (2,4)	4 (3,4)	–
Uganda	4 (2,3,4)	8 (3,4,7,8)	5 (2,3,7)	5 (2,3,4,7,8)	2 (4)

^a The 8 European Union (EU) criteria governing control of exports of military equipment and technology can be summarized as follows.

1. Against an EU or United Nations arms embargo or a non-proliferation agreement.
2. Could be used in human rights abuses or breaches of international humanitarian law.
3. Could contribute to provocation, prolongation or aggravation of tension or conflict.
4. Could be used in an act of international aggression.
5. Could be used in acts that endanger the national security of EU member states and their allies.
6. The recipient supports terrorism or fails to respect international law.
7. Could be diverted in the buyer country or re-exported under undesirable conditions.
8. Is incompatible with the technical and economic capacity of the buyer country.

Sources: European Union, Annual reports according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, 2005–2008, and 11th Annual Report according to Article 8(2) of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, available at <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1484>>; and Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 Dec. 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L335, 13 Dec. 2008.

The USA calls Ethiopia an important partner in counter-terrorism and a robust contributor to international peacekeeping operations.⁴⁸ During the period 2005–2008 the USA supplied Ethiopia with \$11 million (€7.8 million) in military equipment.⁴⁹ The USA has provided military aid to Ethiopia in recent years through its Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme. In both 2008 and 2009 Ethiopia received \$843 000 (€586 000) under the programme and was scheduled to receive another \$3 million (€2.2 million) in 2010. However, this aid has been small compared to what other US allies such as Iraq or Pakistan have received.

Risks of supplying arms to Ethiopia

Countries supplying arms to Ethiopia must consider whether doing so could support a potential future unauthorized Ethiop-

ian presence in Somalia and the possibility that Ethiopia will violate the arms embargo on Somalia by supplying weapons to the TFG without proper authorization or by supplying arms directly to non-state actors. Any decision to supply arms aimed at bolstering Ethiopia's capability to protect its borders with Somalia must also take into account the risk that such supplies may strengthen the restrictive Ethiopian political system and could be used in the protracted interstate conflicts between the Ethiopian Government and rebel groups in the Ogaden and Oromiya regions. Finally, the risk remains of a renewed war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and arming Ethiopia could be seen as potentially upsetting the military balance in the region.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ US Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2010*, Book II, p. 52.

⁴⁹ In addition to this directly supplied military equipment, the US Government authorized the export by US companies to Ethiopia of 'defense articles and services' valued at \$37 million (€27 million) in US fiscal years 2004–2008. However it is not known how many of these articles were delivered and to what extent they were intended for use by the Ethiopian armed forces. Grimmert, R. F., 'U.S. arms sales: agreements with and deliveries to major clients, 2001–2008', Congressional Research Service, 2 Dec 2009; and data on direct commercial sales authorizations in reports by the US Department of State pursuant to Section 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act, available at <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/transfers/transparency/national_reports>.

⁵⁰ Both Eritrea and Ethiopia were under a UN embargo from 1999 to 2000. See Wezeman, P. D., 'United Nations arms embargoes: their impact on arms flows and target behaviour: case study: Eritrea and Ethiopia, 2000–2001', SIPRI, 2007, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=356#>.



Several EU countries have refused to permit the supply of military equipment to Ethiopia, citing concerns about human rights and internal and regional peace and stability (see table 1). Also, the US House of Representatives passed a bill in 2007 citing human rights concerns that would have put conditions on military aid to Ethiopia, but the bill never became law.⁵¹

AMISOM

AMISOM remains significantly short of its mandated troop strength and in need of adequate equipment.⁵² For example, in March 2009 Burundi appealed for armoured personnel carriers and body armour for its AMISOM troops.⁵³ At the AU summit in July 2010 Jean Ping, the AU Commission Chairman, stated that AMISOM was in need of tactical helicopters and other equipment, which he argued should be provided by the international community.⁵⁴ Indeed, under the Security Council resolution mandating AMISOM, UN member states are urged to provide financial resources, personnel, equipment and services to the operation.⁵⁵

As of October 2010 only Uganda and Burundi provided troops to AMISOM. Uganda has been the major troop contributor to AMISOM, deploying troops supported by armoured vehicles and tanks. Despite an internal conflict and its participation in AMISOM and other peace operations, Uganda's imports of major arms have been relatively modest.⁵⁶ In the period 2004–2009, major weapon deliveries to Uganda included 31 second-hand BMP-2 armoured vehicles and 1000 automatic rifles from Ukraine; 31 Buffel light armoured vehicles from South Africa; 23 T-55 tanks from Belarus; and 23 unspecified tanks from Russia.⁵⁷

Arms imports by Burundi have been even more limited. No imports of major conventional weapons have been identified for the period 2005–2009. Albania reported supplying 115 510 cartridges of 12.7-mm calibre to Burundi in 2009.⁵⁸ It has also been reported that large numbers of light and small calibre weapons were delivered to Burundi in 2008 from an unidentified source.⁵⁹ Montenegro has reported that 34 FAB-100 aircraft bombs from

⁵¹ Jopson, B. and Dombey, D., 'Ethiopia bill faces Bush backlash', *Financial Times*, 3 Oct. 2007; and Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007, Bill approved by the US House of Representatives and submitted to the Senate, 3 Oct. 2007, <<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-2003>>.

⁵² See Soder, K., 'Multilateral peace operations: Africa, 2009' SIPRI Fact Sheet, July 2010, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=408>.

⁵³ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009), S/2009/210, 16 Apr. 2009, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Ntale, S., 'Ping: AU peacekeepers in Somalia need help', CNN, 27 July 2010, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/07/26/somalia.au.un/>>.

⁵⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 1744 (note 6).

⁵⁶ The US Government authorized the export by US companies of 'defense articles and services' to Uganda valued at \$48 million (€34 million) in US fiscal years 2004–2008. However, it is not known how many of these articles were delivered and to what extent they were intended for use by the Ugandan armed forces. Reports by the Department of State pursuant to Section 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act (note 49).

⁵⁷ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 25); Holtom, P., 'Ukrainian exports of small arms and light weapons, 2004–2007' SIPRI Background Paper, Oct. 2008, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=369>; and UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) database (note 20).

⁵⁸ United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) database (note 20).

⁵⁹ United Nations, Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, S/2009/603, 23 Nov. 2009, p. 23.

Serbia and an unknown number of machine guns from Albania and Serbia were delivered to Burundi via its territory in 2009.⁶⁰

At least one country has provided arms specifically for use by Burundian and Ugandan AMISOM forces: the USA had by late 2009 supplied \$135 million (€94 million) for logistical and equipment support and pre-deployment training for Burundian and Ugandan AMISOM forces, including 72 armoured vehicles.⁶¹

Risks of supplying arms to AMISOM troop contributors

Although the UN Security Council has urged the international community to support AMISOM with arms, several factors must be taken into account regarding arms supplies to the AMISOM troop contributors. The Ugandan

Government is engaged in an internal conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group, while fighting between the Burundian Government and several armed opposition groups only ended in 2008. In both countries government troops have allegedly been involved in human rights abuses.⁶² Finally, there are suspicions that weapons have

been supplied via or from Burundi to non-state actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).⁶³

Table 1 shows that EU member states have in several cases refused the supply of military equipment to Burundi and Uganda on a variety of grounds. In late 2009 the Malaysian Government also denied permission for the export of 40 000 second-hand assault rifles to Burundi because of fears that they were intended for armed groups in the DRC.⁶⁴

In July 2010 Guinea announced that it was about to contribute 850 soldiers to join the Burundian and Ugandan troops currently deployed with AMISOM.⁶⁵ Arms supplies to Guinea intended to support such a contribution would also be problematic. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the EU imposed arms embargoes on Guinea in October 2009 in response to a deterioration of the political situation that culminated in the killing of over 150 demonstrators by the Guinean military in September 2009.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Montenegrin Ministry of Economy, *2009 Annual Report on Foreign Trade in Controlled Goods* (Ministry of Economy: Podgorica, 2010), p. 33.

⁶¹ United Nations, General Assembly, 'Committee for Programme and Coordination reaffirmed as main subsidiary organ for planning, coordination in text approved by Budget Committee', Press Release GA/AB/3928, 5 Nov. 2009.

⁶² Human Rights Watch, 'Uganda: investigate 2009 Kampala riot killings', 10 Sep. 2010, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/09/10/uganda-investigate-2009-kampala-riot-killings>>; and Human Rights Watch, 'Burundi: violence, rights violations mar elections', 1 July 2010. <<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/07/01/burundi-violence-rights-violations-mar-elections>>.

⁶³ United Nations (note 59), p. 23.

⁶⁴ Bromley, M. and Holtom, P., 'Arms transfers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo: assessing the system of arms transfer notifications, 2008–10', SIPRI Background Paper, Oct. 2010, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=415>.

⁶⁵ Heinlein, P., 'Guinea to bolster AU peace force in Somalia', Voice of America, 23 July 2010, <<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/africa/west/Guinea-to-Bolster-AU-Peace-Force-in-Somalia-99121519.html>>.

⁶⁶ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS heads of state and government, Final communiqué, Abuja, 17 Oct. 2009; and Council Common Position 2009/788/CFSP of 27 Oct. 2009 concerning restrictive measures against the Republic of Guinea, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L281, 28 Oct. 2009>.

Supplying arms directly to the AU or AMISOM may be less risky than supplying arms to the troop-contributing countries



One possible approach to avoiding the risks associated with supplying individual troop-contributing countries is to supply arms directly to the AU or to AMISOM. Such an approach has been used by, among others, Canada, which has since 2005 loaned 105 armoured vehicles to a pool of African countries specifically for use by the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) peacekeeping forces in the Darfur region.⁶⁷

VII. Conclusions

It is difficult to control the flow of arms to a conflict region. When weapons are supplied to such a region as part of efforts to achieve stability and peace it is hard to ensure that it is done in such a way as to reduce the risks of unintended consequences related to the conflict, diversion to other conflicts or human rights abuses.

Arms flows to Somali non-state actors continue despite the arms embargo, albeit at low volumes. It is worrying that the international community took so long to act against Eritrea—and that individual countries continued to supply Eritrea with arms—despite credible allegations that it had violated the embargo on Somalia.

Although there is broad international support for strengthening the armed forces of the TFG, the actual supply of arms to the TFG is problematic. In particular, EU member states seem to be willing to bolster the TFG with training in military tactics but unwilling to supply the weapons these forces need to allow them to use their newly acquired skills. A major question remains over whether sufficient efforts have been taken by countries providing military aid to the TFG to improve the security of TFG arms stocks through proper marking and other accountability procedures.

Ethiopia's role in Somalia raises specific issues for arms transfers. Arms supplied to Ethiopia could support its unauthorized but so far unhindered military activities in Somalia. Protecting Ethiopian territory against possible spillover of the Somali conflict is a legitimate motive for arms transfers to Ethiopia, but the risks that the arms will be used in internal repression or could aggravate the tension with Eritrea could justify restraint on the part of potential suppliers.

Conflicts and human rights abuses occur in the countries contributing troops to AMISOM, and one of these countries is suspected of involvement in the illegal supply of arms to another conflict. For this reason some countries, among them EU member states, have refused certain arms supplies to AMISOM contributors. Nevertheless, AMISOM needs more military equipment in order to carry out its mandate. Countries wanting to support AMISOM should consider channelling arms supplies to the AU or directly to AMISOM instead of to the contributing countries.

⁶⁷ Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 'Canada, supporting African Union peacekeeping in Darfur: past, present, future', May 2010, <<http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/sudan-soudan/support-appui.aspx?lang=eng>>.

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

GOVERNING BOARD

Göran Lennmarker, Chairman
(Sweden)

Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar
(Indonesia)

Dr Alexei G. Arbatov (Russia)
Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi
(Algeria)

Jayantha Dhanapala
(Sri Lanka)

Dr Nabil Elaraby (Egypt)
Ambassador Wolfgang
Ischinger (Germany)

Professor Mary Kaldor
(United Kingdom)

The Director

DIRECTOR

Dr Bates Gill (United States)



STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Signalistgatan 9
SE-169 70 Solna, Sweden
Telephone: +46 8 655 97 00
Fax: +46 8 655 97 33
Email: sipri@sipri.org
Internet: www.sipri.org

SIPRI BACKGROUND PAPER

ARMS FLOWS AND THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

PIETER D. WEZEMAN

CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
II. Background	1
III. Arms supplies to Somali opposition groups	2
IV. Arms supplies to Eritrea	4
V. Arms supplies to the Transitional Federal Government	5
VI. Arms supplies to external supporters of the Transitional Federal Government	7
Ethiopia	7
AMISOM	9
VII. Conclusions	11
Table 1. Denials of licences for arms exports to four African countries by European Union members, 2004–2008	8

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pieter D. Wezeman (Netherlands) is a Senior Researcher with the SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme. He rejoined SIPRI in 2006, having previously worked at the institute from 1994 to 2003. From 2003 to 2006 he was a Senior Analyst for the Dutch Ministry of Defence in the field of proliferation of conventional and nuclear weapon technology.