# Book review:
# Williams, P.D. (Eds.). (2018). Fighting for Peace in Somalia:
# A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007—2017.
# Oxford: Oxford University Press, 366 p.

**Mohamed Adan, Brian Mugabi**

RUDN University, Moscow, Russian Federation

# Рецензия на книгу:
# Fighting for Peace in Somalia:
# A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007—2017 /
# ed. by P.D. Williams. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 366 p.

**М. Адан, Б. Мугаби**

Российский университет дружбы народов, Москва, Российская Федерация

In the book under review, P.D. Williams analyzes The African Union Mission (AMISOM) in Somalia as one of the most prolonged, deadliest, and perhaps most expensive peacekeeping operations in the horn of Africa.

The author illustrates the situation with an African fable telling the story of a lion and an antelope: "Each morning the lion wakes up and knows that he must run faster than the antelope or he will starve. The antelope wakes up and knows that he must run faster than the lion to survive. So, whether you are a lion or an antelope when the morning arrives, you had better be running". This parable demonstrates the conditions faced by the African Union's Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the aftermath of their deployment, where it was charged with outmaneuvering the enemy.

AMISOM — created on the 19th of January 2007, deriving its mandate from the African Union Peace and Security Council — has been functioning within an intricate system of coordination between international and regional actors, and operates in an overly demanding an environment. Despite this, AMISOM has realized some goals, such as reinstating the Somali Government and re-establishing its control in significant places, like the capital Mogadishu. This had been a substantial bottleneck faced by

the peacekeeping body of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). From this setting, the author further expands upon issues such as how AMISOM has been able to get to where it is today despite the hindering factors.

In his literature review, Williams uses both primary and secondary sources to draw the reader into a detailed narrative of AMISOM's peacekeeping operation. The author even uses unpublished documents of the African Union, United Nations, Somali authorities, and the European Union. He also held several interviews with Contingent commanders, among others. The author divides his book into two parts and thirteen chapters.

In Part 1, the author provides a chronological analysis based on the historical narration of the peacekeeping mission. The author indicates shifting strategies from defensive to offensive operations, and the underlying challenges of establishing and empowering the Somali National Army. Part 1 has six chapters that shall be discussed and analyzed below.

The author [Williams 2018: 21—47] begins chapter 1, *Genesis*, by analyzing the AMISOM's deployment from the initial stages. In his narration, he scrutinizes the four profound developments in Somalia and the Horn of Africa in the aftermath of al-Qaida's[1] attack on the United States on the 11th of September 2001. The four developments he refers to are:

(i) the establishment of a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) for Somalia in 2004;

(ii) the African Union (AU) and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) responses to the call by the new TFG president Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed for a peace-building mission so as to establish himself in Somalia;

(iii) the development that came in June 2006 with the decisive victory of the Union of Islamic Courts over the various warlords that had previously run Mogadishu and much of South-Central Somalia;

[1] This organization is prohibited in Russian Federation.

(iv) AMISOM's emergence as an exit strategy for Ethiopia's troops in December 2006, after Prime Minister Meles Zenawi decided to intervene militarily to install the TFG in Mogadishu.

The author mentions the authorization of IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM) and the underpinning issues of its failed deployment, including its failure to gain sufficient political traction. Consequently, in chapter 2, *Entry* [Williams 2018: 48—76], the author makes an account of the first two years before the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops from Mogadishu. He alludes to the challenges faced during deployment and explains how the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) faced attacks immediately upon arrival. He also sheds light on how in May 2007, consideration was given to a potential UN takeover of AMISOM, which the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon would later decline. The author emphasizes how Ethiopia's withdrawal both brought new opportunities and posed some challenges for AMISOM, which had now taken center stage as the primary peacekeeping body.

In chapter 3, *Stalemate* [Williams 2018: 77—100], Williams focuses on the Government's failed attempts to build up a compelling set of security forces and investigates how some of these challenges affected AMISOM's operations. The author then analyzes the UN Security Council's decision to establish a Support Office (UNSOA) for AMISOM in 2009 to provide better logistical support. One of the primary reasons for a stalemate was the low troop numbers, which limited them from advancing, inducing a paralysis in operations.

Subsequently in chapter 4, *Offensive* [Williams 2018: 101—125], he further elaborates on how, to overcome the stalemate, the UN Security Council authorized an additional 4000 troops to help AMISOM in its preparations for a critical operation leading to the battle for Mogadishu. AMISOM was then able to adopt innovative tactics in urban warfare, prompting a sharp decline in Al-Shabaab operations, forcing the fighters to flee from their former stronghold, central Mogadishu. The number of successful attempts accumulated, precipitating a significant

shift in international opinion from viewing the mission as a failure to seeing it as strategic success. AMISOM's offensive that led to the capture of Mogadishu boosted their efforts in expanding their operational areas and ensuring effective control in former Al-Shabaab strongholds.

The remaining pages of part 1 (chapters 5—7) [Williams 2018: 126—209] mention a defensive position and a permanent federal government installation. Williams continues to elaborate on AMISOM's considerable military successes demonstrated by al-Shabaab giving up its numerous settlements. Subsequently, in chapter 6, *Consolidation* [Williams 2018: 155], Al-Shabaab's displacement through effective operations is emphasized. Williams goes on to say that AMISOM's consolidation in its acquired territories lead to it becoming dispersed. Finally, in chapter 7, *Surge* [Williams 2018: 178], the author notes that AMISOM acquired more territory and settlements to help it in administering its operations. In gaining considerable territory, AMISOM forces spread out, which left them vulnerable. Their vulnerability came to be exploited by Al-Shabaab, which organized coordinated attacks against AMISOM troops and public institutions.

In part two of the book, which is organized thematically, chapters 8—13 [Williams 2018: 213—322] describe the six main operational challenges faced by AMISOM. Williams lists these challenges, from logistical complications, obstacles to effective security reform, difficulties in stabilization efforts, to an effective exit strategy. The author offers lessons to be learned from each of the mentioned operational challenges faced by AMISOM. The author clearly defines the situation, and labors to make the reader understand from a practical perspective why the situation is as it is and what can be done if AMISOM is to fully and effectively realize its mandate.

In conclusion, the author provides a detailed narrative examining the challenges and prospects of the AMISOM peacekeeping mission. The book however, demonstrates a distinct lack of comparative analysis of African Peacekeeping Missions, for instance those in Sudan and Congo. Such an analysis would enable the reader to look at AMISOM in the context of the successes and failures of regional and international peacekeeping missions in Africa, instead of considering AMISOM's peacekeeping in isolation.

## Библиографический список / References

Williams, P.D. (Eds.). (2018). *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007—2017*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**About the authors:** *Adan Mohamed* — PhD Student, Department of Theory and History of International Relations, RUDN University (e-mail: mohamedbakaaro@gmail.com).
*Mugabi Brian* — Assistant Lecturer, Department of Theory and History of International Relations, RUDN University (e-mail: mugabi-b@rudn.ru).

**Сведения об авторах:** *Адан Мохаммед* — аспирант кафедры теории и истории международных отношений Российского университета дружбы народов (e-mail: mohamedbakaaro@gmail.com).
*Мугаби Брайан* — ассистент кафедры теории и истории международных отношений Российского университета дружбы народов (e-mail: mugabi-b@rudn.ru).