

EU ASSISTANCE MISSIONS TO FAILED STATES. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LIBYAN AND SOMALI CASES

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Received: July 29th, 2023

Accepted for publication: October 24th, 2023

Abstract: Failed states are a threat to international security. This issue has been recognized and presented in all the security strategies of the European Union (EU). Since 2003, through the adoption of the European Security Strategy and continuing with the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy of 2008, the Global Strategy of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy of 2016, and the Strategic Compass of March 2022, failed states have been identified as threats to the EU. The policy of the EU towards failed states is being realized through a series of missions aimed at supporting the governments of states belonging this category. This support is given to various government institutions that need to be strengthened in order to provide security and prosperity to their citizens. Among the missions conducted by the EU in failed states and their near neighborhood, this article analyses those concerning Libya (EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) and Somalia (EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, EUCAP Somalia, and EUTM Somalia). For the EU, helping these failed states has become a priority, because the EU is a global actor that aims to get more involved in the problems that could have a negative impact on it. These problems include the disruption of international maritime traffic, illegal migration, and organized crime. The purpose of the present article is to highlight how the EU is actively involved in these failed states. Starting from the hypothesis that the involvement of the EU in strengthening the governments of these states is necessary, we will analyse the specifics of the missions sent to these countries.

Keywords: EU policy, EU missions, failed states, Libya, security strategy, Somalia

Rezumat: Statele eșuate reprezintă o amenințare pentru securitatea internațională. Acest lucru a fost conștientizat și prezentat în toate strategiile de securitate ale Uniunii Europene (UE). Încă din 2003, prin adoptarea Strategiei Europene de Securitate și continuând cu Raportul privind punerea în aplicare a Strategiei Europene de Securitate din 2008, Strategia Globală a Uniunii Europene pentru Politica Externă și de Securitate din 2016 și Busola Strategică din martie 2022, statele eșuate au fost considerate ca fiind amenințări de securitate pentru UE. Politica UE față de statele eșuate se concretizează printr-o serie de misiuni care au ca scop sprijinirea guvernelor statelor aflate în această situație. Acest sprijin este acordat diferitelor instituții guvernamentale care trebuie întărite pentru a putea oferi cetățenilor din aceste state acces la un cadru de securitate și

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prosperitate. Printre misiunile desfășurate de UE în statele eșuate și împrejurimi, articolul de față le analizează pe cele care privesc Libia (EUBAM Libia și EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) și Somalia (EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, EUCAP Somalia și EUTM Somalia). Pentru UE ajutorarea acestor state este un lucru necesar, deoarece UE a devenit un actor global care își propune să se implice mai mult în problemele care o pot afecta. Aceste probleme includ: perturbarea traficului maritim internațional, migrația ilegală și criminalitatea organizată. Scopul analizei este de a scoate în evidență modul în care se implică Uniunea în aceste state eșuate. Pornind de la ipoteza că implicarea UE este necesară în consolidarea guvernelor din respectivele state, articolul analizează specificul misiunilor din fiecare țară.

Cuvinte cheie: politica UE, misiuni UE, state eșuate, Libia, strategie de securitate, Somalia

I. Introduction

This article analyses the involvement of the European Union (EU) in two failed states: Libya and Somalia. The policy of the EU towards failed states is realized through a series of missions aimed at supporting the governments of these states. This involvement is necessary because without it the government institutions would continue to be overcome by internal problems. The weakening of these states would renew the growth of terrorism, spur illegal migration, and become a safe haven for organized crime. Piracy is another issue the EU is monitoring, as seen in the case of Somalia-based missions. The EU uses a wide range of instruments in order to contribute to the international effort to combat this phenomenon, through political, military, economic, and diplomatic actions.

Part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), EU's policy towards failed states is operationalized through independent EU missions¹. As Vladimir Kmec argues, CSDP does not only refer to the territorial defense of the EU, but also to the “military and civil implementations [that] address crises outside the EU”². Pașcu and Chiriac note that the policy towards failed states “worked in the past, when under the pressure of a crisis where the US no longer

¹ Ioan Mircea Pașcu and Olga R. Chiriac, “On EU strategic autonomy: EU-NATO-US cooperation in an era of renewed great power competition”, *Europolity* 15, no. 1 (November 2021): 20, https://www.snsa.ro/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Vol-15-no1-1.-Pascu_Chiriac.pdf.

² Vladimir Kmec, *EU Missions and Peacebuilding: Building Peace through the Common Security and Defense* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 3.

signaled a desire to engage as much, the EU took over with a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance in response to the crisis situation in Libya (EUFOR Libya)³.

Jonathan Di John states that to describe a failed state, first, we need to understand how a state is defined⁴: “statehood exists only when a certain political entity possesses a permanent population, a defined territory, a government and the ability to enter into relations with other states”⁵. In light of this, Robert Rotberg’s explanation of a failed state is useful: “In contrast to strong states, failed states cannot control their borders. They lose authority over sections of territory. Often, the expression of official power is limited to a capital city and one or more ethnically specific zones”⁶.

The first authors who used the term *failed state* were Helman and Ratner in 1993, who warned that: “Failing states promise to become a familiar facet of international life”⁷. At that time, they argued that there were three groups of states whose survival was threatened:

“First, there are the failed states like Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, and Somalia, a small group whose governmental structures have been overwhelmed by circumstances. Second, there are the failing states like Ethiopia, Georgia, and Zaire, where collapse is not imminent but could occur within several years. And third, there are some newly independent states in the territories formerly known as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, whose viability is difficult to assess. All three groups deserve close attention, and all three will require innovative policies”⁸.

According to them, these states could only be helped by the international community united under the authority of the UN. They proposed active involvement wherever states proved unable to govern their own territory. Similarly, Jean-Germain Gros in his taxonomy had defined failed states as being

³ Pașcu and Chiriac, “On EU strategic autonomy”, 20.

⁴ Jonathan Di John, “Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature”, Working Paper No. 25 (Development as State-Making), *Crisis States Research Centre*, January 2008, 3, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/57427/wp25.2.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ Robert I. Rotberg, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators”, in *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 5, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/statefailureandstateweaknessinatimeofterror_chapter.pdf.

⁷ Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, “Saving Failed States”, *Foreign Policy*, no. 89 (Winter 1992-1993): 3-20, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/06/15/saving-failed-states/>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

“those in which public authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their end of what Hobbes long ago called the social contract, but which now includes more than maintaining the peace among society’s many factions and interests”⁹.

The EU can address the challenges in these states through civilian or military missions that require complex strategies and programs based on civilian and military logistics. The EU seeks to track the evolution of failed states and identify way in which these states can be restored to their full statehood. Yoo considers that: “Finding a comprehensive and effective solution to the challenges of terrorism, human rights violations, or poverty and economic development requires some understanding of how to restore failed states”¹⁰. For the EU, these states represent potential threats to its security, including those that stem from terrorism, organized crime, and illegal migration. At the same time, once these areas are stabilized, they could be places that could foster important economic relations with the EU¹¹.

The EU is involved in these states through civilian and/or military missions, seeking to prevent the degradation of the institutions that manage the funds received for reconstruction and humanitarian aid. Among these, the mission in Libya (EUBAM, started in 2013) is of critical importance since Libya, once one of the most important actors in the region, continues to deal with the effects of a 12-year long civil war. The other state where we find three important EU missions on the ground, is Somalia. Greatly troubled by prolonged civil wars and famine, Somalia is the archetypal failed state.

II. Methodology

The article analyses EU foreign policy and how crises are managed through CSDP missions. The purpose of this research is to highlight how the EU is actively involved in these failed states in order to assess whether the

⁹ Jean-Germain Gros, “Towards a taxonomy of failed states in the New World Order: decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti”, *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (September 1996): 456, <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/13211226.pdf>.

¹⁰ John Yoo, “Fixing Failed States”, *California Law Review* 99, no. 1 (February 2011): 95. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23014430>.

¹¹ Craișor-Constantin Ioniță, *A multi-criteria analysis of the strategic interests of NATO, the EU and China in Africa and the Arctic: specialist study* (Bucharest: “Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, 2021), 46, https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_studii/analiza_multicriteriala_a_intereselor_strategice_in_africa_si_zona_artica.pdf.

involvement of the EU in strengthening the governments of the respective states is necessary or not. In developing the research framework, we used a qualitative analysis of official documents: the European Security Strategy adopted on December 12, 2003; the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (2008); the Global Strategy of the Union European Foreign and Security Policy (2016); and the Strategic Compass (March 2022). Aside from these, we also included the decisions of the Council of the European Union concerning the aid missions. In this documentation process, special attention was paid to the official websites of the five analysed missions, selecting information relating to: start dates and subsequent extensions of the missions, location, type of mission, mandate, and cooperation with other missions. The period analysed covered 15 years, between 2008 and 2023.

The two states analysed were selected because these countries have a strategic importance for the EU. Libya is important because its stabilization would secure the south of the European Union and contribute to the EU's energy security. Libya has large reserves of natural gas and oil and an increase in economic exchanges would be to the advantage of both sides. A rapprochement between the EU and Libya (through the support provided by the two EU missions) would lead to a decrease in illegal migration and would also mitigate the dangers encountered by people trying to escape the Libyan conflict in the Mediterranean region. Somalia is also important because it represents a critical region for the security of commercial maritime transport. The EU, as a global actor with interests in this region has many reasons to help Somalia, since the security issues in the region – piracy, organized crime, terrorism – have a direct impact on European security.

III. EU Policy Towards Failed States

We have established already that failed states pose a threat to international security. According to the European Union External Action, “In a rapidly changing world, security challenges have become more complex, multidimensional and fluid. No EU Member State can face these threats alone”¹². This concern was also communicated by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

¹² European Union External Action, “A stronger EU on security and defence”, November 19, 2018, https://www.ecas.europa.eu/ecas/stronger-eu-security-and-defence_en.

(HR/VP) Josep Borrell who noted that aside from being a source of illegal immigration, failed states have private armies on their territory that generate conflict:

“[...], we have seen in recent years the instrumentalisation of migrants, the privatisation of armies and the politicisation of the control of sensitive technologies. Add to this the dynamics of *state failures*, the retreat of democratic freedoms, plus the attacks on the ‘global commons’ of cyber space, the high seas and outer-space, and the conclusion is clear: the defence of Europe requires a comprehensive concept of security”¹³.

The EU’s foreign policy and defense interests have been conceptualized in a series of strategies that provide current and future guidance for how Member States should address security threats. The topic of failed states is addressed in the European Security Strategy adopted on December 12, 2003. The Strategy defines state failure in relation to two indications: bad governance and civil conflict. It states that:

“bad governance – corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions and lack of accountability and civil conflict weaken states from within. In some cases, this has led to the near collapse of state institutions. Somalia, Liberia and Afghanistan under the Taliban are the best known recent examples. State collapse can be associated with obvious threats such as organized crime or terrorism. The failure represents an alarming phenomenon that undermines global governance and contributes to regional instability”¹⁴.

In the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy of 2008, failed states continued to be considered threats to the EU: “Conflicts in the Middle East and other regions of the world remain unresolved, while others have erupted right in our neighbourhood. State failures affect our security through crime, illegal immigration and, more recently, piracy”¹⁵. The increase in insecurity in maritime traffic due to piracy led Djibouti, a small country

¹³ Council of the European Union, *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security*, 2022, 5-6, https://www.ecas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf.

¹⁴ Council of the European Union, *The European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009), 27, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30815/qc7809568roc.pdf>.

¹⁵ Council of the European Union, *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Securing security in a changing world* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009), 7, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30815/qc7809568roc.pdf>.

neighboring Somalia to host military bases on its territory. F.B. Suciú and Ionel Muntele describe Djibouti as a stable state due to “the presence of foreign military bases (US, China, France, Germany, UK, etc.) that capitalize on its strategic position to monitor the Iranian-Saudi competition in the Arabian Peninsula, protect maritime trade and fight piracy and terrorism”¹⁶.

In 2016, the EU introduced a new strategy – the Global Strategy of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy – to respond to the new security challenges. These challenges came from Russia, which was becoming increasingly hostile after the occupation of Crimea. Afterwards, with the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the risk of instability increased on the eastern flank of the EU and implicitly of NATO. Meanwhile, failed states continued to create new challenges for the EU. On this issue, the Global Strategy stated that:

“These crises, and the unspeakable violence and human suffering to which they give rise, threaten our shared vital interests. The EU will engage in a practical and principled way in peacebuilding, concentrating our efforts in surrounding regions to the east and south, while considering engagement further afield on a case by case basis”¹⁷.

It is important for the EU that this involvement meets the required standards that lead to a comprehensive approach. This requires extensive expertise and adequate funding to change things for the better and provide hope for people living in these states:

“The EU will promote human security through an integrated approach. All these conflicts have multiple dimensions – from security to gender, from governance to economics. Implementing a multidimensional approach using all available policies and tools aimed at preventing, managing and resolving conflicts is essential. But the scope of the comprehensive approach will be expanded further. There are no quick fixes to any of these conflicts. Experience from Somalia, Mali, Afghanistan and elsewhere highlights their protracted nature. The European Union will follow a multi-stage approach, acting at all stages of the conflict cycle”¹⁸.

¹⁶ F.B. Suciú and Ionel Muntele, “The Horn of Africa, between collapse and hope”, *Revista Intelligence*, February 15, 2023, <https://intelligence.sri.ro/cornul-africii-intre-colaps-si-speranta/>.

¹⁷ European External Action Service, “*Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*”. *A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016, 28, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

IV. EU Missions and Failed States

IV.1. Libya

Prior to 2011, Libya was ruled by Muammar Gaddafi, who was violently deposed in the aftermath of Arab Spring protests that broke out in 2011 and subsequent NATO-led intervention that backed the rebels. Since then, Libya has been torn by a civil war, which has had a profound impact on the country, leading it to require more involvement from various international organizations. The Center for Preventive Action stated that the international community “continued to express concern over the permanent fracture of Libya as armed militant groups have tried to divide the country along political and tribal lines”¹⁹, adding that, “in the absence of a primary governing body, migration and human trafficking have remained problematic”²⁰. Under these circumstances, EU missions in this country are justified by the need to combat the presence of terrorist groups, organized crime groups, and groups that traffic in arms and people linked to Libya. For these purposes, the EU allocated € 88.8 million in humanitarian aid to Libya for the first two years of operations²¹.

During the civil war, an important turning point was the year 2019, when Marshal Khalifa Haftar tried to occupy the capital Tripoli. Notably, in terms of international participation, on the part of the Tripoli government, Turkey intervened and changed the course of the war²². As for the involvement of other states from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in Libya, some supported the Government of National Accord (GNA) and others the Libyan National Army (LNA). Colombo and Varvelli argue that:

¹⁹ Center for Preventive Action, “Civil Conflict in Libya”, *Council on Foreign Relations – Global Conflict Tracker*, updated September 19, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-libya>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, “Libya - Factsheet”, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/middle-east-and-northern-africa/libya_en#facts--figures.

²² Matteo Colombo and Arturo Varvelli, “Libya: A Failed State in the Middle of the Mediterranean”, *IEMed: Mediterranean Yearbook*, no. 2020 (2020): 84, <https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Libya-A-Failed-State-in-the-Middle-of-the-Mediterranean-1.pdf>.

“In the Libyan context, Turkey and, to a lesser extent Qatar, back the GNA, which is also supported by militias ideologically linked to the Muslim Brotherhood²³. On the other hand, Egypt, UAE and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia, are among the main sponsors of the HoR-LNA”²⁴.

Due to the chronic of the conflict, the situation remains tense. The government in Tripoli is supported by the UN and internationally recognized, but is in conflict with Marshal Khalifa Haftar, the commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA)²⁵. According to Oliver P. Richmond, the actions of some permanent members of the UN Security Council (Russia and China) and their resistance to the “liberal peace-building consensus” further complicate the peace process in Libya²⁶. Russia and China want to “build multipolar zones of competing interests, their own development banks and forms of military and diplomatic intervention assistance”²⁷.

For the Libyan case-study, we present the mandates of two EU missions: EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR MED IRINI.

IV.1.1. EUBAM Libya

EUBAM Libya provides assistance to the Libyan authorities in the field of border management, as is evident from the mission’s acronym (EUBAM: EU Border Assistance Mission), covering the land, sea and air borders of the country. It is a civilian mission seeking to promote “crisis management with a capacity-building mandate”, by “assist[ing] the Libyan authorities at strategic and operational levels”²⁸. According to the mission mandate which is still operational, EUBAM activities include:

“The work [...] carried out by advising, training and mentoring Libyan counterparts on strengthening border services in line with international standards

²³ Author’s note: The Muslim Brotherhood is the oldest Islamic political organization, founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. It is currently considered a terrorist organization in Egypt and other states in the region. The ideology of this organization is based on revolutionizing the Arab political system according to the founder’s vision.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁵ Center for Preventive Action, “Civil Conflict in Libya”.

²⁶ Oliver P. Richmond, Sandra Pogodda, and Gëzim Visoka, “The international dynamics of counter-peace”, *European Journal of International Relations* (2023): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661231168772>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ EUBAM Libya, “About us”, September 15, 2021, https://www.ecas.europa.eu/eubam-libya/about-eu-border-assistance-mission-libya-eubam_en?s=327&ettrans=ro.

and best practices and by advising the Libyan authorities on the development of a National Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy”²⁹.

The mission started on May 22, 2013 and was supposed to end on June 30, 2020, but after the Berlin Conference on January 19, 2020, the UN decided that it was appropriate to extend the civilian mission, finding that the plan presented was meeting the country’s border security needs: “On 12 February 2020, in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2510 (2020), the UN Security Council welcomed the Berlin Conference on Libya and supported its conclusions, noting that these conclusions represent an important element of a comprehensive solution to the situation in Libya”³⁰.

The Decision of the Council of the European Union from June 18, 2021 states that on June 29, 2020, the Council approved the extension of EUBAM Libya’s mandate until June 30, 2021. And from March 2, 2021, a two-year extension was proposed until June 30, 2023. Once again, on June 26, 2023, an additional two-year extension was approved which is set to expire on June 30, 2025. On the issue of budget allocation, the Council ordered the approval of a budget of € 84.85 million for the period July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023³¹.

The mission has the following objectives:

- (1) “EUBAM Libya shall assist the Libyan authorities in building state security structures in Libya, in particular in the areas of border management, law enforcement and criminal justice, in order to contribute to efforts to disrupt organized criminal networks involved in particular in the trafficking migrant smuggling, human trafficking and terrorism in Libya and the central Mediterranean region.
- (2) EUBAM Libya supports the United Nations-led efforts for peace in Libya in the border areas management, law enforcement and criminal justice”³².

During the 2019 offensive led by to Marshal Khalifa Haftar and during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the mission operated from its headquarters in Tunis, with only a few people dispatched to Tripoli. From September 2020 EUBAM Libya’s headquarters and most of its operational staff were relocated to Tripoli. The EU through this mission is actively supporting the authorities in stepping up efforts to stop organized criminal networks involved in migrant

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1009 of 18 June 2021 amending Decision 2013/233/CFSP on the European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2021, 18, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D1009&qid=1629820283768&from=EN>.

³¹ Ibid., 19.

³² Ibid.

smuggling, people-trafficking and terrorism. The mission also supports the Libyan authorities in areas such as law enforcement by strengthening the strategic planning capacities of the Ministry of Interior.

IV.1.2. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI

The EUNAVFOR MED IRINI mission is a military mission that began on March 31, 2020 and will continue until March 2025. Its original mandate was set to expire in 2021, but was extended from 2021 to 2023 and, again, from 2023 to 2025. Its goals is to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya and to accomplish this, the mission operates aerial, satellite and maritime networks. Based in Rome, the mission controls suspicious vessels heading for Libya. Other tasks EUNAVFOR MED IRINI can perform, include those that:

- “monitor and collect information on illicit exports of petroleum, crude oil and refined petroleum products from Libya;
- contributes to disrupting the business model of smuggling and people-trafficking networks through intelligence gathering and aircraft patrolling;
- [...] support[...] the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy. The implementation of this activity has not started due to the political fragmentation in Libya”³³.

This embargo was not respected by some international actors who supported the various sides in the conflict. States such as the Russian Federation, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt supported Khalifa Haftar, while Turkey and Qatar supported the government in Tripoli³⁴. In these conditions, the EU had to oversee the application of the embargo to prevent the supply of arms from reaching the parties to the conflict. When the mission was first launched, through these measures, the EU was “keen to see an end to the turmoil in Libya, as years of conflict have left areas of the country as lawless gray areas used by human traffickers to channel migrants to Europe”³⁵. The budget allocated for its first year of operations (2020-2021) was € 9 837 800³⁶.

³³ EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, “About us”, <https://www.operationirini.eu/about-us/>.

³⁴ Silviu Nate, “Libya and the new map of geopolitical stakes in the Levant Basin”, *Hotnews*, last modified January 28, 2020, <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-opinii-23626152-libia-noua-harta-mizelor-geopolitice-bazinul-levant.htm>.

³⁵ Euractiv, “EU to extend Libya arms embargo mission to 2023”, last modified March 18, 2021, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-to-extend-libya-arms-embargo-mission-to-2023/>.

³⁶ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 of 31 March 2020 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI)”, *Official*

IV.2. *Somalia*

Since August 1, 2012, after the adoption of the new constitution, the Somali state bears the name of the Federal Republic of Somalia. In Somalia, there is currently a civil war between the central authorities in Mogadishu and the Islamic group Al-Shabaab (affiliated to Al Qaeda). The federal government is internationally recognized and supported, as can be seen in the case of the EU missions to this country.

William T. Brooks in *Why Failed States Matter: The Case of Somalia* (2012) believes that while the conflict is longstanding, a cause that contributes to its prolongation has to do with the lack of credibility of the rulers. According to Brooks:

“As Somalia has been a failed state for more than three decades, it currently has no credible, experienced leaders to govern the country or build functioning institutions. Therefore, the international community must be willing to pursue a long-term approach to successfully rebuild the nation”³⁷.

In Somalia due to the protracted civil war (1991-present) there is a severe humanitarian crisis³⁸ that has facilitated the emergence of armed groups that commit piracy and disrupt commercial maritime transit in this area. UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated that for 2023, the humanitarian situation in Somalia “continues to deteriorate”:

“The severe drought, hunger, disease and violence merge to bring Somalia to the brink of famine. An estimated 8.25 million people (1.5 million children under five, 1.8 million girls (five to 17 years), 1.8 million boys (five to 17 years), 1.3 million women, 1.4 million men and 412,000 elderly) require humanitarian assistance”³⁹.

In Somalia, the EU participates both in terms of military involvement, but also through civilian missions where it provides over 35% of all humanitarian

Journal of the European Union, 2020, 9, <https://www.operationirini.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/200401-CD-IRINI-in-OJ.pdf>.

³⁷ William T. Brooks, “Why Failed States Matter: The Case of Somalia”, *Strategy Research Project*, United States Army War College, Class of 2012, 17, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA560777.pdf>.

³⁸ OCHA, “Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023”, last modified February 8, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-february-2023>.

³⁹ Ibid.

aid⁴⁰. the EU offered the following financial aid to develop the resilience of the Somali state (see Table no. 1). The table shows an increase in funding for each sector in which the EU provides aid to strengthen Somalia. This cross-sector engagement provides the Somali authorities with funds to improve the lives of a large number of citizens.

Financing sectors The year	Displacement and migration	Agriculture, livestock and fisheries	Gender and social inclusion	Transportation	Nutrition	Environment and natural resource management
2018	72.1 million euros	25 million euros	15.4 million euros	6 million euros	33 million euros	14.8 million euros
2019	90 million euros	66 million euros	20.7 million euros	38 million euros	64 million euros	22.8 million euros

Table no. 1: EU funding for Somalia to build resilience

Source: European Union in Somalia, “Partners in Peace”, European Union External Action, 2022, 19, <https://www.ceas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EU-Somalia-6-SC.pdf>.

Decades of failed state experience are largely to blame for the existence of piracy in Somalia. In Sava’s view:

“Somalia is currently the country with the highest level of piracy in the world. One cause of the development of piracy is closely related to the historical setting, because during the authoritarian regime of General Siad Barre poverty increased and the state ended up in a civil war. Under these conditions, piracy evolved from attacking relatively small fishing vessels to attacking commercial vessels such as oil tankers or cargo vessels”⁴¹.

In the future, as the situation in this state will remain tensioned, there will be an increase in the involvement of regional actors. Currently, in addition to the EU, Turkey, which provides the federal government with drones, and the United Arab Emirates, which signed an agreement with Somalia to train 10,000 soldiers and police officers, are also involved militarily in Somalia⁴².

⁴⁰ The European Union in Somalia, “Partners in Peace”, European Union External Action, 2022, 18, <https://www.ceas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EU-Somalia-6-SC.pdf>.

⁴¹ Andreea Nicoleta Sava, “Piracy and terrorism in the Horn of Africa – Federal Republic of Somalia”, *Polis* IX, no. 1 (January 2021): 9. [http://revistapolis.ro/documente/revista/2021/1\(31\)/9.%20A%20N%20Sava.pdf](http://revistapolis.ro/documente/revista/2021/1(31)/9.%20A%20N%20Sava.pdf).

⁴² Vanda Felbab-Brown, “Somalia’s challenges in 2023”, *Brookings*, January 27, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/somalias-challenges-in-2023/>.

IV.2.1. The EU’s Integrated Approach to Missions in the Horn of Africa

In this key region for global maritime trade, there are two failed states that cause instability and where government authority is weak: Somalia and Yemen. The EU considers that an integrated approach is necessary to address the threat posed by piracy and maritime traffic interception. Large quantities of goods are transported through the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and then through the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal allows ships to pass between Europe and Asia in either direction, thereby eliminating other longer and costly routes. To put things in perspective, 12% of the world volume of goods is transported through the Canal. In 2020 alone, “[n]early 19,000 ships, or an average of 51.5 ships per day, with a net tonnage of 1.17 billion tonnes passed through the canal”⁴³.

Given the strong ties that exist between existent piracy networks and Somalia, the EU is actively trying to address this issue through several missions in the region (EU NAVFOR Atalanta; EUCAP Somalia; and EUTM Somalia): “EU NAVFOR is part of the EU’s integrated approach, addressing both the current symptoms and root causes of the problem. To this end, other CSDP missions in the region are EUCAP Somalia and EUTM Somalia”⁴⁴.

IV.2.2. EU NAVFOR Atalanta

The EU NAVFOR Atalanta is a military mission that started on November 10, 2008. At the end of 2022, the mission was extended for another two years, until December 2024⁴⁵. The main objectives of Operation Atalanta are:

- “ - protecting World Food Program vessels and other vulnerable vessels;
- deterring, preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery at sea”⁴⁶.

The protection of commercial ships became even more important after Russia’s blockade of Ukraine, as the number of ships carrying grain was reduced and piracy attacks would deepen the food crisis.

EU NAVFOR Atalanta contributes to deterring, preventing and stopping acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast. The area that this mission

⁴³ DIGI 24, “Historical images: What the Suez Canal looked like at its inauguration, 152 years ago”, last modified November 17, 2021, <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/imagini-istorice-cum-arata-canalul-suez-la-inaugurare-acum-152-de-ani-1738781>.

⁴⁴ EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA, “Mission”, <https://eunavfor.eu/mission>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

oversees is cca. 4,700,000 miles square (cca. 16,121,000 km²)⁴⁷ and includes parts of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and a large portion of the Indian Ocean (including the Islands of Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros). Also included here are the coastal regions of Somalia and its internal waters.

To patrol this area, the mission uses: “Marine ships (surface combatant ships and auxiliary ships, including with helicopters on board); Maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft (MPRA); Unmanned aerial systems (UAS); Teams of the Autonomous Ship Protection Detachment (AVPD), etc.”⁴⁸. These missions are expensive as reflected in the financial reference value (€ 9 930 000) for the common costs approved by the Council for the period between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2022⁴⁹.

IV.2.3. EUTM Somalia

EUTM Somalia is based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1872 of May 2009. EU agreed on January 25, 2010 to launch a military mission to contribute to the training of Somalia’s security forces. The European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) was launched on 7 April 2010 and was initially based in Uganda. Its mandate has been extended seven times. Changes in the mission reflect the circumstances on the ground. EUTM Somalia is described as “an EU military training mission that aims to strengthen the Somali National Government (SNG) and institutions in Somalia by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF)”⁵⁰.

In its seventh mandate (2021-2023), EUTM Somalia continues to provide training to the Somali Security Forces (SSF), helping the government to maintain order in the country. Furthermore, this mission provides strategic level advice to force institutions and assists in mentoring in initial training⁵¹. Eight states contribute troops to the realization of the EUTM Somalia mandate: seven

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA, “Mission - Who contributes to Operation Atalanta?”, <https://eunavfor.eu/mission>.

⁴⁹ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/2188 of 22 December 2020 amending Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on the military operation of the European Union with a view to contributing to deterring, preventing and repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea coast of Somalia”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2020, 77, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020D2188&from=EN>.

⁵⁰ EUTM-Somalia, “Home”, <https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/>.

⁵¹ EUTM-Somalia, “European Union Training Mission – Somalia”, 1, last updated September 2022, <https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2022/09/EUTM-S-FACTSHEET-7th-Mandate.pdf>.

Member States (Italy, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Romania, Portugal, Greece) and Serbia⁵².

IV.2.4. EUCAP Somalia

The EU launched the EUCAP Nestor mission in 2012 to strengthen civil maritime capabilities, with the aim of supporting host states in the development of maritime security. EUCAP Nestor was mandated to stop piracy in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean. According to the *Official Journal of the European Union*, “On December 12, 2016, by Decision (CFSP) 2016/2240 (2), the Council amended mandate of the mission to focus on capacity building in Somalia and changed the name of the mission to EUCAP Somalia”⁵³.

At the end of 2022, the Council extended the mandate for another two years, with the mission to end on December 31, 2024. The mission maintains the goal of supporting maritime security in Somalia. Activities in this mission focus on strategic-level advice, ranging from training and mentoring naval forces that are part of the coast guard to providing support for legislation and the activity of the prosecutor’s office and of the police.

The EUCAP Somalia mission focuses on the implementation of the following three pillars:

- 1.“Strengthening maritime police units in and around the four main Somali ports (Mogadishu, Berbera, Bosaso and Kismayo);
- 2.Contribut[ing] to the development of the Somali Coast Guard functions and continu[ing] to support the importance of maritime security for the development of the Blue Economy;
- 3.Support for the wider development of the police, with particular reference to the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan and the improvement and restructuring of the Somali police force, in coordination with EU-funded activities”⁵⁴.

⁵² Ibid., 1.

⁵³ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2445 of the Council of 12 December 2022 amending Decision 2012/389/CFSP on the European Union capacity-building mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2022, 91, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D2445&from=EN>.

⁵⁴ EUCAP Somalia, “About EUCAP Somalia”, last modified May 12, 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucap-som/about-eucap-somalia_en?s=332.

For the two-year mandate, which started in January 2023, the Council decided to approve an increase of the budget of EUCAP Somalia in order for the mission to better be able to fulfil its mandate. For the period January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2024, the financial reference value intended to cover the expenses related to EUCAP Somalia was € 83,076,673.07⁵⁵.

V. Conclusion

EU dispatches missions in failed states and critical maritime transit areas to assist with the situation on the ground and to foster the consolidation and reconstruction of these states. The missions collaborate with internationally recognized authorities, even if they do not control the entire territory of their states. The missions concerning Libya (EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR MED IRINI), respectively those sent to Somalia (EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, EUCAP Somalia and EUTM Somalia) are an example of good practices for how the EU acts in such situations. EU missions help strengthen the governments of these states both in their military as well as in the civilian capacity since the EU provides considerable humanitarian aid to Libya and Somalia. This aid is necessary to support growing social cohesion and to attract the population living in poverty to the government side.

If ascertaining *whether involvement of the EU in strengthening the governments of the respective states is necessary or not*, we found that this involvement is necessary because the states that need stability do not have the necessary domestic resources to combat the influence of parties that want to destabilize them. In conducting this research, we found that two elements are crucial for the success of these missions: 1) adequate funding; and 2) the presence of specialists who advise and provide instruction to the staff representing the governmental institutions in these states.

⁵⁵ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2445 OF THE COUNCIL of 12 December 2022 amending Decision 2012/389/CFSP on the European Union capacity-building mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2022, 91, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TEXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D2445&from=EN>.

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