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The CoESPU MAGAZINE

THE ONLINE QUARTERLY OF STABILITY POLICING

Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units - *Sub Iure ad Pacem tuendam Milites Paro*

FROM CRISIS TO LEGITIMACY: STABILITY POLICING IN FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS

The CoESPU MAGAZINE

THE ONLINE QUARTERLY OF STABILITY POLICING

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FOREWORD

Lt. Col. Stefano BORTONE
Managing Editor

Dear Readers,

in an era of complex crises, Stability Policing requires method, vision, and humility. This issue of the COESPU Magazine pursues a shared objective: to consolidate a community of practice that, through dialogue among operational experience, research, and doctrine, produces concrete tools for conflict prevention, the protection of communities, and the strengthening of the rule of law. The following pages offer complementary perspectives on issues that are crucial for international security and for Stability Policing: from the critical analysis of missions and their trajectories to methodologies for integrating civilian and police components into crisis-management operations; from understanding the dynamics that can lead to mass tragedies to the challenges of countering violent extremism and hybrid threats in fragile contexts.

The common thread is clear: stability is built by strengthening legitimate institutions, local capacities, and trust between communities and security forces. It is a gradual commitment, founded on common standards, training, mentoring, and accountability; as well as on the courage to recognize mistakes, learn from them, and translate that learning into doctrine useful to those who will operate after us.

You will find not slogans, but arguments. Not certainties, but well-posed questions and operational proposals. Doctrine is consolidated by measuring itself against reality, accepting its complexity, and investing in training, interoperability, and the transparent evaluation of results.

We thank the authors for their intellectual generosity and the readers for their trust: your feedback is an essential part of this journey. We want these pages to help illuminate difficult choices, avoid mistakes already made, and build, step by step, the security of the people we are called to protect. Because peace is not an event: it is a competence. And competence grows when experience becomes knowledge and knowledge is translated into action.

Enjoy the reading.

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PUBLISHER
CoESPU, Via Medici, 87
Zip: 36100, Vicenza IT
Tel.: (+39) 0444 932111

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The CoESPU Magazine is devoted to the publication of professional concepts and issues, research and doctrinal products developed by the Carabinieri Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units, in collaboration with other international research Centers. The Magazine addresses topics of professional, technical, operational and juridical nature in the field of Stability Policing within Peace Operations. Based on the core values of ethics, integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity, harmonically inflected and informed by the traditions of over two hundred years of Carabinieri history, the Magazine fosters Human Rights and gender mainstreaming, while seeking to enhance current police peacekeeping doctrine and promoting international police peacekeeping interoperability, cognizant of Lessons Learned and best practises. The CoESPU Magazine is constantly committed to upholding UN standards, norms, procedures and curricula, while endorsing self-sufficiency of the participating Police Contributing Countries. Consequently, its editorial policy promotes the principles of representativeness, responsiveness, and accountability, as well as effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, to provide the highest professional standards to build trust and legitimacy of beneficiary Law Enforcement Institutions.

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FEATURES SECTION

MINUSTAH: Anatomy of a foretold failure and doctrinal lessons for Stability Policing

by Stefano Bortone

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, deployed from 2004 to 2017[1] and tragically tested by the 2010 earthquake[2] and the cholera outbreak[3] stands as one of the most instructive and controversial cases for those concerned with the doctrine and employment of stability policing. The field experience exposed a nexus of structural and contingent factors: institutional fragility, external interference, the penetration of criminal networks, strategic design errors, and grave fractures of legitimacy due to the handling of the public health emergency and instances of sexual exploitation[4] . Within this framework, the action of Formed Police Units and the Italian contribution to coordination with non-governmental organizations proved essential for day-to-day security and assistance to the population[5] , yet they did not suffice to reverse the course of a mission that, in hindsight, seemed marked by a "foretold failure."

The UN Security Council established the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti by Resolution 1542 of 30 April 2004, with operational deployment beginning in May of the same year and the mandate ending on 15 October 2017. Its stated objectives were to support public order, create security conditions for an inclusive political process, protect UN personnel, and facilitate security sector reform. After 2017, the mission was replaced by the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti until October 2019; since 2019 the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti has been active[6] . For over a decade, military and police forces from numerous countries operated across all of the island's departments under multinational leadership, with a significant presence of Formed Police Units, including the Italian Carabinieri contribution[7] .

MINUSTAH's police disposition included Formed Police Units (FPUs) tasked with public order, riot control, protection of sensitive sites, escorts, high-intensity operations, and support to the Haitian National Police (HNP). Italy contributed a Carabinieri FPU (approximately 120 personnel), a formation characterized by a dual military-police capability, interoperability with EUROGENDFOR partners, and a strong inclination toward community-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing in complex urban environments. The headquarters in Port-au-Prince coordinated military, police, and civilian components, with a presence in all of the island's main departments.

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Despite the progressive containment of some gangs in specific phases of the mission, the equilibrium remains fragile: between 2018 and 2021, homicides increased by 113% and kidnappings by 1,236%, with around 200 gangs controlling large urban areas and logistical nodes[8] . Haiti has often been described as a "Republic of NGOs." International cooperation mobilized hundreds of organizations, essential in the humanitarian response after the 12 January 2010 earthquake, in WASH, health, shelter, and economic recovery activities[9] . In this ecosystem, the mission was called upon to conduct delicate civil-military coordination (CIMIC) to avoid duplication and ensure the security of aid workers, with an important role for FPUs in protecting convoys, health sites, and logistics hubs. However, three elements undermined the structural effectiveness of the mission-NGO relationship: fragmentation of inter-cluster coordination; the tendency to bypass weakened Haitian institutions (risking limited ownership); and the politicization of humanitarian access in areas controlled by gangs. The absence of a clear "civilian compact" with shared milestones for strengthening the HNP and the justice sector made progress on the ground intermittent.

Before 2010, the prevailing health risk was represented by endemic diseases such as malaria, addressed through prevention campaigns, drainage, distribution of mosquito nets, and pharmacological support. On 12 January 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake devastated the Port-au-Prince area and surrounding departments, caused hundreds of thousands of casualties, and displaced over a million people. Within weeks, it became necessary to transform the operational posture: protection of sensitive sites, security of logistics nodes, humanitarian escorts, decongesting critical road arteries, and mitigating looting. The Formed Police Units ensured convoy security, the securing of collection and distribution centers, and support for joint patrols with the Haitian National Police and humanitarian agencies. In parallel,

"INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MOBILIZED HUNDREDS OF ORGANIZATIONS, ESSENTIAL IN THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AFTER THE 12 JANUARY 2010 EARTHQUAKE, IN WASH, HEALTH, SHELTER, AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTIVITIES"

non-governmental organizations, coordinated by emergency response platforms, deployed medical and logistical capabilities, with the central role of rapid response teams and the rapid activation of clinics and water points in the areas of Saint-Marc, Mirebalais, and Artibonite.

In October 2010, only a few months after the earthquake, a cholera outbreak was recorded in the Saint-Marc region. In a short time, infections reached hundreds of thousands of cases; in 2017, the World Health Organization and the United Nations estimated over 800,000 infections and more than 10,000 cumulative deaths. Epidemiological and genetic investigations conducted by scientific and health entities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, traced the strain to a South Asian origin[10] , while academic and civil society reports documented serious shortcomings in the management of waste from a United Nations base near the Artibonite River. For months, the official narrative was defensive; only in 2016 did the UN Secretary-General acknowledge the Organization's responsibility for having contributed to the spread of cholera, announcing a renewed commitment to the victims and to water infrastructure[11]. That sequence: initial denial, converging evidence, belated admission, profoundly affected perceptions of the mission's legitimacy: in working-class neighborhoods, the image of the "peacekeepers" dimmed, reactivating latent resentments and shrinking the operating space for stability policing

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for proximity dialogue with communities. The doctrinal lesson is clear: in high-vulnerability theaters, environmental management of bases (wastewater, latrines, and sludge disposal) is an intrinsic component of the protection of civilians and must be treated as a critical operational requirement on par with ROE and force protection[12]. At the same time, independent inquiries documented cases of sexual exploitation and abuse against minors and women by international personnel[13], with the birth of numerous unrecognized children and situations of extreme vulnerability. These behaviors, in addition to flagrantly violating peacekeeping principles, produced long-term side effects: growing distrust in institutions, social stigmatization of mothers and children, and pressure on family and community networks. Overlaid on this were dynamics of human trafficking and sexual exploitation conducted by local and transnational criminal networks that took advantage of post-earthquake chaos and weak controls, with routes extending from Haitian territory to the neighboring Dominican Republic and, along longer chains, to the Caribbean and the American continent. Although neither overlapping with nor wholly attributable to the mission, this set of phenomena weighed on public perception and posed additional challenges to stability policing in the protection of civilians and the prevention of abuse. The Haitian story cannot be understood without considering the interplay of political interference, economic interests, and the consolidation of organized crime. The arc from the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 to the political-institutional crisis that erupted after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021 shows governance constantly pressured by external actors and divergent agendas. The economic fabric, already precarious, was further exposed to pressure from international firms and consortia in construction, logistics, and services, especially during the post-earthquake reconstruction period: accusations and disputes over concessions, procurement, and the use of funds fueled the perception that the priority was the contracts pipeline rather than strengthening local capacities. Meanwhile, entrenched criminal networks (around two hundred armed groups

according to inter-American system estimates) consolidated control over Port-au-Prince neighborhoods, port nodes, fuel supply chains, kidnap-for-ransom, and the trafficking of arms and people[14]. In this environment, international security action often found itself operating "against the wind," with tools and timelines misaligned with the speed at which illicit actors adapted. Doctrinally, the Haitian case confirms that the organized crime–urban insurgency nexus requires SPU with strong investigative capabilities, chain-of-evidence, operational mentoring of the local police, and inter-agency task forces able to target the financial assets and logistical flows of these groups[15] .

The Haitian arena saw external public and private actors intersect: regional powers, multilateral donors, contractors, and companies involved in reconstruction and export manufacturing chains. These interests, not always aligned, generated distorted incentives and a "political economy" that at times favored short-term objectives (containing insecurity, symbolic projects) over structural reforms of policing, justice, and local governance. Journalistic and academic analyses have highlighted how foreign interventions failed to sustainably strengthen Haitian institutions, leaving a system on the ground vulnerable to capture by elites and criminal networks. Without an inclusive political pact and an architecture of shared accountability, international engagement risks crystallizing into a prolonged presence without an exit trajectory.

The multinational composition of the contingents was both an asset and a factor of complexity. Nationalities, organizational cultures, languages, sensitivities, and differing operational practices met daily in operations rooms and across the disposition. Within the FPUs, differing approaches coexisted regarding graduated use of force, crowd management, mediation with community leaders, and engagement with humanitarian actors. Diversity if not adequately prepared and trained for, generated asymmetries in applying rules of engagement, misunderstandings with the population, and misaligned operational messaging. The lesson learned, of immediate doctrinal value, concerns the need for tighter common standards in three areas: pre-deployment intercultural and language training; command - and - control

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procedures that are truly integrated and "nationality-agnostic"; and transparent chains of responsibility for incidents affecting civilians[16]. The relationship with non-governmental organizations —an indispensable asset in complex urban contexts—likewise required a shared lexicon, mutual respect for humanitarian principles, and systematic deconfliction mechanisms[17] .

The assessment of overall effectiveness cannot ignore certain empirical data. Despite periods when, especially after 2007, urban security indicators showed a decline in kidnappings and violence in Port-au-Prince[18], the long-term trajectory registered a severe relapse: between 2018 and 2021, homicides and kidnappings grew by 113% and 1,236% respectively, reaching levels of territorial control by gangs never before so extensive[19]. This dynamic highlights three design defects. First, a discrepancy between maximal political objectives (stabilization, institutional reforms, development) and predominantly security-oriented, and moreover temporary, instruments: security created windows of opportunity that were not filled by legitimate, functioning governance.

Second, the erosion of legitimacy resulting from cholera and abuses undermined the social capital indispensable to the success of stability policing operations; the "social license" to operate thinned, reducing the effectiveness even of technically sound interventions. Third, the resilience and adaptive capacity of criminal networks were underestimated: the absence of a joint strategy against organized crime intertwining policing, control of financial flows, port security, and community intelligence left spaces that gangs swiftly occupied.

The mission oscillated between peace-enforcement tasks in dense urban environments and state-building programs that require very different time horizons and resources. A deficit of accountability, internal and external, was endemic: from environmental management to disciplinary action on abuses, mechanisms appeared tardy and


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opaque, fueling distrust[20]. The approach to security was clearly disconnected from justice: without functioning prosecutorial services, chains of evidence, and penitentiary institutions, arresting gang leaders merely produces turnover, while the population does not perceive a fairer State.

Within the MINUSTAH framework, FPUs provided an essential contribution in terms of crowd control, protection of critical sites, and support for the operations of civilian and humanitarian components[21]. The Italian FPU, embedded in the mission's policing architecture, operated according to the tenets of Stability Policing, integrating de-escalation techniques, threat-oriented information collection, and community engagement to mitigate tensions, especially in high-vulnerability urban areas. During the 2010 health emergencies, it contributed to the protection of medical convoys and health facilities, in coordination with Haitian authorities and the main NGOs engaged in the response. This technical-professional framework remains one of the most solid legacies on which to graft the lessons learned. Within this framework, the Italian presence was characterized by the quality of its Formed Police Units, integration with humanitarian actors, and a proximity-based approach. Mixed patrols with the Haitian National Police, the protection of humanitarian corridors, support to distribution centers, accompaniment of Italian and international NGOs, and the use of community-oriented

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policing techniques contributed, in specific areas, to reducing criminal pressure and enabling the health and social response. These experiences, embedded in the lessons-learned cycle, have nourished the Italian doctrine of stability policing in the international arena, with specific advances in pre-deployment training, standards of conduct, and environmental management of bases[22] .

Haiti's trajectory suggests a precise agenda for doctrine, training, and planning:

- the protection of civilians requires a dynamic balance between visible security postures and cultural mediation. This demands language skills, mapping of community actors, and community-oriented policing as a permanent, not ancillary, line of operation[23];

- the prevention of abuse and exploitation must be treated as an operational function: selection, training, everyday leadership, safe reporting channels, rapid investigations, and clear consequences. Transparency is part of the protection of civilians[24];

- environmental health is not a support function; it is security: pre-embarkation health screening, certified wastewater treatment systems, frequent and public environmental audits, and biological emergency plans developed jointly with authorities and health partners;

- organized crime must be addressed with an inter-agency approach: financial investigations, port and fuel security, disruption of arsenals, data- and community-driven intelligence, and regional judicial cooperation[25];

- relations with non-governmental organizations must be institutionalized in stable coordination structures at the tactical level: interconnected operations rooms, information-sharing procedures, and joint planning of movements and distributions[26];

- managing the contingents' "melting pot" requires truly enforceable common standards: certified intercultural training, interoperable command and control, harmonized rules of engagement supervised in the field, and independent assessments of civilian impact[27];

Haiti remains one of the most complex crises in the international system. MINUSTAH represented a major political, military, and policing effort, but its

outcomes confirm that stabilization is not attainable without coherent alignment among mandate, instruments, and accountability—and without an integrated vision of security, justice, and service to citizens. The lesson is twofold: on the one hand, strengthen SPU training on PoC (Protection of Civilians), WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), and SEA (Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) as inseparable elements of operations in fragile urban areas; on the other, invest in capabilities to counter the criminal networks that fuel violence and trafficking, integrating advising and mentoring in a sustainable key. Only in this way will it be possible to avoid future international efforts, in Haiti and elsewhere, turning into another foretold failure.

Note: (1) UN Security Council, Resolution 1542 (2004) – S/RES/1542 (2004), establishing MINUSTAH; mission end set for 15 October 2017 (2) USGS; UNOCHA, Haiti Earthquake 12 January 2010, M 7.0 – seismic data and humanitarian impact (3) WHO/PAHO and United Nations, epidemiological updates on cholera in Haiti (2010–2017): cumulative estimate >800,000 cases and >10,000 deaths (4) UN Secretary-General, "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: A new approach", A/71/818 (2017) [5] United Nations Police Division, "Policy on Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions" (2016) [6] UN Security Council, Res. 2350 (2017) (transition to MINUJUSTH) and Res. 2476 (2019) (establishment of BINUH).
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Lt. Col. Stefano BORTONE
CoESPU's Press & Public Information Officer

Ph: Lt. Col. Stefano Bortone

Stability Policing as a Tool for Crisis Management and Peacekeeping

by Marco Bandioli and Francesco Caldari

Modern armed conflicts have long manifested themselves without formal initial acts or declarations of war. These steps are difficult to implement in practice, given that conflicts often arise within national sovereignty, within limited local contexts, or following offensive actions by terrorist organizations. Furthermore, an armed conflict can also erupt (theoretically) suddenly, confronting the international community with the event, requiring communication via a concise text message on some popular social network! Currently, it is unthinkable for an armed conflict to materialize suddenly and unexpectedly, at least theoretically, without any warning, both theoretically (geopolitical assessments, intelligence analysis, etc.) and practically (massment of troops, movement of resources, increased communication, deployment of military assets, etc.).

Before a full-blown conflict erupts, many past experiences have taught us that politically uncertain and diplomatically ambiguous circumstances have favored the establishment of states of tension, crisis, or undefined situations of "non-peace" and "non-war." In essence, a progressive situation of instability can transform an initial "situation of tension," which, as it deteriorates, can then transform into a "crisis situation," evolving into a "pre-conflict situation," and ultimately leading to a full-blown "open conflict."

Naturally, even post-conflict situations where peace has not been achieved and consolidated may present the same challenges of crisis management. Situations of potential instability, with the attendant problem of insecurity, and the need to address and manage a crisis were already clearly evident in the 1990s, when "Security and Defense Policy" was discussed both at the NATO level and at the level of the then-current WEU (Western European Union). However, to provide international legitimacy to a potential intervention force, whether military or constabulary, and to ensure political co-responsibility, approval from the United Nations Security Council, via a specific "UN Resolution," was already considered necessary for intervention in a crisis area. Specifically, since the UN does not have its own armed forces, contingents made available to the UN by various nations can operate at three different functional levels, which consequently define three types of operations:

Ph: Ministero della Difesa

- Operations under UN AUSPICIONS: the United

Nations merely endorses the operation's objectives (e.g., Desert Storm / UNITAF-Somalia 1);

- Operations under a UN MANDATE: the United Nations appoints a nation or organization to plan and conduct the mission (operations with "delegated management"). In this case, the UN defines the objectives to be pursued but retains only the political direction of the operation (e.g., Operation "Alba" / IFOR / SFOR / KFOR);
- Operations under UN COMMAND: The United Nations assumes direct command of the operation, establishing the necessary command structures on a multinational basis (e.g., UNIFIL-Lebanon / UNOSOM-Somalia 2 / UNOMOZ-Mozambique).

More specifically, in the military context, operations aimed at managing a crisis are called "Crisis Response Operations" (CROs) or "Crisis Response Operations" (in NATO, called "Non-Article Five CROs").

These Operations are further subdivided into subtypes, the most important of which are "Peace Support Operations" (PSOs), also known as "Petersberg Missions" (as defined during the WEU Council of Ministers meeting in Petersberg in 1992). These, in turn, depending on their function as defined by the UN Charter, are subdivided into:

- Operations with a Conciliatory Function (from Chapter VI of the UN Charter);
- Operations with a Coercive Function (from Chapter VII of the UN Charter).

The following types of missions are associated with the Conciliatory function:

- Humanitarian Aid;
- Conflict Prevention;
- Peace Making.

The following types of missions are associated with the Coercive function:

- Peacekeeping;
- Peace Enforcement;
- Peace Building.

In fact, the concept of "Peacekeeping", has since taken on both a much more "conciliatory" aspect (leaving the coercive role primarily to "Peace Enforcement") and a more "multi-role" aspect, where the assigned mission can also span other missions, varying according to the ongoing situation. The definition of "Peacekeeping Operations," even in various UN manuals, is not always uniform; however, the following appears to be among the best: "Multinational operations conducted with military or police forces provided by contributing countries which, through a joint effort (also to share political responsibilities and resulting costs! Editor's note), aim to maintain a situation of international peace and security or, in any case, to create the specific conditions for maintaining a situation of peace."

"THE CONCEPT OF "PEACEKEEPING", HAS SINCE TAKEN ON BOTH A MUCH MORE "CONCILIATORY" ASPECT AND A MORE "MULTI-ROLE" ASPECT WHERE THE ASSIGNED MISSION CAN ALSO SPAN OTHER MISSIONS, VARYING ACCORDING TO THE ONGOING SITUATION."

In the late 1990s, following various UN missions, it became clear that certain contexts of instability were being deliberately created by hostile groups to undermine the efforts made during Peacekeeping Operations.

Professor Stephen Stedman, based on his numerous experiences (Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, and Rwanda) as a senior UN researcher, defined such hostile groups as "spoilers" (a term that in this context means "to ruin something"), which has also been translated as "peace saboteurs." He defined them as "leaders and groups of individuals who believe that the peace that emerges from negotiations threatens their power, their worldview, and their interests, and who resort to violence to prevent this by sabotaging the processes that seek to achieve peace." Furthermore, it was precisely the complex

Ph: EULEX/Press office

crises of the 1990s, characterized by civil wars, ethno-sectarian tensions, and state collapse, that exposed some of the limitations of traditional military forces, designed primarily for conventional conflicts between states.

In particular, the tragic experiences in the theaters of operation in Somalia in 1993 (failure to restore political stability – UN Operation "Restore Hope") and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 (Srebrenica massacre – failure of the UNPROFOR / United Nations Protection Force) demonstrated the inadequacy of military contingents in managing internal threats, civil unrest, and protecting the population. It was demonstrated that this inability had created a dangerous "policing gap" (defined as a "security vacuum") that resulted in a security gap between the end of large-scale hostilities and the creation of a stable and safe environment for the civilian population.

These experiences in Somalia and Bosnia tragically highlighted the inadequacy of conventional military forces: in Somalia, the humanitarian operation devolved into an urban conflict in which US Special Forces, despite their highly trained combat skills, found themselves crippled by irregular militias. In Bosnia, however, UN peacekeepers failed to protect the civilian population in Srebrenica, helplessly witnessing one of the worst acts of genocide in Europe since World War II. In both cases, traditional military forces, geared toward countering external threats, proved unprepared to manage internal security, civil unrest, and civilian protection.

The difficulties that arose during these circumstances therefore required a radical rethinking of the approach to crisis management, highlighting the need for police forces that, however, had some form of "military status," essentially a "hybrid" force capable of supporting (and even replacing) local police forces.

In light of the above, NATO theorized and developed the doctrinal concept of "Stability Policing" (SP) to establish and train specialized units specifically designed to bridge the gap between purely military operations and civilian police activities, providing a flexible and effective tool for managing the most delicate phases of peacekeeping operations.

This doctrine, formalized in Allied Joint Publication

AJP-3.22 (applied in complex scenarios, such as peacekeeping missions, post-conflict stabilization, or supporting the reconstruction of "fragile states"), provides the following official definition: "police activities aimed at temporarily strengthening or replacing indigenous police forces in order to contribute to the restoration and/or maintenance of public order and security, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights."

Moreover, Italy already possessed military forces institutionally dedicated and trained to also perform police tasks and missions: the Carabinieri. Indeed, the concrete contribution that Italy, through its Carabinieri, could make in creating a force with military-level public security status, as it already provided on home soil, with a view to operational deployment in various crisis theaters, was particularly evident.

The innovative response to that "security vacuum" that had been felt and which had been addressed by NATO through Stability Policing, took the form of the creation of the first "Multinational Specialized Unit", better known as the "Multinational Specialized Unit" (MSU), deployed in Bosnia in August 1998 as part of the NATO SFOR ("Stabilization Force") mission.

This regimental-sized unit was composed of Gendarmerie-Type Forces (GTF), specifically Italian Carabinieri and Argentine gendarmes, supported by a Romanian military police component, under Italian leadership. Essentially, these were "hybrid" forces, i.e., police forces with military status that combined the discipline, organization, and robustness typical of the armed forces with the skills, mentality, and functions of civilian police. This hybrid nature later proved to be the unique solution to the policing gap, as it allowed for a calibrated response in environments too hostile for civilian police, but where the use of lethal military force would be inappropriate and counterproductive.

The positive experience of the MSUs in the Balkans laid the operational foundation for the subsequent formalization of a shared doctrine within NATO, transforming a tactical solution into a recognized strategic-level capability.

The effectiveness demonstrated in the field by MSUs has led to the need to codify operational experience into a formal, shared doctrinal framework. This process materialized in 2016 with the publication of the Allied Joint Publication AJP-3.22 (Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing), which today represents the Atlantic Alliance's reference document on this matter. The doctrine not only standardizes the approach but also expands the concept's scope, making it a flexible tool applicable across the full spectrum of conflicts.

AJP-3.22 defines two primary missions for Stability Policing, which adapt to varying levels of collapse or inefficiency of local security institutions:

- Replacement, required in situations where local police forces (IPF – Indigenous Police Force) or a recognized government are nonexistent or completely collapsed. This is the most demanding case and can characterize a so-called "Failed State." Replacement can be complete (covering territorial control, general policing, and specialized functions) or partial (limited to specific capacity gaps that existing IPFs cannot fill);
- Reinforcement, required when local police exist and are considered reliable, but their effectiveness is limited or weakened. This situation is often characteristic of a "recovering state." Reinforcement activities can include several functions: monitoring: observing, evaluating, and reporting on IPF performance to ensure compliance with human rights and international best practices; mentoring: providing ongoing guidance and advice to individuals, teams, or specific units until they are able to function independently, often focused on developing personnel into leadership and command positions; advising: providing specialized expertise and advice to local forces, applicable from the tactical to the strategic level; reforming: a strategic transformation process aimed at improving

capabilities and integrity, which may include internal restructuring, reconstruction, and inspection; Training: initiatives that contribute to the education and training of the local force, both individually and collectively; Partnering: involvement in joint activities. Reinforcement can evolve from the replacement function (initial phase) and requires a progressive transfer of responsibility to the local police.

To fulfill these missions, Stability Policing forces must possess a wide range of specialized capabilities, distinct from those of a conventional military unit, and in particular:

- Crowd control and disorder management – essential capabilities for managing civil tensions with the proportionate use of force, preventing the escalation of violence;
- Criminal investigations and forensics – essential skills for gathering evidence, managing crime scenes, and supporting the justice system in prosecuting those responsible for crimes;
- Border control and security of critical sites – to reestablish state sovereignty and protect infrastructure vital to the functioning of society;
- Counter-terrorism and organized crime – specialized capabilities to counter threats that undermine stability and finance destabilizing groups;
- Protection of civilians and vulnerable groups – to ensure human security and create a protected environment, particularly for minorities, women, and children.

The deployment of MSU units proved from the outset fully capable of both bridging the "deployment gap" (defined as the inability, or unwillingness, of local police to carry out their assigned mission) and providing a concrete contribution to ending large-scale violence.

Examples of deployment include the deployments in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as the fight against ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). In Bosnia, the deployment of NATO's SFOR encountered the threat of orchestrated civil unrest, known as "rent-a-mobs" (a derogatory term for a group of people,

Ph: EUAM/EUROGENDFOR

often hired, who participate in protests or events to create an artificial or inauthentic demonstration of support or opposition).

SFOR, lacking crowd control capabilities, was paralyzed. The deployment of the MSU in 1998 decisively filled this deployment gap. In its first year of operation, the MSU resolved 261 of 263 "interventions" without resorting to the use of force, relying on deterrence, dissuasion, and negotiation.

In Kosovo, the rapid deployment of the MSU within KFOR (Kosovo Force) in 1999 prevented a deployment gap. This readiness allowed them to effectively manage the unrest in the divided city of Mitrovica, neutralizing the tactics of the so-called "Bridge Watchers," a paramilitary group composed mainly of Serbs from northern Kosovo, active especially between the late 1990s and early 2000s. Incidentally, their name derives from the bridge over the Ibar River, which divides the city of Mitrovica into two parts: the northern part, with a Serb majority, and the southern part, with a Albanian majority, which has become a symbol of the ethnic and political division between the two communities;

In the fight against ISIS, Stability Policing's contribution, following the serious attack on the Italian Maestrale base in An Nasiriyah, home to the MSU, on November 12, 2003, which resulted in the

deaths of 19 Italians (12 Carabinieri, 5 Army personnel, and 2 civilians) and 9 Iraqis, took the form of the Carabinieri-led Police Task Force – Iraq (PTF-I), an evolution of previous training missions launched by the force in Iraq. A contingent of 90 Carabinieri was deployed in March 2015 to form the PTF-I, which subsequently grew to include approximately 170 personnel, including the Spanish Guardia Civil and military and civilian police personnel from other countries. The coalition's strategy was based on the concept of "clear and hold": military forces "cleared" areas of ISIS, while local police forces ("Hold Forces") were tasked with "keeping" them safe. The PTF-I was created to train these forces, a successful model of "train, advise, and assist."

In any case, the commitment and results achieved by the Carabinieri MSUs have highlighted Italy's pioneering role in developing, codifying, and disseminating the concept of Stability Policing globally, enabling the operational experience gained to be transformed into a recognized strategic capability and a model of excellence. Recognition of this pioneering role was subsequently realized with the establishment of the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU), inaugurated in Vicenza on March 1, 2005.

The institution arose from an Italian proposal accepted by the G8 during the 2004 Sea Island Summit (photo) and supported from the outset by crucial funding from the United States Department of State.

The CoESPU's mission is twofold, making it a unique point of reference with:

- The "advanced training center": the CoESPU is a world-class training center;
- the "doctrinal hub": in addition to training, the CoESPU functions as a strategic think tank, collaborating with international organizations to develop and standardize common doctrines and procedures and promoting interoperability.

For completeness, the same facility that houses the CoESPU now also houses the "NATO Stability Policing – Center of Excellence" (NATO SP-CoE) as well as the permanent Headquarters of the "European Gendarmerie Force," better known as EUROGENDFOR (EUROPEAN GENDARMERIE FORCE – EGF).

Ultimately, it is clear that Stability Policing, conducted by specialized gendarmerie-type forces, is not an afterthought, but a crisis management tool. It represents the link between military intervention, necessary to end the conflict, and the construction of a sustainable peace based on the rule of law.

For the sake of completeness, EUROGENDFOR's current commitment is at the Rafah crossing (between Gaza and Egypt) as part of the European Union mission "EUBAM Rafah" (European Union Border Assistance Mission – Rafah), a mission reactivated in early 2025 after a suspension since 2007. This force includes a core of Carabinieri, demonstrating that these Stability Policing forces can play a key role in ensuring the security and orderly post-conflict management of these precarious territories, thus contributing to international efforts for peace and stability in the region.

Rear Admiral Lwr Hlf (Ret.) Marco BANDIOLI
Italian Navy

BG (Ret.) Francesco CALDARI
Italian Carabinieri

Was the Rwandan genocide a Malthusian catastrophe?

by Carlotta Nara Gallo

Mankind was just so impossibly heavy. There were so many of them and they showed no sign of halting their endless reproduction. Stop, she wanted to cry out, please stop. You cannot all fit on the space between the oceans, you cannot grow enough food on the land beneath the mountains. You cannot graze enough livestock on the grasses around your cities, you cannot build enough homes on the peaks of your hills. You must stop, so that I can rest beneath your ever increasing weight. […] Why could men not just be less greedy, she wondered. […] Why did they not look at the wars which had ravaged Thebes, and understand that these were necessary because they would not stop consuming everything? That if they carried on as they were, the seas would be empty of fish and the land would be empty of grain? - Gaia, Mother Earth.[1]

Introduction and historical background

If we go back to the Trojan war, we would probably identify the conflict as a nature's revenge and the root causes would rely on mythical beliefs: it was Mother Earth Gaia, who could no longer support the weight of humanity, that asked Zeus to take action in order to correct the mortal problem and restore the "divine order of things" (Haynes, 2020, p. 251). In the contemporary era, however, it is no longer possible to rely on mythology to explain violence and conflicts; on the contrary, we should investigate the root causes based on historical, sociocultural, political and economic dynamics, as in the case of 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Being one of the most devastating in history the Rwandan genocide is considered by many authors as the largest example of one-sided violence in the post- Cold War era (Eck, Hultman, 2007). The extraordinary nature of the massacres against Tutsi and some moderate Hutu by extremist Hutu made the genocide obtain a particular place in the collective memory of humanity (Touré, 2013). Since 1916 this country has been under the Belgian colonial rule, which transformed socio economic groups in ethnicities on the basis of different origins and psychological characteristics. The colonial power reinforced the privileges of the minority Tutsis over the subordinated majority Hutus. With the independence of the country in 1962 and the coup d'état in 1973, this domination has been reversed with Hutus taking power and limiting

Ph: REUTERS/Corinne Dufka

Tutsis' opportunities. The rapid population growth, the increasing population/resources ratio in a primarily agricultural economy, and the large migration flow of Tutsi in Uganda and Burundi contributed to the buildup of tensions in the 1990s. The Rwandan genocide took place in the context of civil war started in 1990 between the Rwandan Government Forces (RGF), composed by Hutu, and the rebels Tutsi, who created the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) while being exiled in Uganda. The Arusha Accords of 1993 were never implemented and in 1994 the attack to the Rwanda's Hutu President's airplane caused a conflict relapse, leading to the mass assassination of around 800.000 among Tutsi and moderate Hutu.

The persecution lasted over 100 days and only a Tutsi military victory stopped the genocide and the country-wide chaos and destruction (Richter et al., 2007). Different opinions about the root causes has been formulated: some authors see the Rwandan genocide as a modern-day Malthusian crisis resulting from climate change issues, others focus on combatants' economic motivations, on interethnic inequalities reinforced by colonization or state organization facilitating a deadly efficiency (Friedman, 2016). Despite the different theories, a consensus has emerged around the idea that several structural and historical factors predisposed Rwanda to ethnic violence and multiple shorter-term factors precipitated it, but in the end the rationale for the genocide was the strategy of a small élite whose political survival depended on the extermination of the Tutsi minority (McDoom, 2012). The aim of this paper is first to analyze and critically discuss the neo-malthusian narrative of a conflict caused by the scarcity of resources leading to a zero-sum confrontation; secondly, to prove how the socio-cultural, economic, and political interests contributed to the outbreak of violence in Rwanda.

The Neo-malthusian perspective: resource scarcity and conflict

In 1994 Rwanda was one of the most densely

"THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE TOOK PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVIL WAR STARTED IN 1990 BETWEEN THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT FORCES (RGF), COMPOSED BY HUTU, AND THE REBELS TUTSI, WHO CREATED THE RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) WHILE BEING EXILED IN UGANDA."

populated African countries, with high fertility rates and a young population, exerting considerable ecological pressure on land.

This has inspired neo-Malthusian explanations of its violence (Andre & Platteau, 1998; Verpoorten, 2012): the effects of land scarcity can particularly emerge in an agriculture dependent society, as in the case of Rwanda, where more than 90% of the economically active population engaged in agriculture (Friedman, 2016). The relationship between resource scarcity and conflict in Rwanda is linked to the Malthusian argument that when population growth overcomes the subsistence level, it will be curtailed by forces such as epidemics, infanticide, famine and war (Homer-Dixon, 1999). We can however distinguish between hard- and soft-Malthusian schools of thought: according to the former it exists a causal relationship between overpopulation and resource scarcity. The soft-Malthusians argue instead that resource scarcity does not directly induce violent conflict, rather we have also to consider the socio-political and economic context. From this perspective, in the case of Rwanda overpopulation may have contributed to the conduct of the genocide by increasing the competition for scarce resources, but it was not the rationale for the genocide. The root causes should be found in political domination and a desire for an aggressive redistribution of economic assets (McNab, Mohamed, 2006).

According to authors like Diamond (2005), André and Platteau (1998), Rwanda's conditions fit well with Malthus's hypothesis of violence induced by a


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a rising population under a stagnant agricultural sector and intensifying land pressure and changing social relationships can, in time, lead to insecurity and to an outbreak of extraordinarily brutal violence. In her meso-analysis, Verpoorten (2012) finds much higher death rates in areas with higher population density and lower access to new land for young men. Moreover, as pointed out by Zimmerer (2014), the environmental violence is amongst the main driving forces of collective violence and climate change will dramatically increase the likelihood of genocide occurring in areas at risk. On this basis, he criticizes genocide prevention model for its focus on humanitarian military intervention, asking for a new concept of sustainable prevention on the basis of global social justice.

Criticisms and limits of the Neo-malthusian approach

Despite being shared by many, the neo-Malthusian explanation comes with significant problems and limits. First of all the little empirical evidence shows the inability of such studies to fully explain the local nature and conditionality of the tension between resource supply and demand (Verpoorten, 2012).

The major counterpoint is that, for most cases, areas of high population density and population pressure did not see greater levels of violence (Verwimp, 2005). Examples are Tanzania and Bangladesh, which show higher populations densities and poverty, yet have not experienced genocidal violence (Uvin, 1998).

The anti-Malthusian school of thought argues that there is not causal relationship between conflicts and resource scarcity, instead population growth can be an innovative factor for society, stimulating inventions, economic growth and productivity. However, this optimistic perspective cannot be applied to the case of Rwanda, where increases in population did not lead to an increased productivity (McNab, 2006). This is not to deny that limited land availability in a subsistence agricultural society with a growing population played a significant factor in fueling frustration that may have contributed to collective violence, but it is not the primary cause (Friedman, 2016). Malthusian pressures may have exacerbated prior patterns of socioeconomic tension and violence (Richter et al., 2007).

The lack of data sources on the causal link between war, resource scarcity and population pressure, along with the poor consideration of the role of the

national and international environment in exacerbating the conflict, are the biggest shortcomings of the neo malthusian narrative on Rwandan genocide. In order to better understand why such a violent war occurred, it is therefore necessary to analyze the socio-economic and political reasons and the role of international actors.

Sociocultural, political and economic context in Rwanda

Historical models postulate that genocide cannot occur without the ideology and decisions of its authoritarian perpetrators and the indifference of bystanders (Richter et al., 331). From this perspective, the genocide of the Tutsi is seen as the result of extremist Hutu ethnicism, based on divisions and forged stereotypes, reinforced by colonization. It is above all the result of a historical and sociocultural construction: colonization transformed socio-economic and socio-political groups into dichotomous ethnic categories; in a second moment, colonial identity discourses were ideologized and internalized by the Rwandans themselves once they became independent (Touré, 2013).

In Rwanda, an anti-Tutsi narrative pervaded the society, relying on a specific Hutu interpretation of Rwanda's history (McDoom, 2012). Straus (2006) describes this mechanism as "collective ethnic categorization" when Rwandans switched from "seeing people of another ethnicity or racial category as neighbors to seeing then as "enemies" who must be killed" (Straus, 2006: 225). When ruling élites perceive a threat to their power, they tend to engage in ethnic violence to preserve their position (McDoom, 2012). In this sense, McDoom's (2014) model suggests that cohesive communities are more resistant to élite attempts to divide them thanks to interethnic trust and cooperation. Evidence shows that in areas with greater ethnic integration, the outbreak of violence is delayed as it takes time to erode existing interethnic bonds and bridging social capital. International actors also played an interesting role in Rwandan context, as shown by Uvin (1998), who analyzed the role of development aid in the process of inequality, exclusion, and humiliation that characterized social and economic life in Rwanda in the period leading up to the genocide. He argues that development aid ignored and reinforced these characteristics of social violence. Uvin (1998) also challenges the now standard explanations for the genocide in Rwanda, such as the effects of prevailing economic and political crisis, the invasion by the RPF, the international pressure for a democratization, the hate propaganda, and the role of the militia. According to him, all these fail to investigate the deeper social basis of the processes of manipulation and radicalization. An other important factor not to forget, as McNab (2006) underlines, is the creation of a set of economic incentives to motivate participation in the genocide and to collect and redistribute resources (McNab, 2006).

Conclusions

The Rwandan genocide cannot be reduced to a singular explanatory model. While neo Malthusian perspectives have offered important insights into how environmental and demographic pressures may exacerbate pre-existing tensions, they fail to capture the complex interplay of historical, sociopolitical, and economic factors that made the 1994 genocide possible. The structural violence embedded in colonial legacies, the deliberate ethnic manipulation by political elites, and the strategic use of propaganda and economic incentives reveal that the genocide was not an inevitable consequence of scarcity, but rather the result of calculated choices made within a deeply unequal and fragmented society.

Moreover, the failure of international actors and development institutions to acknowledge and address the growing social exclusion, humiliation, and political repression in Rwanda prior to 1994 further contributed to the permissive environment in which mass violence could unfold. As such, preventing future genocides requires moving

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beyond simplistic, monocausal narratives. Preventing such atrocities in the future requires more than reactive measures; what is required is a sustainable approach grounded in global social justice: this means addressing the deep structural inequalities that foster environments conducive to mass violence (Zimmerer, 2014).

Ms. Carlotta Nara GALLO
University of Turin
Former CoESPU's Intern

Note: (1) Haynes Natalie, A Thousand Ships (Pan Macmillan, 2020), pp. 250-251

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Ph: CoESPU (Rwanda, 2019)

Security in Somalia: UN, EU, and African Union's counterterrorism approaches & the Italian contribution in the Horn of Africa

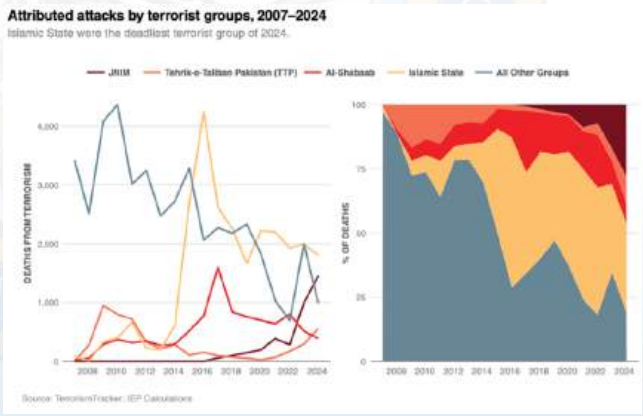
by Alessandro Tamburrini

Introduction: Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

Terrorism remains one of the most pressing global security challenges, generating instability and menacing international peace and security. Over time, governments and IOs opted for a multifaceted approach; however, the impact of counterterrorism (CT) measures is questionable both due to: the limited understanding of criteria to define "terrorism" (de Graaf, 2011), and the debatable results of CT measures, which have often given rise to even more – or at least different – violence (Lum, Kennedy, and Sherley, 2006). The Horn of Africa is one of the regions most affected by terrorism, with al-Shabaab, a notorious terrorist organization, operating primarily in Somalia. Al-Shabaab, "the youth" in Arabic, emerged in the 2000s as the armed wing of the Islamic Courts Union (Dauda and Opeyeoluwa, 2023), with its ideological roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI), a radical Islamist organization dismantled by the Ethiopians in the 1990s. After nationalist anger erupted, in 2006 al-Shabaab rose as a separate force and, after the 2009 Ethiopian withdrawal, the group took control of large areas of Somalia. In 2010, the group conducted its first foreign attack, in Uganda, and in 2012, it officially aligned with al-Qaeda.

Executing activities almost uniquely in a local form, al-Shabaab's deadliest attacks have been: the 2015 Garissa University massacre, with 148 victims in Kenya, and the 2017 Mogadishu truck bombing, which caused the death of over 500 people, representing one of the worst terrorist attacks in the history of Africa (IEP, 2025). As data shows (charts below), the attacks from this group have decreased over time, as has their impact (IEP, 2025). This is largely due to the offensives conducted by the African Union's (AU) soldiers and the support of other key organizations, particularly the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

For this reason, this article aims to analyze the different CT approaches of the UN, EU, and AU in Somalia, as well as evaluate the contribution of the Italian armed forces in the stabilization and security of the region. As it will be later discussed, the role of the Carabinieri – and to an extent that of the CoESPU – has been instrumental in supporting the local militaries and police and indirectly in the fight against al Shabaab, through the training of Somali police forces, both under a bilateral and international framework.



Global terrorism Index (Credit: IEP)

The Role of the UN in the Horn of Africa

The UN has, since the 1990s, intervened in this region, imposing an embargo after the fall of Barre's government and launching UNOSOM I and II (1992-1995). Moving to the 2000s, the Security Council (UNSC) issued, in 2008, Resolution 1844,

Ph: Ministero della Difesa

a imposing sanctions on all those individuals or entities threatening regional peace and security through acts against the transitional government, or AMISOM forces. However, at that stage, al-Shabaab had never been mentioned in any UN document. The first time the group was addressed by the UN was in Resolution 1907 (2009), aimed at extending the 1844 sanctions regime to Eritrea, precisely due to alleged support for al-Shabaab. Ultimately, in 2010, the terrorist organization was included in the 2231 Consolidated list, where individuals and entities subject to sanctions are listed. Notwithstanding the acknowledgment of the 2012 al-Shabaab's affiliation to al-Qaeda, the UN never clearly recognized the Somali extremist group as "terrorist", but simply referred to it as a "destabilizing actor" or "opposition group" (UNSC Res.2036 & 2093). The ambiguous labelling did not change even in 2013, when the UNSC decided to launch the **United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)**, in order to support the peace and state-building processes. In fact, in UNSOM's mandate, al-Shabaab is not even mentioned.

A shift can be observed in 2023, when the UNSC established a dedicated sanctions regime against al-Shabaab (UNSC Res. 2713), and in 2024, when Resolution 2753 terminated UNSOM and launched the **Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS).** Here, al-Shabaab is indicated as "a serious threat to the peace, security and stability of Somalia and the region". Both missions have been supported by the UN Office in Somalia and the **Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**, which has been central in initiatives as "Tech against Terrorism" (relevant given the prominent role online of al-Shabaab) and in backing the IGAD. Apart from these instruments, as per Kofi Annan's auspices, the UN has been involved in Somalia with its deradicalization (or PVE) plan. The UN has, indeed, launched in 2023 in Africa the YEEP Programme, which enabled a youth policy dialogue on preventing extremism.

While assessing the success of the UN's instruments is difficult, it may be argued that the results of the UN's terrorism-related actions in the Horn of Africa are mixed. The UN surely improved the Somali state and peace-building processes, always committed to the fullest respect of human rights. Yet it had a limited impact on reducing al-Shabaab's capabilities due to its more political role and the framing inconsistencies.

The EU's position in the Horn of Africa

Although the EU-CT and security approach is very internally-oriented and despite its geographical distance from the Horn of Africa, the reasons behind the EU's foreign engagement are multiple: first, as Art.43 TEU posits, through its Common Security and Defence Policy, the EU "may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories" (TEU). The EU also does so through the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, where it is one of the key players. Secondly, as confirmed by EU officials, by supporting the Somali forces in ensuring general national security, the EU prevents a possible spillover of violence outside Africa (through migration too), with al-Shabaab seen as a vector of instability. Lastly, the commercial routes passing through the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb are crucial for European markets, which is why they have to be protected and secured from any threat.

To transform those motivations into action, the EU has transposed the UN's sanctions on al Shabaab and its individuals, and it has put into place key missions: in 2010, the Union launched **EUTM Somalia (EUTM-S)**, to provide tactical and specialist training and strategic advisory roles to the Somali National Armed Forces (European Union, 2016). Despite the absence of any direct reference to "terrorism" or al-Shabaab, it is indisputable that empowering the Somali forces through better training and equipment surely contributes to fighting terrorism.

In this regard, EUTM-S cooperates with **EUCAP Somalia**, the latter aiming at: supporting the development of the Somali Police Forces (especially the Darwish units), boosting maritime police capacities, and fostering the rule of law. Then, completing the EU integrated approach, there is the first naval operation launched by the EU and operating in the region: **EUNAVFOR Atalanta**. Unlike EUTM or EUCAP, Atalanta has an executive mandate that is very relevant, since with time it has evolved to also tackle activities linked to al-Shabaab, which is also explicitly mentioned in its mandate.

"THE EU PREVENTS A POSSIBLE SPILLOVER OF VIOLENCE OUTSIDE AFRICA (THROUGH MIGRATION TOO), WITH AL-SHABAAB SEEN AS A VECTOR OF INSTABILITY."

Interacting with **EUNAVFOR Aspides**, Operation Atalanta is crucial as al-Shabaab is strengthening ties with the Houthis, which could, in turn, make the Somali terrorist organization more dangerous for the overall regional security. To conclude with an assessment, the EU can certainly be understood as a key driver of the improvements in the capacity and state-building processes in Somalia. The positive impact of its CSDP missions has been confirmed by SIPRI, which, in a 2020 study, highlighted the impact of EUTM-S on ground missions conducted by African soldiers (Williams and Ali, 2020). Nonetheless, al-Shabaab is not a primary target of the EU and, therefore, the effectiveness of the Union's missions is limited (yet tangible).

The African Union's kinetic approach

Notwithstanding the delayed prioritization of terrorism (due to focus on decolonization), the CT approach of the African Union is definitely more kinetic and with clearer narratives compared to that of the UN or the EU. This is, of course, the result of the proximity to the "existential" threat, al-Shabaab, which necessitated a more direct and tougher response. To pursue this offensive posture, already in 2007, the African Union received the UN's approval to launch **AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia** (UNSC Resolution 1744). Unlike the more careful and political approach of the UN and the EU, AMISOM was authorized to "take all necessary measures as appropriate to carry out the [...] mandate" (Res.1744, para. 6), and in its 2017 mandate renewal, it was also made clear that al-Shabaab was a central target of the mission. **AMISOM** was built around three components: Civilian (focused on humanitarian aspects and state/capacity-building) , Police (aimed at training,

mentoring, and advising the Somali Police Forces and at contributing to public order tasks), and Military. The latter envisaged on-the-ground operations with troops and has been instrumental in supporting the Somali National Security Forces (SNAF) to push al-Shabaab out of most of southern Somalia. In this regard, some battles and operations need to be recalled: first, the 2010-2011 Battle of Mogadishu, which pushed the extremist militants out of the Capital. Then, the 2014/2015 Operation Eagle was the largest offensive since 2011, carried out by AMISOM and the SNAF, and together with Operation Indian Ocean, it contributed to liberating 10 key Somali towns. Lastly, the 2021 Basra offensive, which led to the dismantling of a key base for al-Shabaab, from which the group launched attacks against AMISOM bases and civilians.

AMISOM came to an end in 2022 and was replaced by the **African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**. Maintaining the same three components, the scope of ATMIS remained very military-oriented. Its innovation was the strong emphasis on transitioning to general and global control of the Somali authorities.

A transition, which is also at the core of **AUSSOM (the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia)**, that is the latest version of the African Union's mission, which substituted ATMIS in 2024, adopting a more humanitarian stance, with the military component reduced. Assessing the impact of the AU's role in Somalia, it is reasonable to underline that there have been allegations of violations of human rights by the AU's soldiers and that there is also a lack of attention to the root causes of terrorism; as a matter of fact, only a few and scarce deradicalization programs are in action. However, as the data and maps online showcase, the great reconquering of territory and contribution in the fight against al-Shabaab by African-led missions is undeniable, thus showing the potential of African solutions to African threats.

Italy's engagement: the role of the Carabinieri

In line with the goals of the missions of the three organizations discussed so far, the Italian armed forces' contribution to the security of the Horn of Africa is significant. The primary instrument of engagement is the **MIADIT Somalia**. Established

Ph: African Union

by the agreement between Italy, Somalia, and Djibouti, this mission consists of training activities both for the Somali police and the Djiboutian police and gendarmerie-type forces. Partly conducted in the Italian Military Support Base in Djibouti "Amedeo Guillet" by officials of the Arma dei Carabinieri, the mission provides support to the Somali government, mainly in terms of security and territory control, thus entering the broader framework of capacity building and stabilization (Ministero della Difesa); an aspect, which is also at the core of the UN, EU, and AU's commitment. Having reached its 23rd edition, MIADIT Somalia is pivotal in the development of security mechanisms to enforce in a region under constant turmoil, and the variety of activities involved allows a fully-fledged development of the local (national) police forces. The mission is also very relevant for two reasons: it is strictly related to the goals of the **CoESPU**, which, for instance, in 2019, provided a trainer as part of an MIADT training to the US "Apache Company" soldiers in the Horn of Africa (The CoESPU Magazine, 2019). Secondly, MIADIT strictly cooperates with EUCAP Somalia, where the **EUROGENDFOR** (the EU's multinational police force) operates. Part of the European Gendarmerie are once more the Italian Carabinieri. Moreover, as previously discussed, EUCAP Somalia is part of the EU CSDP integrated approach, together with EUTM-S. Precisely, the latter is of pivotal importance for the Italian armed forces, given that since 2014, the mission has been led by Italian military Generals. With a contingent of 148 Italian servicepersons, through EUTM-S Italy also strongly collaborates with AUSSOM soldiers in their Peace Support Operations (at the core of CoESPU's mission). A collaboration that traces its roots to 2013, when there still was AMISOM, and when the Italian Carabinieri sent officers to train Somali Police Forces. To wrap up, the engagement of the Italian armed forces in the Horn of Africa is of primary importance for multiple reasons: first of all, as Defence Minister Crosetto recalled, supporting the


Ph: African Union

security of the regions creates the conditions to have fewer migration concerns coming from the Horn of Africa, and thus not to have an overload of new individuals to manage in Italy (AfricaRivista.it). Secondly, as also recalled by Lt. Gen. Iannucci (Commander of Italy's Joint Operations Command – COVI), Somalia, as well as the Horn of Africa in general, are areas of strategic depth for the Mattei Plan (Nova.news). Lastly, once more, the role of the Italian military in the regions serves to guarantee the security of maritime commercial routes passing through the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb.

Conclusion

The analysis of the counterterrorism approaches of the United Nations, European Union, and African Union showcases that the major divergences among the three organizations are the result of distinct institutional framings, priorities, and operational capabilities, as well as of security realities and perspectives. Each organization, in its way, either more conservative or kinetic, contributes to the development of the Somali defence framework, with the commitment to free Somalia and the Horn of Africa from any form of violence or extremism. Within this multilevel architecture, Italy's armed forces (especially Carabinieri) stand as a strategic bridge between military action and stabilization, providing top-notch quality training. Overall, Somalia proves that to create the conditions for durable security, force alone is not sufficient, but rather a wide array of means – and possibly actors – are necessary.

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Alessandro TAMBURRINI
"Project Advisor – External Contributor"
at NATO Stability Policing CoE

Ph: U.S. Air Force / Sgt. Zoe Russell (Somalia, 2021)

DEPUTY COMMANDANT'S CORNER

Relentless Pursuit of Excellence

Col. Joe Bruhl
US Army
CoESPU Deputy Commandant

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, "Change is the only constant in life."

2,500 years later, Heraclitus' adage remains especially true for CoESPU and our global community of interest. At the end of this Fiscal Year, after 20 years of partnership through the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), CoESPU will embark on a new model of cooperation with the United States. At the United Nations, shifting geopolitical realities and new models of thinking have diminished the number of large-scale Peace Operations and reduced global demand for Stability Police. In conflicts across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, protagonists embrace hybrid warfare, blurring the line between military and civilian targets and placing vulnerable communities at even greater risk. And, across the globe, leaders race to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced robotics faster and better than those who seek to use them for harm.

Rarely has there been a time of more rapid and profound change for those invested in Stability Policing — making CoESPU's leadership as a globally recognized think-tank and training center more important than ever. ***Good leaders pay careful attention in times of transition*** — redoubling their efforts to be present, communicate their vision, encourage and inspire, and garner feedback from those most effected by the change. That is exactly what CoESPU is committed to doing.

CoESPU will continue to lead alongside the 19 international organizations with whom we partner and look forward to expanding that number. We will drive innovation in Stability Policing, adapting our training offer to meet the realities of the 21st century and hosting workshops to explore how AI and robotics impact our mission. Through it all, our vision remains unchanged: to build global capacity of professional, capable, and ethical Stability Police.

But we can't do this alone! CoESPU needs your feedback to help us navigate this period of change. So, if you are a CoESPU Alumni, sign up for our Alumni Database at www.coespu.org/user/register and stay connected. If you are a practitioner, follow us on social media and keep track of the latest news and events. And if you have creative ideas for how to meet the challenges ahead, write in the pages of this journal, and share them with thousands of like-minded professionals around the world.

With your support, CoESPU can lead through change, empowering the global Stability Policing community of interest to emerge from this period of transition stronger and more vibrant than ever.

TRAINING & COURSES

CPTM 27, FPU CS (PDT25) AND TOT (PDT25)

January 14th – February 10th, 2026

27th UN Core Pre-Deployment Training Material course, FPU Command Staff (PDT25) course and Train-of-Trainers (PDT25) course, funded by the US Department of State, for trainees from Nepal.

SP MODULE

February 10th – February 12th, 2026

Module on Stability Policing, delivered by CoESPU, within the International Master on Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (IMSISS) by Trento University, in cooperation with Glasgow, Dublin and Prague Charles Universities.

CB - SA

February 11th – February 24th, 2026

A course on Capacity Building and Strategic Advising for Carabinieri Officers.

SP10

March 18th – March 31st, 2026

Course on Stability Policing in International Crisis Management Operations for Carabinieri personnel.

FPU - PCCs Workshop

March 23rd – March 27th, 2026

Annual United Nations FPU - Police Contributing Countries' Workshop.

ONSITE VISITS

Mr. François Bonet, Consul General of France in Milan
January 27th, 2026

BG (US Army) Daniel Cederman, SETAF-AF Deputy Commander
March 6th, 2026

BG Armelle Valentin, Commander of the French Gendarmerie for External Missions

March 12th, 2026


CASERMA
GENERALE CHINOTTO

AROUND THE WORLD

Brindisi, Italy
March *2026*
Meeting between the CoESPU and the United Nations Standing Police Capacity.

Mexico City, Mexico
March *2026*
Human Rights & Gender Perspective in Policing course, delivered by CoESPU instructors for *Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana* officials.

Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

March *2026*

Seminar "Human Rights, Gender Aspects and Capacity Building" at the Center for Training and Improvement of the General Inspectorate of the Moldovan Carabinieri.

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The CoESPU MAGAZINE

THE ONLINE QUARTERLY OF STABILITY POLICING

Visit: **www.coespu.org**

We welcome your contributions!

Should you wish to collaborate with our Magazine, please send your articles, tales or pictures from the field to **coespurivista@carabinieri.it**

Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units
Caserma “Gen. A. Chinotto”
via Giacomo Medici, 87
36100 - Vicenza Italy
coespu.info@carabinieri.it - www.coespu.org