African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia

For Prelims: **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, **African Union (AU)**, African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), **African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**, Somaliland, Puntland, **Horn of Africa**, **Blue Berets**, **Tutsis**.

For Mains: Role of peacekeeping missions in resolving conflicts, regional peace initiatives.

Source: HT

Why in News?

Recently, the **UN Security Council (UNSC)** endorsed the **African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council's** initiative named **African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM).**

- The resolution titled **Resolution 2767 (2024)** aims to address Somalia's security challenges posed by **Somalia's civil war** and terrorist groups such as **Al-Shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.**
- It is similar to UN peacekeeping missions.

 Note: Peace and Security Council (PSC) is the **standing decision-making organ** of the **AU** for the **prevention, management and resolution** of conflicts.

- It is also the key pillar of the **African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)**, which is the framework for promoting **peace, security and stability** in Africa.
- The **Levant** is the eastern shoreland of the **Mediterranean sea** comprising **Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and Palestine.**

What is ATMIS and AUSSOM?

- **About ATMIS: African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)** is a **multidimensional mission (military, police and civilian)**, authorised by the **African Union** and mandated by the **United Nations Security Council.**
  - **Mandate:** It replaces the **African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)** with a clear mandate to fully implement the **Somali Transition Plan (STP)**.
    - STP is a comprehensive guide by Somalia and partners for **transferring security responsibility** from the African Union to the Federal Government of Somalia.
- **About AUSSOM:** It provides for the replacement of the **African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**, whose mandate ends on **31st December 2024.**
  - **Transitioning Responsibility**: Since 2022, **7,000 ATMIS troops** have been reduced, and AUSSOM continues **supporting Somali forces** in stabilising the nation.

- Mandate and Operations: AU members can deploy **up to 12,626 personnel, including 1,040 police officers**, until June 2025 to combat terrorism and maintain security.
- **Financing:** A hybrid approach, combining **UN assessed contributions (75%) and African Union/partner contributions (25%)**, has been proposed to fund the mission to ensure sustainable and predictable funding for African peace operations.
- **Challenges: Burundi and Ethiopian** troops will **not be taking part** in AUSSOM.
  - **Egypt may take part** in the AUSSOM with which **Ethiopia** has its own **disputes** over a dam it has constructed along the Nile.
  - **Ethiopia** has **good relations** with authorities governing **Somaliland (a breakaway region of Somalia).**
    - The **US** expressed concerns that the **UN disproportionately funded** the mission and abstained from voting in the UNSC.
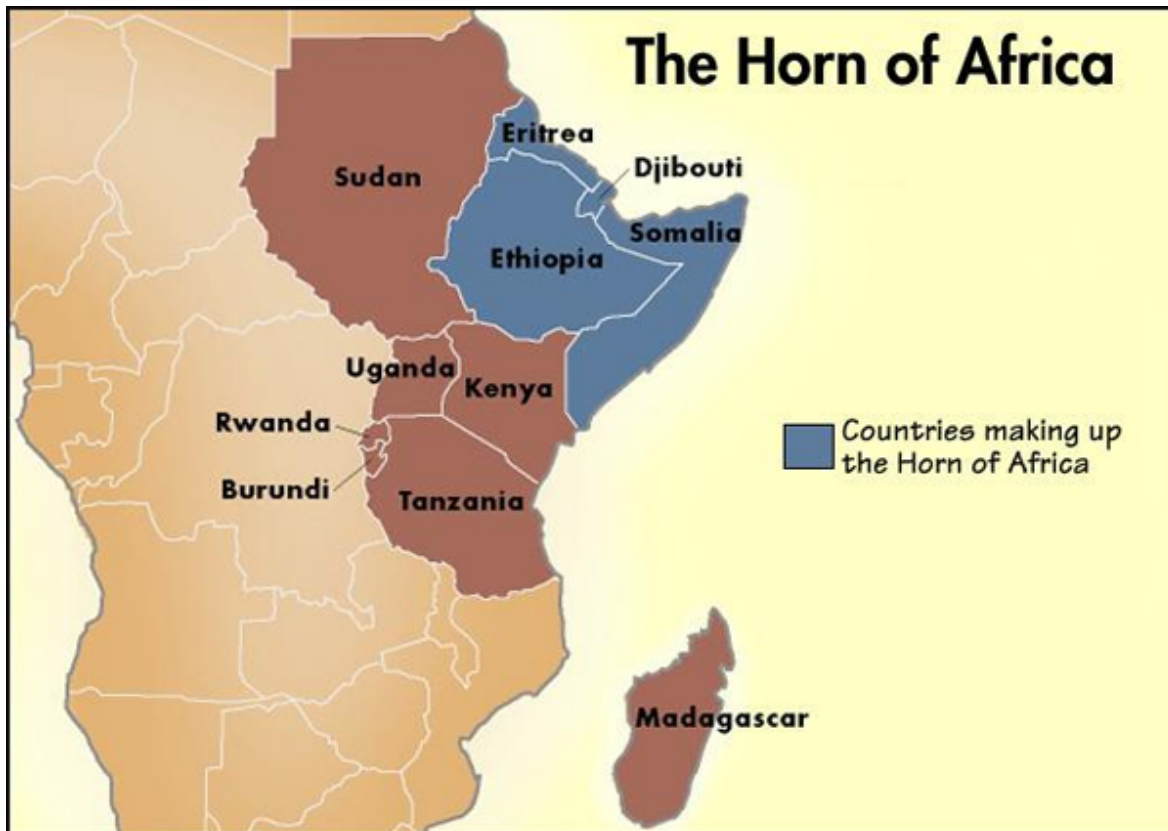
What is Somalia's Civil War?

- **About:** It began in **1988,** during President **Siad Barre's authoritarian rule.** His regime collapsed in **January 1991**, creating a **power vacuum and chaos**.
- **Fragmentation of Somalia:** After Barre's fall, Somalia split into regions controlled by militias and groups, including **Somaliland,** which declared independence in **1991**, and **Puntland**, which declared partial autonomy in 1998.
  - **Somalia and Ethiopia** have been in a **year-long dispute** over a sea access deal Ethiopia made with the **separatist Somaliland region**.

- **Rise of Clannism:** The clannism system **fueled tensions** in Somalia, hindering government unity and peace efforts, while clan rivalries strained relations between the **Federal Government and regional states**.
  - **Clannism** is the dominance of **clan-based politics,** where loyalty to clan and sub-clan interests often **overrides national unity.**
  - The four main clans in Somalia are **Dorad, Hawiye, Dir and Rahanweym**.
- **Peace Efforts:**
  - **Arta Declaration (2000):** Regional organizations such as the **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)** attempted to establish a more representative government.
  - **Transitional Government: Transitional National Government (TNG)** and **Transitional Federal Government (TFG)** were established but were plagued by inefficiency, infighting, and corruption.
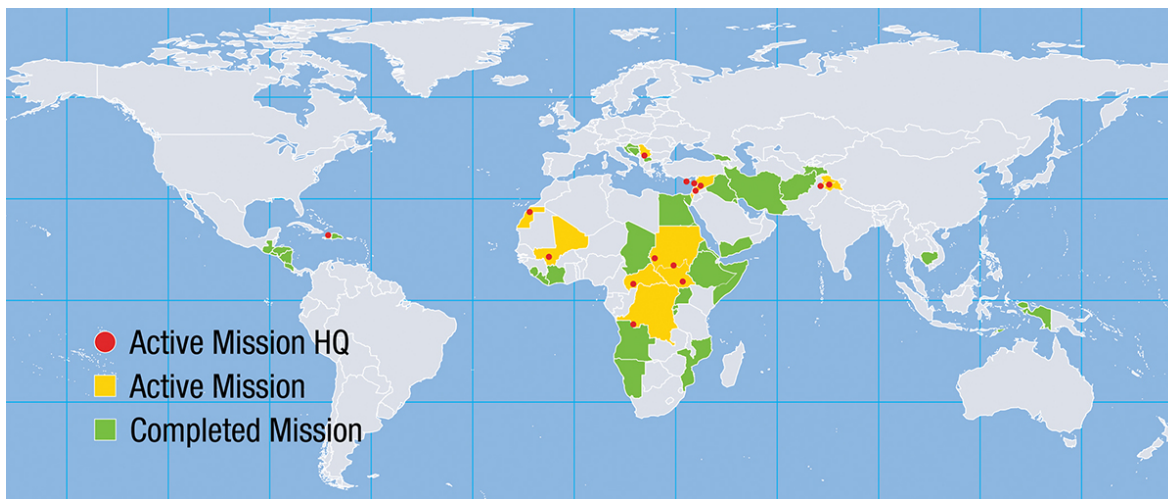
- **Rise of Al-Shabaab:** By 2007, the rise of **Al-Shabaab**, an Islamist militant group, escalated the conflict. It is **al-Qaeda's strongest affiliate**.
  - Al-Shabaab's primary goal is to overthrow the **Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)**, expel foreign military presence, and establish a strict interpretation of **Islamic law (Sharia)**.
  - The group advocates for a "**Greater Somalia**," seeking to unite ethnic Somalis across East Africa into a single Islamic state.
    - Greater Somalia would include **Somalia, Somaliland, part of Djibouti and Kenya (Northern areas) and the Ethiopian Ogaden.**

Note: **Horn of Africa** comprises the countries of **Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia**.

What is the UN Peacekeeping Mission?

- **About:** It is a set of operations led by the UN to help maintain **peace and security** in conflict zones through deployment of **military personnel, police, and civilian experts**.
  - It was established in **May 1948** when the UNSC authorised the deployment of **UN military observers** to monitor the **Armistice Agreement** between **Israel and its Arab neighbors.**
  - UN peacekeepers are often referred to as **Blue Berets or Blue Helmets** because of their light blue berets or helmets.
- **Global Presence:** Over the **past 70 years**, more than **1 million men and women** have served under the UN flag in more than **70 UN peacekeeping operations**.
  - More than **1,00,000 military, police and civilian personnel from 125 countries** currently serve in 14 peacekeeping operations.

- **Effectiveness:**
  - **Success Stories:**
    - **Sierra Leone (1999-2005):** The peacekeepers **disarmed over 75,000 ex-fighters**, including child soldiers, and destroyed 42,000 weapons, greatly aiding the country's stabilization.
    - **Burundi (2004-2006):** UN peacekeepers helped the country recover from ethnic conflict, aiding the transition from **civil war to stability,** and extended their mission to protect these gains.
    - **Liberia (2003-2018):** United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) brokered peace agreements, oversaw disarmament, and supported **democratic elections** in Liberia.
    - **Sierra Leone (1999 to 2005):** Peacekeepers ended the **country's civil war** and facilitated the implementation of the **Lome Peace Agreement**.
      - The mission's success was driven by the commitment of both warring parties to the peace process, its **clear mandate**, and the support from the international community.
  - **Failures:**
    - **Somalia (1992-1995):** The **Battle of Mogadishu (1993)** saw US soldiers killed and their bodies paraded, leading to the **swift withdrawal of American and UN forces**.
      - By 1995, the UN withdrew completely, marking the mission a **failure**.
    - **Rwanda (1994):** In 1994, **over 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis ethnic group, were killed** in a genocide.
      - Despite early warnings, the UN failed to intervene or provide enough resources to prevent it.
    - **Srebrenica (1995):** In 1995, UN peacekeepers in **Srebrenica, Bosnia**, failed to prevent the execution of **8,000 Muslim men and boys** by **Bosnian Serb forces**, despite declaring it a **"safe area."**

India's Contribution in UN Peacekeeping Missions

- **India's Role:** India has played a significant role in UN Peacekeeping Missions contributing more troops than any other country, with **over 253,000 personnel** serving in **49 of the 72 UN missions since 1948**.
  - As of **January 2024, around 5,900 Indian troops** are deployed across 12 UN peacekeeping missions.
- **Past Missions:**
  - **Haiti (2017-19):** India contributed two **Formed Police Units (FPU)** with around 280 personnel from BSF, CISF, and Assam Rifles from November 2017 to July 2019, achieving great success.
  - **Liberia (2007-16):** A **125-member all-women police unit** in Liberia inspired a fourfold increase in women applying to join the police.

- **Sierra Leone (1999-2001):** India contributed two Infantry Battalion groups, two engineer companies, **Attack helicopter unit, and medical unit** among others.
- **Sudan (2005):** India has contributed two Infantry **Battalion groups, Engineer Company, Signal Company**, among others.
- **Rwanda (1994-96):** An Infantry Battalion, Signal Company, Engineer Company, Staff Officers, and Military Observers were provided.
- **Somalia (1993-94):** Indian Army deployed a **Brigade Group comprising 5,000 all ranks** and the Navy deployed four battleships.

Conclusion

The recent endorsement of **AUSSOM** by the **UN Security Council** underscores the **continued struggle to stabilize Somalia** amidst its prolonged civil war. While African-led missions like ATMIS and AUSSOM are crucial, historical **failures of UN peacekeeping**, such as in Somalia and Rwanda, emphasize the need for **clear mandates, resources, and international cooperation**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Analyze the successes and failures of UN peacekeeping missions.

Mains

Q. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council. **(2015)**