

IV

JUDGEMENT 4 OF 7

HOW SURE WE ARE: OBSERVED FOR THE FIGURES

Africa's peace mission gap is small beside its military spending

IN BRIEF

- African governments added about \$4.6 billion to their military budgets in 2025.
- They have not found the roughly \$70 million a year that the African Union's peace mission in Somalia still lacks.

The African Union mission in Somalia needs about \$190 million a year and has about \$120 million pledged. At the same time, the UN is cutting its own support for the mission. The missing money is a small slice of what African states spend on their own armies. Closing the gap depends on political will and a shared way of paying, and African governments control both.

The reasoning

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) puts African military spending at \$58.2 billion in 2025, up 8.5% in a year. Algeria alone spent more than all of sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Egypt and Kenya are among the countries that send the Somalia mission's roughly 12,000 troops. In February, the African Union noted a proposal to raise its Peace Fund, which pays for African peace missions, from \$400 million to \$1 billion. It took no decision. So the money exists on the continent, and it goes to national armies.

The UN route is closing. The UN's peacekeeping budget for 2026 to 2027 is \$5.1 billion, a tenth lower than the year before. The United States pays about 27% of UN peacekeeping costs and owes the UN around \$4 billion. In 2023 the Security Council passed Resolution 2719, which lets compulsory payments from UN members cover up to 75% of an African Union mission. The Council has never used it. On 18 September the United States agreed that the UN office that supplies the Somalia mission will wind down over 12 months from January 2027 and then close. After that, the mission will need African money or a Council decision to continue.

A shortfall of \$70 million is about 0.12% of Africa's military spending. The gap is about how African states agree to share the cost, and whether they choose to. An African Union that pays for its own main mission can ask the UN for money from a position of strength. One that cannot pay gives the Council a reason to refuse.

The evidence

- SIPRI: African military spending rose 8.5% to \$58.2 billion in 2025 [Source](#)
- Somali Guardian: the Somalia mission needs about \$190 million a year and has \$120 million pledged [Source](#)
- Institute for Security Studies: Resolution 2719 allows UN funding of up to 75% of an African Union mission and has not been used [Source](#)
- Dawan Africa: the United States agreed to a 12-month wind-down of the UN support office from January 2027 [Source](#)
- Security Council Report: the UN peacekeeping budget for 2026 to 2027 is \$5.1 billion, a tenth lower [Source](#)
- Security Council Report: the United States pays about 27% of peacekeeping costs and owes around \$4 billion [Source](#)
- Africa is a Country: the countries that send troops to the Somalia mission [Source](#)

The strongest argument against

Most African military spending pays salaries, and much of it is in North African states that do not fund missions further south. It cannot simply be moved to Somalia. The Peace Fund has also grown to \$400 million from member states' own payments. Against an African Union operating budget of about \$600 million, that is a real achievement.

Sector briefings behind this judgement

Sector · Observed

Security and conflict

Africa's wars were discussed in side meetings with no money attached, while African armies grew and the African Union mission in Somalia ran short of cash.

[Open the briefing](#)

Recommended moves

100 DAYS · BY EARLY JANUARY 2027

CONTINENTAL

Close the Somalia mission's funding gap with African money before UN supplies stop

Leads: The AU Peace and Security Council with IGAD; Somalia and the six troop-sending countries as first movers

1 YEAR · BY SEPTEMBER 2027

REGIONAL

Share ship-tracking data and create African war-risk insurance for Red Sea trade

Leads: IGAD and the African signatories of the Djibouti Code, with ATIDI and the African Development Bank; Djibouti and Kenya as first contributors

Words used on this page

African Union (AU)

The organisation of 55 African states, based in Addis Ababa. Its heads of state meet each February. It can suspend members after a coup. [Glossary](#) · [Source: au.int](#)

AUSSOM

The African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia. About 12,000 troops from Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt, Djibouti and Burundi help Somali forces against al-Shabaab. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

AU Peace Fund

A fund paid for by African Union members to finance African peace work and missions. [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: au.int](#)

UN peacekeeping budget

A separate UN budget, approved each June, that pays for UN peace missions. It is paid through assessed contributions, and its largest payers are the United States and China. [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: peacekeeping.un.org](#)

UN Security Council

The 15-member UN body that decides on war and peace. It can impose sanctions and send peacekeepers, and its decisions bind all UN members. Five permanent members can each block any decision. [The UN and diplomacy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: un.org](#)

Resolution 2719

A Security Council decision of December 2023. It allows UN member states' regular contributions to help pay for peace missions led by the African Union, decided case by case. It lets the UN pay up to three-quarters of such a mission's budget. It has never been used: the United States blocked its first use, for Somalia. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: issafrica.org](#)

UN support office in Somalia

A UN office that supplies food, fuel, transport and medical care to the African Union mission in Somalia. The United States agreed in September 2026 to a 12-month drawdown from January 2027, followed by closure. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: unsos.unmissions.org](#)