

African Union Adds Year to Mandate of Somalia Force
By REUTERS
5 January 2012

The African Union said Thursday that it had extended the mandate of its peacekeeping force in Somalia by 12 months and that it hoped to increase the mission's size to close to 18,000 troops to help in the fight against Shabab rebels.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council urged the United Nations Security Council to endorse the expansion of the force "to take advantage of the unique opportunity created by the operations being conducted against Al Shabab in different parts of Somalia."

Kenyan and Ethiopian troops are also fighting the rebels in Somalia.

The Shabab, Islamists known for chopping off hands and starving the famine-stricken populace, have been fighting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government, the country's internationally recognized authority.

Created in 2007, the African Union force is made up of close to 10,000 troops from Uganda and Burundi.

© 2012 *The New York Times Company*