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## ***PRESS RELEASE***

*(For immediate release)*

### **Al Shabaab Guilty of Endangering Civilians, says Report into Legoo incident**

**Mogadishu, 09 February, 2013** ;A probe set up to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident in which civilians were killed when the Al-Qaeda affiliated terror group, Alshabaab, attacked an AMISOM patrol , has found that AMISOM soldiers acted within internationally accepted rules of engagement when they responded to the ambush.

Seven civilians, including 5 children, were killed and another 7 injured in the incident which occurred near the village of Jir-Yasin, a few kilometers from Leego. 9 AMISOM soldiers were also wounded in the incident, 3 of them seriously. A number of goats were also killed.

The investigation was carried out by a board of inquiry composed of local political representatives including MPs, Somali government officials and AMISOM representatives. It found that the Al-Shabaab had attacked an AMISOM reconnaissance patrol within the vicinity of the village, forcing the soldiers to defend themselves, in the process endangering civilian life.

The AMISOM Force Commander, Lt Gen Andrew Gutti, said that although he was glad that AMISOM troops were not found to have acted irresponsibly or negligently, he nonetheless was deeply saddened by the loss of innocent life, adding that AMISOM forces were committed to minimizing the impact of their operations on Somali civilians. “We have passed on the recommendations in this report to the AU for further action and are reviewing our procedures in order to avoid such incidents in future,” he said, noting that AMISOM doctors were helping to treat the wounded civilians at the Medina Hospital.

“As in the past, Al-Shabaab continues to demonstrate scant regard for the safety of the Somali people,” he added, cautioning civilians to avoid areas where there was a known Al-Shabaab presence.

A report published in October last year by the Somalia Protection Cluster, a consortium of local and international NGOs including UN agencies, acknowledged that AMISOM was cognizant

about its international legal obligations and had done much to minimize civilian casualties. All AMISOM personnel receive training on the relevant aspects of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law and the mission has in the past taken action against soldiers who violated its Rules of Engagement.

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