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UNIÃO AFRICANA

CAERT, B.P 141 Bureau Poste El-Mohammadia Alger, Algérie, Tel +213 21 520 1 10 Fax +213 21 5203 78  
Email : [admin@caert.org.dz](mailto:admin@caert.org.dz)

**ACSRT / CAERT**

African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

# Terrorism

# Bi-weekly Press Review

1 - 15 January 2015

Review no. 84



**Press Review**  
**1—15 January 2015**

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## Terrorism in Africa

### "Charlie Hebdo" - L'Afrique réagit : l'expression de l'horreur contre l'attentat islamiste

Algérie, Tunisie, Togo, Mauritanie : des exemples de pays que l'assassinat des journalistes du journal satirique français a secoués.



Dans un message de condoléances adressé à son homologue français, François Hollande, le président algérien, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a exprimé la condamnation "vigoureuse" par l'Algérie de l'attentat terroriste perpétré mercredi à Paris contre le siège de l'hebdomadaire satirique français, Charlie Hebdo, faisant 12 morts.

L'Algérie à côté du peuple français

Affirmant la constance et la détermination de l'Algérie à lutter contre le terrorisme, il a rappelé que l'Algérie "a souffert pendant deux longues années des effets du terrorisme pour mesurer à sa juste valeur la douleur du peuple français ami". Et d'exprimer "la solidarité du peuple algérien avec le peuple français". Cela dit, l'Algérie a mis en garde ce jeudi "contre les amalgames et la stigmatisation des communautés musulmanes d'Europe" à la suite de cet attentat terroriste contre le siège de l'hebdomadaire français, Charlie Hebdo. "L'Islam n'a rien à voir avec les auteurs de cet attentat quelles que soient leurs motivations", a-t-elle indiqué. Selon le porte-parole du ministère algérien des Affaires étrangères, Abdelaziz Cherif, "cet acte terroriste est condamnable quelles que soient les motivations de ses auteurs et ceux qui sont derrière", ajoutant : "L'idiotie de cet attentat sauvage exclut ses auteurs de défenseurs et de représentants de la cause de la communauté musulmane dont ils se proclament".

La Tunisie aussi

Même tonalité du côté de la Primature tunisienne. Celle-ci a vigoureusement condamné l'attentat qu'il a qualifié de "terroriste, lâche", tout en exprimant sa "solidarité avec le peuple français". Et le gouvernement tunisien de renouveler son appel à la communauté internationale pour davantage de coordination et de coo-

pération pour faire face au terrorisme qui vise la sécurité et la stabilité dans le monde. Le Syndicat des journalistes tunisiens s'est joint à l'opinion des autorités pour condamner vigoureusement cet attentat terroriste contre le journal "Charlie Hebdo" à Paris. Il a exprimé l'espoir que cet attentat n'alimente à nouveau les sentiments de haine contre les musulmans en France.

#### Le Togo "profondément consterné"

Le chef de l'Etat togolais, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, a, de son côté, exprimé sa "vive indignation et sa profonde consternation" dans une lettre adressée au président français. "Une telle violence au seuil d'une nouvelle année ne peut susciter qu'une réprobation totale", s'indigne le président Gnassingbé, qui exprime à cet effet "l'expression de la profonde compassion ressentie par l'ensemble du peuple togolais face à la douleur du peuple français et au chagrin des familles des victimes et des blessés". Pour le président togolais, le tragique attentat contre Charlie Hebdo "touche à un symbole de la liberté d'expression dont la défense a toujours été au cœur de l'humanisme et des valeurs universelles si chères à la France. Il rappelle combien notre commune adhésion à une lutte sans merci contre l'hydre du terrorisme doit être sans cesse renouvelée et renforcée pour le triomphe d'un monde de paix, de liberté et de tolérance".

#### La Mauritanie condamne fermement

"En cette douloureuse occasion, le gouvernement présente ses condoléances aux autorités et au peuple français, ainsi qu'aux familles des victimes", souligne la déclaration du gouvernement mauritanien. "Fidèle à son engagement dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et son attachement aux valeurs humaines, la Mauritanie condamne fermement l'attentat terroriste perpétré aujourd'hui à Paris provoquant des morts et des blessés", poursuit-il.

<http://afrique.lepoint.fr/>

## Africa in 2014: The good, the bad and the ugly

December 31, 2014



Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

### **Liesl Louw-Vaudran Correspondent**

***Good news in 2014 was that the economic boom in Africa continued, with the African Development Bank's annual African Economic Outlook Report predicting growth of 4,8 percent in 2014 and between 5–6 percent in 2015.***

Africa is not a country. What might have been an excellent year for some was a disaster for others. For protesters in Burkina Faso who have known only one ruler for the last 27 years, 2014 was a very good year. The peaceful overthrow of Blaise Compaoré at the end of October was a victory for democracy. Whether the strong positioning of military officials in the transitional government will undermine the democratic gains remains to be seen.

The African Union (AU), which should give itself some credit for ensuring that Compaoré was replaced by a civilian-led government in Burkina Faso, also had quite a good year.

AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma got the private sector to contribute to AU programmes, notably the AU Support Mission to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa. Following a fundraising meeting on November 8, South African cell-phone giant MTN came out tops with a sponsorship of \$10 million for the fight against Ebola and Strive Masiyiwa's Econet donated \$2,5 million.

2014 has been a good year for ruling parties and former liberation movements in

Southern Africa. From Namibia to Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique, those in power stayed in power, albeit by slightly reduced margins and with grumblings from the opposition.

In Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi from the ruling FRELIMO was elected on October 15, but the opposition RENAMO and fledgling Mozambique Democratic Movement are still not satisfied that the polls were free and fair. In Namibia, on November 29, President Hage Geingob was elected with a huge margin for the ruling SWAPO.

In South Africa, the ruling African National Congress won elections on May 7 with 62 percent, down from 66 percent at the last poll. The country's ruling alliance was, however, dealt a blow by the fracturing of the powerful trade union movement. Corruption, service delivery protests and a weakened economy also took their toll.

In Botswana President Ian Khama's Botswana Democratic Party again won elections on October 24, amidst complaints from human rights activists and journalists about the closing of the political space.

Good news in 2014 was that the economic boom in Africa continued, with the African Development Bank's annual African Economic Outlook Report predicting growth of 4,8 percent in 2014 and between 5–6 percent in 2015. Lower oil prices are, however, a huge worry to the continent's major oil producers like Nigeria, Angola and South Sudan who have been banking on over \$100 per barrel for at least a few more years.

For some parts of the continent, 2014 has been a bad year. Wars in South Sudan and the Central African Republic continued, and Libya all but imploded. Bear in mind though that, as Institute for Security Studies executive director Jakkie Cilliers remarked in a recent ISS paper on conflict in Africa, the 24-hour news cycle creates the mistaken impression that the entire continent is ablaze.

The devastating Ebola epidemic has ravaged the poor, post-conflict countries of the Mano River basin. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia are still struggling with the catastrophic effects of the outbreak, with over 7 000 deaths to date.

International criminal justice in Africa was dealt a blow this year. In June, the AU approved the establishment of the African Court on Justice and Human Rights, which will exempt presidents and senior government officials from prosecution for a raft of serious crimes.

On December 5, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was compelled to drop charges against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta after a long struggle to collect enough evidence and withstand the impact of witnesses dying, going missing or withdrawing their testimony out of fear. The credibility of the ICC is arguably at an all-time low in Africa, fuelled by the Kenyan government's diplomatic campaign against the court, which continued apace this year.

The 'ugly' in 2014 came wearing balaclavas and carrying black flags. They attacked

villages, carried out massacres, kidnapped schoolchildren and summarily executed travellers on a bus who could not recite the Koran.

Terrorism continued in northern Nigeria where the death toll from attacks by Boko Haram continues to rise almost daily. Despite the outcry against the group and the popular #BringBackOurGirls campaign — a home-grown, Nigerian initiative that grabbed world attention — hundreds of hostages are still in the hands of Boko Haram.

This includes the 219 girls kidnapped in Chibok in April this year. Suicide bombs have claimed dozens of lives and the attacks have spread from north-eastern Nigeria to other parts, including the northern capital Kano where more than 100 people were killed when a mosque was bombed on November 29.

In Mali, the Islamist groups that occupied the northern part of the country in 2013 have not all been defeated by the French and African troops present on the ground. Increasingly these peacekeepers have become the targets of the al-Qaeda linked groups with the UN Multidimensional Stabilisation Mission for Mali noting 43 casualties since June.

African peacekeepers from the AU Mission for Somalia meanwhile have made important gains against al-Shabaab in Somalia this year. But Kenya is reeling from a spate of attacks on civilians in Nairobi, the Coastal Region and the northeast, near the Somali border.

The worst of these was the killing of 60 people in Mpekotoni in June and two particularly gruesome attacks, the first on a bus heading for Nairobi in late November in which 28 non-Muslims were killed, and the second in a stone quarry where militants killed 36 workers.

Experts differ on the reasons for this increase in Islamic radicalism. To some extent the groups in Africa are becoming more visible and deadly because they are linked to international terror networks like al-Qaeda or the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Most agree, however, that it is local conditions and local responses that drive radicalisation and terrorism.

It is difficult to predict what 2015 holds, but already there are warning lights in various parts of the continent. This is true in places where elections are planned, like Nigeria on 14 February, or where opposition groups are mobilising against third (or longer) term bids by their presidents.

Cote d'Ivoire, where nerves are still frayed after the bitter political conflict in 2011, also goes to the polls in 2015.

In the eastern DRC, military action by the Congolese army and the UN Force Intervention Brigade could become a reality early in 2015 if the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) rebels refuse to disarm before the 2 January deadline.

2015 promises to be another challenging year for Africa, with its share of high

drama and high-risk politics. — ISS.

<http://www.herald.co.zw/africa-in-2014-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

## 10 Wars to Watch in 2015

JANUARY 2, 2015

From Afghanistan to Yemen, the conflicts and crises the world faces in the coming year.

BY **JEAN-MARIE GUÉHENNO** Jean-Marie Guéhenno is president and CEO of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group.



The last year was a bad one for international peace and security. Sure, there were bright spots in 2014. Colombia's peace process looks hopeful. The last round of Iran's nuclear talks was more successful than many think. Tunisia, though not yet out of the woods, showed the power of dialogue over violence. Afghanistan bucked its history and has, notwithstanding many challenges, a government of national unity. President Barack Obama's restoration of diplomatic relations with Cuba can only be positive.

But for the most part, it has been a dispiriting year. Conflict is again on the rise after a major decrease following the end of the Cold War. Today's wars kill and displace more people, and are harder to end than in years past.

The Arab world's turmoil deepened: The Islamic State captured large swathes of Iraq and Syria, much of Gaza was destroyed again, Egypt turned toward authoritarianism and repression, and Libya and Yemen drifted toward civil war. In Africa, the world watched South Sudan's leaders drive their new country into the ground. The optimism of 2013 faded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ebola ravaged parts of West Africa, and Boko Haram insurgents stepped up terrorist attacks in northern Nigeria. The international legal order was challenged with the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and war is back in Europe as fighting continues in eastern Ukraine.

So what do the last 12 months tell us is going wrong?

On a global level, increasing geopolitical competition appears, for the moment at least, to be leading to a less controlled, less predictable world. This is most obvious, of course, with regard to the relationship between Russia and the West. It's not yet zero-sum: The two nations still work together on the Iran nuclear file, the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, and, for the most part, on African peacekeeping. But Russia's policy in its neighborhood presents a real challenge, and its relationship with the United States and Europe has grown antagonistic.

China's relations with its neighbors also remain tense and could lead to a crisis in the East or South China Seas. The struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia shapes the contours of violence between Sunnis and Shiites across the Middle East. Major Sunni powers are themselves divided: The contest between the Saudis, Emiratis, and Egypt on the one hand, and Qatar and Turkey on the other, plays out across North Africa. Elsewhere on the African continent, powers jostle in Somalia and in South Sudan's increasingly regionalized war; and the DRC has long been a venue for its neighbors' competition over influence and resources.

Rivalry between major and regional powers is nothing new, of course. But hostility between big powers has stymied the U.N. Security Council on Ukraine and Syria — and leaves its most powerful members less time and political capital to invest on other crises. As power gets more diffuse, antagonism between regional powers matters more. Competition between powerful states increasingly lends a regional or international color to civil wars, rendering their resolution more complex.

Wars and instability also are becoming more geographically concentrated, spreading from parts of Libya, the Sahel, and northern Nigeria across the African Great Lakes and Horn, through Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and over to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**Stabilizing the world's most vulnerable areas should be a major, global foreign policy imperative — and not just a moral one, given that these regions often serve as a haven for terrorists and transnational criminals.**

Stabilizing the world's most vulnerable areas should be a major, global foreign policy imperative — and not just a moral one, given that these regions often serve as a haven for terrorists and transnational criminals.

This is compounded by a worrying tendency toward violence in countries attempting to transition to democracy. Some of the world's most troubled places are those that are trying to move away from authoritarian rule, such as Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, the DRC, and Ukraine. Forging a new consensus on a division of power and resources is a huge challenge — and failure tends to lead to renewed strife.

This poses dilemmas for both domestic elites and foreign powers. On the one hand, we know the behavior of many authoritarian rulers simply stores up problems for later. They hollow out institutions, repress their opponents, neglect much of the

population, and often leave succession mechanisms vague. On the other hand, getting rid of them often, in the short term, makes things worse — precisely because their rule has left no system in place to manage change.

Last year also shows clearly that jihadi groups remain a persistent, growing threat. The Islamic State and its new affiliates in Sinai and North Africa, Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabab in Somalia and Kenya, and al Qaeda franchises in South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Yemen, and the Sahel are destabilizing governments, killing civilians, and radicalizing local populations. But grouping these movements is often pointless: While they say their ambitions are global, diverse radical enterprises feed off local grievances.

Although these jihadist groups use horrific terrorist tactics, they are more than just terrorists. They seek to control territory. They often blend brutal tactics with astute political or social outreach. Some present themselves as alternatives to a corrupt and unjust state, providing basic public goods — particularly security and justice, albeit often cruel variants thereof — when a government has failed to do so. Few of the wars they fight in are initially driven by international jihad. Extremist ideology often comes late to the party, and always amid other sources of violence. But once there, it makes finding a mediated end to wars much more challenging.

Clearly such diverse problems don't lend themselves to generic prescription. Solutions require a granular understanding of each conflict, its drivers, its protagonists, their motives and interests. Any response needs to be tailored to context. But we can offer a few general ideas based on the past year.

First, too often this year, policy has lacked a political strategy. This applies as much to the U.S. campaign against the Islamic State as it does to the Nigerians' against Boko Haram. Military action won't work alone; in fact, it often perpetuates underlying drivers of conflict — power inequalities, underdevelopment, state predation, identity politics and so forth. What keeps countries together are political settlements. Ending wars or avoiding crises requires a process that steers toward that.

Second, talking makes sense more often than not. The bright spots of this year — the Iranian nuclear file, Colombia's peace talks, Tunisia's transition, U.S.-Cuba relations — all show the value of dialogue, even when awkward or unpopular. Of course there are risks, particularly in talking to groups with exclusionary agendas or where criminal motives outweigh political ones. But at the moment the balance is dangerously weighted against dialogue: Policymakers need to be more flexible, eschew dogmatic declarations about who they can or cannot speak to, and where force is necessary, wed it with engagement, even if only to isolate those who are genuinely beyond the pale.

Third, political inclusion should more frequently be a guiding principle of today's leaders. Over time, that means building institutions that are representative, effective, and protect all citizens — long, arduous, and intensely political work. In fragile countries, the rush to elections that empower the winner at the detriment of the loser, or to ratify constitutions that concentrate power in one person, are danger-

ous.

**Exclusion is a major driver in many of today's wars — all main groups need a seat at the table to protect their interests.**

Exclusion is a major driver in many of today's wars — all main groups need a seat at the table to protect their interests.

Fourth, it is much better to prevent crises than to try to contain them later. This means engaging before local conflicts gain a jihadi dimension, for example. It means addressing communities' grievances before they take up arms. It means trying to end wars before factions fragment, making peace efforts more difficult.

Particularly important is to shore up those states in troubled regions that are reasonably stable, or at least have not yet collapsed. This means making sure military aid does not entrench rulers and perpetuate bad habits. But it also means greater caution in advocating regime change, instead nudging leaders toward more inclusive politics, better provision of basic public goods and services, tackling corruption, and improving relations with neighbors. None of this is easy, particularly given the many crises occupying world leaders. But it is clearly better than picking up the pieces afterwards. In fact, given that the world's crisis management capacity is already at breaking point, a collapse in another region — like Central Asia, for example, or the Gulf — would be disastrous.

Last, a word about the list. Like any, it is to some degree arbitrary. With so many crises raging, narrowing it down to the 10 most dangerous is hard. We omit Sudan, for example, which is still wracked by wars in its peripheries that look set to escalate, given the continued lack of reform in Khartoum. Nor do we include the extraordinary levels of violence related to drug trafficking in Mexico and parts of Central America. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also doesn't appear here — but it could clearly heat up in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, or even Israel itself. Pakistan is off this year's list too but, as December's horrific attack in Peshawar shows, still faces multiple interlinked threats, whether from jihadists, sectarian urban violence, or its restless military.

With that qualification in mind, here are 10 wars to watch next year:



### **.1 Syria, Iraq, and the Islamic State**

Since the Islamic State swept across a wide swath of northern Iraq in June, the jihadist group has become a primary focus of regional politics. But its success is a symptom of deeper problems that are not amenable to military solutions, including sectarian governments in Syria and Iraq, military strategies dependent on militias that radicalize local populations, and the waning of mainstream Sunni forces.

In the run-up to the Iraqi elections in April, then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki took a page from the playbook of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, using the jihadist threat to rally his Shiite base and win international support by presenting himself as a bulwark against terrorism. His tactics were as successful as they were damaging: He won the election, but only at the price of estranging most of the country's Sunnis.

While many Iraqis and U.S. policymakers hoped that Maliki's ouster in favor of Haider al-Abadi would pave the way for more inclusive governance, they have so far been disappointed. Iran-affiliated Shiite forces still hold sway over decision-making in Baghdad. Meanwhile, though the war against the Islamic State has spurred a nascent rapprochement between the Kurdistan Regional Government and Baghdad, Western support to Kurdish factions is feeding intra-Iraqi tensions and intra-Kurdish rivalries.

The U.S. air campaign against the Islamic State has somewhat slowed the jihadist group. However, the conflict's broader dynamics on both sides of the Syria-Iraq border continue to shift in the Islamic State's favor, as it claims it is both the only serious opponent of the Assad regime — which is seen as benefiting from the U.S.-led air strikes — and the only serious defender of Sunni interests in either coun-

try.

The fighting capacity and morale of the Western-backed Syrian armed opposition continues to weaken. The al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra has already evicted most moderate factions from rebel-held Idlib province, and the Assad regime is undeterred in its effort to crush them militarily. Western-backed groups remain major players in Aleppo, the most valuable remaining opposition territory, but rebels there are struggling to prevent regime encirclement while also holding the Islamic State at bay in the adjacent countryside. Defeat there would threaten the viability of non-jihadist forces in the north as a whole, probably ruling out a mediated end to the conflict. Maintaining the possibility of a future peace process is essential.



## **.2Ukraine**

Ukraine may not be the world's deadliest crisis, but it has transformed relations between Russia and the West for the worse. More than 5,000 people have been killed in eastern Ukraine since open conflict began in March 2014, including about 1,000 after a cease-fire was declared on Sept. 5. The onset of winter could add a new dimension to the crisis: The population in the separatist-held eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk will have to make ends meet with little in the way of heating, medicine, food, or money, which are all in short supply due to the collapse of the local economy and a tightening of financial screws by Kiev. The separatist leadership has created few functioning government institutions, has almost no trained officials, and will not be able to respond to any humanitarian emergency on its own.

There are glimmers of hope. Though Moscow continues to support the tiny

breakaway “republics” created in parts of Donetsk and Luhansk, its enthusiasm for the separatists is waning. It has not recognized them, and now stresses openly that their future lies within the boundaries of Ukraine.

However, the situation remains unpredictable. The beginning of 2015 is unlikely to see either side impose its will militarily — but as both have influential pro-war lobbies, they might be tempted to try. Other parts of Ukraine’s southeast — areas like Kharkiv and Zaporizhia, relatively quiet until now — could grow restive if Moscow stirs things up, perhaps to open a land route to Crimea through Ukraine’s south-east. More radical separatists are certainly hoping this will happen.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko recognizes that urgent economic and political reforms are crucial to Ukraine’s long-term stability. However, he is moving slowly to implement them. The West needs to maintain political pressure on him to follow through.

In the short term, the international community’s main tasks are to separate the warring parties, encourage Kiev to reach out to its compatriots in the east, place the Ukrainian-Russia border fully under the control of international monitors, and gradually shift the conflict from armed confrontation to political negotiations. The emergence of another frozen conflict on Europe’s periphery can still be avoided — with a bit of luck, a lot of energy, and a policy toward Moscow that combines sustained pressure with potential incentives for de-escalation.



### **.3South Sudan**

South Sudan is entering its second year of a brutal civil war that, for the moment, looks set to grind on.

Last December, long-simmering disputes within the ruling party and army exploded into a war between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to his former vice president, Riek Machar. Military garrisons split, often violently, along ethnic lines. Clashes quickly spread from the capital as fighting destroyed major cities and oil infrastructure. With Ugandan troops and Sudanese rebels fighting alongside government forces — and with Sudan reportedly arming both government and opposition — the war has drawn in neighbors and risks further destabilizing an already troubled region. The government is leveraging its financial future to pay for the war, leaving the country on the brink of bankruptcy.

Some estimates suggest the war has already left as many as 50,000 dead and almost 2 million displaced. Humanitarian organizations have, for the moment, averted famine, but they face considerable hostility. The end of the rainy season in December is likely to bring an escalation of violence.

Efforts to end the war have not succeeded. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a sub-regional group of which both Uganda and Sudan are members, has taken the lead on mediation efforts, but talks have had little impact and are not inclusive. Ceasefires are repeatedly violated. Nor have the United States and China put their full weight behind the peace process. Armed groups are fragmenting, and many are now beyond Kiir and Machar's control, fueling secondary conflicts that are evolving in the civil war's shadow.

How can the world stop the bleeding? The U.N. Security Council — particularly the United States and China, which maintain close ties to regional powers — need to engage more actively. An arms embargo, if closely monitored, should increase leverage over all sides. U.S. pressure on Uganda, coupled with Chinese pressure on Sudan and combined pressure from the region and major powers on Kiir and Machar, might break the deadlock. A mechanism to ensure that oil revenue is not fueling the conflict should be considered, in conjunction with pressure on opposition supply lines. Mediators should also expand dialogue with armed groups and hardliners across the country.

South Sudan is among the world's gravest crises. Unlike in Syria and Ukraine, however, there is greater hope for coordinated international action, as the issue doesn't split the U.N. Security Council. With the region divided, it is time for major powers to weigh in more forcefully.



#### **.4Nigeria**

Nigeria faces a perfect storm in 2015. First, a brutal insurgency by the Islamist group Boko Haram continues to wrack parts of the north, especially the impoverished northeast. The group seized more territory this summer, and its attacks have since spread to neighboring Cameroon and could spill over into Niger and Chad. Now in its fifth year and showing no sign of abating, the conflict has left over 13,000 dead and displaced some 800,000 people.

President Goodluck Jonathan's response has relied largely on military measures. While his government's campaigns have scored some victories, they have not succeeded in rolling back the insurgency. At times, they have created more enemies for the government: Operations have been heavy-handed and indiscriminate, with security forces and allied local militias engaging in extrajudicial killings and torture. Significant casualties in some battles have led to soldiers refusing to fight or deserting their units. The more than 200 Chibok schoolgirls, kidnapped by militants last April in an attack that made international headlines, are still missing, reinforcing the perception of a government out of its depth.

Second, the worldwide drop in oil prices has weakened the government, which depends on sales of crude for roughly 70 percent of its income. In the last two months of 2014, Nigeria twice lowered the oil price it uses to plan its budget (reaching 65 dollars a barrel) while vowing not to resort to inflationary measures. Nigeria's currency, the naira, was also devalued for the first time in three years.

Third, elections scheduled for February 2015 could also destabilize the country. Nigerian polls are always fiercely contested, but the chances for violence this time

around are exceptionally high. For the first time since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) faces a real challenge. An opposition coalition, the All Progressives Congress (APC), has united behind a single presidential candidate, retired Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, who will take on President Jonathan.

As with previous elections, campaigning and voting will almost certainly see violence at the state level. A disputed presidential result would be more worrying still: If Buhari loses, mobs could take to the streets in northern cities, as they did when he lost the 2011 vote — but this time with Boko Haram poised to add to the bloodshed. If Jonathan loses, his supporters in the Delta have already threatened to reignite violence there.



## **.5Somalia**

While combined offensives by African Union forces and the Somali army have resulted in impressive gains against al-Shabab, the Somali Federal Government is still struggling to actually govern. Despite a provisional federal constitution, tensions between the president and prime minister escalated into a nasty tussle in late 2014 that resulted in the latter's ousting. Political discord at both the federal and regional levels now threatens the government's stated ambition of holding elections and a constitutional referendum by 2016.

Although more territory is under the notional control of the central government than at any time since the early 1990s, the reality is that a patchwork of local armed clans hold sway. The twin goals of federal state-formation and national elections — both still largely viewed, locally, as a zero-sum game of clan dominance — are likely to generate further conflict. In this environment, the African Union mis-

sion, AMISOM, will struggle to maintain its neutrality, not least since the majority of its troops come from neighboring states. And despite territorial losses and the targeted killing of its leader by a U.S. drone strike in September, al-Shabab retains its ability to strike at home and farther afield — most notably in Kenya, where it claims to champion the cause of the marginalized Muslim minority.

Somalia's stakeholders — both domestic and foreign — need to shift priorities to match the country's challenges. They should focus on local stabilization, including through district councils and municipalities, and the establishment of grass-roots political institutions. Local elections need to take precedence over national polls. The current top-down trajectory risks increasing donor frustration with a central government that cannot deliver, and strengthening the power of clans to capture the presidency.



#### **.6 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

The past year has dashed many of the hopes raised by progress in the DRC in 2013.

Reforms promised by President Joseph Kabila, particularly with regard to the security sector, have stalled. While 2013 saw Congolese troops and a special U.N. contingent, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), defeat the M23, a Rwanda-backed militia, efforts to demobilize other militias have foundered. Congolese forces launched operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), but its leadership remains at large and unidentified fighters continue to massacre villagers in its area of operations.

More challenging are the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a remnant of the Hutu paramilitaries behind Rwanda's genocide in 1994. The Congo-

lese government and FIB troop contributors, particularly South Africa and Tanzania, are reluctant to take on Rwanda's enemies, the FDLR, in the way they took on its allies, the M23. A strategy against the FDLR cannot be based on military action alone. Softer measures — third-country resettlement, a disarmament plan that looks after both fighters and communities, police action against the illicit networks supporting the FDLR, and an agreement about the judicial process for its leaders — need to be combined with a credible threat of force.

For now, however, that threat is missing. The tiny numbers of FDLR fighters handing themselves in suggests the group won't disarm voluntarily; the six-month deadline for this process, imposed by regional powers, was clearly a tactic to gain time. As the disarmament of militias stalls, another escalation of violence in the eastern provinces is possible, especially if Rwanda pulls out of the political process managed by the United Nations.

As in Nigeria, upcoming polls in the DRC are the most formidable challenge in an already fragile political environment. Kabila, whose legitimacy is already very weak and who is constitutionally barred from running for a third term, may try to change rules or delay the vote to prolong his tenure. Either step will spark opposition protests. Given that violence in the DRC's east is largely a symptom of Kinshasa's bad governance and state dysfunction, the forthcoming vote will be as pivotal to the country's stability as militias and meddling neighbors.



## .7Afghanistan

Afghanistan, for the first time in its history, saw a largely peaceful transfer of power last year. President Hamid Karzai left office, Ashraf Ghani was sworn in as his suc-

cessor, and the runner-up in the elections, Abdullah Abdullah, became Afghanistan's "chief executive" in a power-sharing arrangement.

But the protracted crisis over election results suggests Ghani's unity government could present challenges as well as opportunities. Relations between the two camps are still bitter, they have yet to agree on key cabinet appointments, and the power-sharing deal lacks mechanisms for resolving disputes. Factionalism could stymie the urgently needed reforms that Ghani has promised: to strengthen institutions, check corruption, balance executive power, and move toward a less centralized system of governance.

The new government also faces a growing Taliban insurgency. Ghani signed an agreement with Washington that paved the way for 12,000 soldiers, overwhelmingly Americans, to remain in Afghanistan in 2015 to conduct counterterrorism operations and to advise, train, and assist local forces, who are fighting hard against the Taliban.

But violence is increasing, and insurgents are making gains in outlying regions. In late October, the Afghan Defense Ministry said that 2014 had already become the deadliest year for Afghan forces since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, and an earlier U.N. report warned that the year had seen a rising number of civilian deaths and injuries. As foreign troops withdraw, Kabul's reach into the provinces has weakened, and it will struggle to maintain army rosters at current levels without billions of extra donor dollars.

During visits to China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia in the initial weeks of his presidency, Ghani has wisely signaled his interest in ending the conflict through mediation. The risk, however, is that this will increase the leverage of Pakistan, with which Kabul's relationship remains strained — and where Afghan insurgents still shelter along the border. Meanwhile, the number of Taliban attacks suggests that, at least for now, the insurgents will continue to test their strength against that of the Afghan army. Fighting will remain an essential component of bargaining, and 2015 promises to be another violent year for Afghans.



## .8Yemen

Yemen's transition has broken down. The political process has fallen victim to elite competition, a shift of the balance of power in favor of the Houthis — a Zaydi Shiite movement that has swept across much of the country from its northwestern stronghold — and a resurgent separatist movement in the south. As economic and security conditions have deteriorated, the state's credibility — and trust in President Abed-Rabbo Mansour Hadi as an honest broker between factions — has suffered.

The Houthis, backed by a broad political front frustrated with political stagnation, took over the capital, Sanaa, in September 2014. They agreed to a plan to appoint a new government, the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, but rapidly violated its spirit by tightening their grip on the capital and extending their territorial control southward and westward into the country's Sunni heartland and the oil-producing region of Marib.

While Yemen doesn't have a history of sectarian violence, it is starting to acquire one. The Houthi power grab has brought it into greater conflict with Islah, a political party that includes the Yemeni branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as with al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, formed in 2009 by Saudi and Yemeni Sunni militants. The Houthi advance has also stoked fears in the south that federal autonomy, as envisioned by the transitional dialogue that followed former President Ali Abdullah Saleh's ouster, is unlikely to succeed.

Regional and major powers have a mixed record in Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council were critical to bringing factions together during the tur-

moil in 2011. The Saudis also have poured in billions of dollars to prop up the state budget. But after the Houthis entered Sanaa, Riyadh expressed doubts about funding a government dominated by a group it considers Iranian proxies. Were the Saudis to discourage investment and pull financial support, the Yemeni state could completely collapse. Iran and Saudi Arabia, who have a common enemy in al Qaeda, should cooperate rather than let Yemen slip into another proxy war.

The U.N. Security Council's role has also been mixed. In February 2014, it mandated sanctions for any group deemed to be disrupting the transition. After the Houthi takeover of Sanaa, it sanctioned two Houthi commanders and former President Saleh, at the urging of President Hadi and the Saudis. This backfired, handing a temporary boost to those it sought to weaken. Saleh's General People's Congress Party promptly withdrew support from the government and expelled Hadi from its leadership, while the Houthis welcomed the sanctions as a badge of honor. None of these parties seem likely to embrace compromise any time soon.



ABDULLAH DOMA/AFP/Getty Images

### **.9Libya and the Sahel**

Libya's transition has also derailed, and the ensuing chaos is spilling across its borders. Political deadlock has produced two rival legislatures — an internationally recognized parliament in Tobruk and an Islamist-dominated General National Congress in Tripoli. The Libyan government no longer enjoys real authority; confidence in state institutions, today little more than a façade, has crumbled. Assassinations of officials and a coup attempt led by an anti-Islamist general have split

the country, reflecting regional polarization. Divisions, however, are more complex than Islamists vs. anti-Islamists. Struggles over oil and gas wealth, rivalries between militias and tribes, foreign powers' competing interests, and disagreements on how to structure the post-Qaddafi state all threaten to tear the country apart.

This is a problem not only for Libya, but also for its neighbors. The influx of arms and mercenaries partly explains Mali's collapse in 2012, as Tuareg rebels and al Qaeda-linked groups seized the north and a military coup toppled the Bamako government. A French operation drove back the jihadists — but many still shelter in the desert or within remote communities. Meanwhile, terrorist activity has also increased in Niger: As in Mali, authorities are struggling to exert control over the vast desert, with their efforts complicated by regional rivalries, in particular between Algeria and Morocco. Extremists and criminals with transnational connections increasingly exploit the Sahel to escape French operations and gain a foothold in northern Africa, and porous borders, weak state authority, and the ready availability of weapons all work to their advantage.

All this regional insecurity, meanwhile, reverberates in Libya's vast ungoverned south. The neglected southwestern Fazzan province has experienced an influx of Tuareg fighters, including radical Islamists, and is becoming a haven for radical groups.

Libya's leaders appear incapable of stemming the country's disintegration. Interventions by France and, to a lesser degree, the United States have checked the jihadist advance in the Sahel. But whether military efforts are accompanied by the inclusive politics and socio-economic development necessary to achieve real stability remains to be seen. Thus far, political strategies badly lag behind military operations.



### **.10Venezuela**

Compared with many of the others listed, Venezuela is no war zone. Calm has returned to the streets of Caracas after clashes between protesters, security forces, and pro-government militias claimed several dozen lives, mostly those of protesters, in early 2014. But the underlying causes of the crisis remain, and Venezuela could suffer another bout of instability this year.

President Nicolás Maduro's government faces an economic crisis that has been worsened by the dramatic fall in the price of oil, on which Venezuela depends for around 96 percent of its revenue. The situation was dire even before the decline in oil prices: The country already suffered high inflation (upwards of 60 percent); scarcities of food, medicine, and other basic goods; collapsing public services; and one of the world's highest violent-crime rates.

The government's popularity has fallen steadily since Maduro took office upon the death of Hugo Chávez in March 2013. Maduro's approval rating is below 25 percent, unusually low for Venezuela and reflecting discontent even within the chávista rank and file that make up his base.

None of this would be insurmountable were it not for the failure of the present regime, since it came to power in 1999, to strengthen the country's institutions. The Supreme Court (TSJ), electoral authorities (CNE), and three components of what Venezuelans call the "moral power" (the attorney general, ombudsman, and comptroller general) are packed with government loyalists. The legislature, which should serve as a forum for peaceful debate, is a rubber stamp for the presidency. As a result, Venezuela has been left without safety valves that could help ease tension.

Amid last year's clashes, a tentative dialogue began between the government and the opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance. One of few points of accord was the need to fill long-standing vacancies on the TSJ and the CNE, and replace the three members of the "moral power" whose terms were due to expire at the end of the year. Unfortunately, the government did not take a consensual approach and an opportunity to de-escalate tensions with the opposition has been lost. Unless regional actors are prepared to weigh in more decisively, legislative elections due in 2015 are more likely to trigger another bout of violence than they are to usher in a widely accepted parliament.

\* \* \*

The picture that emerges from this survey of conflicts is grim. There is, however, one glimmer of hope — the increasing fragmentation of the world also means that there is no overarching divide. Even if the deepening crisis between Russia and the West is unsettling Europe, the last remnants of the Cold War are disappearing as Cuba and the United States normalize their relations. Many conflicts can now be dealt with on their own merits, and the growing role of regional powers — while adding complexity and, in some cases, new antagonisms — also creates opportunities for more creative diplomacy.

This is no time for the "old powers" to retrench, but they do have to acknowledge that successful peacemaking in 2015 will depend on working with a much broader array of countries than they have in the past.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/>

## Cameroon

### Cameroon: la loi sur le terrorisme fait ses premières victimes à Edéa

8 Janvier 2015



**Dix employés de la Société camerounaise de palmeraies (Socapalm), en exercice dans les plantations de Mbongo par Edéa, sont aux arrêts pour tentative de grève.**

Selon des informations parvenues à notre rédaction à l'heure où nous allions sous presse, hier, les dix ouvriers étaient sur le point d'être déférés au parquet d'Edéa (chef-lieu du département de la Sanaga Maritime, dans la région du Littoral). Tout commence lundi 5 janvier, lorsqu'ils sont interpellés par des éléments de la brigade de gendarmerie de Mbongo, puis placés en garde-à-vue. Une fois mise au parfum, les familles des prévenues vont se déporter tout de suite à la brigade. Henry N. parent d'un des interpellés, rapporte : «Les gendarmes nous ont fait comprendre que ce sont les meneurs (les dix ouvriers, ndlr) d'une grève en gestation. Qu'ils ont été arrêtés en application de la loi sur le terrorisme car, le Cameroun est en guerre et que de ce fait, personne n'a le droit de manifester». Et de poursuivre: «Lorsque nous avons indiqué aux gendarmes qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une manifestation à caractère terroriste, mais des revendications portant sur l'amélioration des conditions de travail, il nous a été rapporté que ces mesures ont été prises pour éviter des échauffourées comme celle de mars 2010, pendant lesquelles les révoltés avaient attaqué les bureaux administratifs et incendiés de nombreuses maisons. » Notre informateur conclut : «L'on utilise désormais le décret du chef de l'État pour

intimider les populations et étouffer toutes sortes de réclamations, mêmes les plus légitimes». Joint au téléphone, hier aux environs de 17h, pour un recoupement d'usage, le commandant de brigade de Mbongo visiblement gêné, indique d'un ton menaçant : «Pourquoi ne venez vous-même pas vérifier l'information sur place, au lieu de m'appeler au téléphone». Malgré de nombreux autres appels effectués par le reporter de La Météo pour en savoir davantage, le chef de la brigade de gendarmerie restera muet comme une carpe.

Toujours est-il que, apprend-on, dimanche 4 janvier, plusieurs ouvriers de la plantation de Mbongo se sont réunis afin de planifier un mouvement d'humeur. Ils entendaient ainsi se révolter contre les conditions de travail qu'ils qualifiaient de «proches de l'esclavage avec le manque d'affiliation à la Cnps, l'absence de contrat de travail réglementaire, des horaires de travail démentielles, une rémunération floue». Nos sources indiquent que, l'assistant Socapalm qui contrôle toute la plantation dite division 5, mis au courant des intentions de ses collaborateurs, aurait immédiatement alerté les éléments de la gendarmerie de Mbongo. Ensemble, ils auraient évoqué à leur bénéfice la récente loi sur le terrorisme, afin de casser la grève et de mettre la main au collet des supposés meneurs. Depuis cette nouvelle donne, un calme précaire règne dans localité de Mbongo.

En effet, depuis son adoption le 4 décembre à l'Assemblée nationale et sa promulgation par le président de la République le 23 du même mois, la loi anti-terrorisme fait débat au Cameroun. Elle condamne à la peine de mort toute personne reconnue coupable de fait terroriste. Mais la polémique et les critiques s'attardent surtout sur la définition donnée par cette loi des faits terroristes, élargis aux manifestations publiques. Car, elle stipule: «toute personne reconnue coupable de fait de perturbation du fonctionnement normal du service public ou qui peut créer une situation de crise au sein des populations ou encore créer une insurrection générale dans le pays, tombe également sous le coup de la peine capitale». Jugée liberticide par une frange de la population, ses pourfendeurs soutiennent qu'elle peut laisser libre cours à toute sorte d'interprétations.

Pourtant, dans son adresse à la nation le 31 décembre dernier, le chef de l'État a tenu à préciser qu'«il ne s'agit aucunement, comme l'ont prétendu certains esprits mal intentionnés, d'en prendre prétexte pour restreindre les libertés publiques. Devant la multiplication des actes terroristes, la plupart des grands pays démocratiques ont dû, au cours des dernières années, compléter leur législation dans le sens de la prévention du terrorisme». Affaire à suivre.

<http://www.237online.com/>

## Kenya

### La loi kenyane sur la sécurité menace les réfugiés



En avril 2014, plus de 350 Somaliens sans papiers ont été expulsés du Kenya et de nombreux autres ont été envoyés dans des camps de réfugiés NAIROBI/DADAAB, 8 janvier 2015 (IRIN) -

Les groupes de défense des droits de l'homme ont dénoncé la modification de la loi kenyane sur la sécurité qui, disent-ils, menace les droits des réfugiés, malgré [la décision](#) de la Haute cour, qui a suspendu vendredi plusieurs articles de la loi pour une durée de 30 jours dans l'attente d'un examen complet.

La suspension concerne notamment une section de cette loi de grande portée, connue communément comme la loi « antiterrorisme », qui modifie la loi kenyane relative aux réfugiés. La version modifiée stipule que « le nombre de réfugiés et de demandeurs d'asile autorisés à rester au Kenya ne doit pas dépasser les 150 000 ». Le Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés ([HCR](#)) compte actuellement plus de 600 000 réfugiés, demandeurs d'asile et apatrides vivant au Kenya.

Bien que l'Assemblée nationale puisse changer ce plafond de 150 000, les groupes de défense des droits de l'homme craignent que la nouvelle modification de la loi entraîne le retour forcé d'un grand nombre de réfugiés. Cela équivaldrait à un refoulement, ce qui est une violation grave de la législation internationale relative aux réfugiés.

Vendredi, le juge a décidé que d'autres sections de la nouvelle loi concernant les

réfugiés allaient être maintenues. C'est le cas notamment de la disposition obligeant les personnes demandant le statut de réfugié à rester dans des camps de réfugiés prévus à cet effet « jusqu'à ce qu'une décision soit prise concernant leur statut ». Selon le HCR, plus de 50 000 réfugiés vivent hors des camps à Nairobi, la capitale du Kenya.

D'ici à 30 jours, la Cour d'appel se prononcera sur la constitutionnalité de 22 sections de la loi contestées par la Commission nationale kenyane pour les droits de l'homme (KNHRC) et la Coalition pour la réforme et la démocratie (CORD), alliance des partis d'opposition.

La modification de la loi sur la sécurité a été adoptée le 18 décembre par le Parlement, après des débats houleux au cours desquels des membres de l'assemblée en sont même venus aux mains. Le lendemain, le président l'entérinait.

Accélérées par une série d'attentats terroristes menés au Kenya par le groupe somalien Al-Shabab, la rédaction et l'adoption de la loi n'ont pris que deux semaines. Le 2 décembre, 36 personnes ont été tuées par Al-Shabab dans une carrière proche de la ville de Mandera, non loin de la frontière avec la Somalie. Dix jours plus tôt, à moins de 50 kilomètres de là, 28 passagers d'un bus avaient été tués par le groupe armé.

Plus de 50 attentas à l'arme à feu, à la grenade ou aux engins explosifs improvisés ont été commis au Kenya depuis 2011, lorsque le pays a lancé une opération militaire contre Al-Shabab en Somalie.

### **Les réfugiés somaliens touchés de manière disproportionnée**

Amnesty International estime non seulement que si la nouvelle loi est appliquée cela conduirait inévitablement à des refoulements, mais qu'elle risquerait également de donner lieu à des discriminations.

« Nous nous inquiétons vraiment de savoir qui sera visé par les reconduites aux frontières », a dit à IRIN Michelle Kagari, directrice régionale adjointe d'Amnesty International pour l'Afrique de l'Est. « Nous avons constaté que les réfugiés, et plus particulièrement les réfugiés somaliens, faisaient particulièrement les frais du lien fait entre les réfugiés, le terrorisme et les opérations de sécurité du Kenya en Somalie. »

Le HCR estime que d'ici la fin 2015, les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile somaliens représenteront près de 70 pour cent des personnes relevant de sa compétence au Kenya.

La crainte d'être pris pour cible se fait également entendre au sein de la communauté de réfugiés somaliens.

« La loi antiterrorisme s'adresse principalement aux musulmans et plus particulièrement aux Somaliens », a dit le cheik Mohamed Abdi, religieux musulman vivant à Dadaab, le plus grand complexe de réfugiés du Kenya, dont la plupart des résidents sont somaliens. « Il n'y a nulle part où fuir. Nous avons quitté la Somalie à cause de problèmes liés au terrorisme et ici, où nous pensions que nous serions en sécurité, cela devient un nouvel enfer. »

« Certains réfugiés qui vivent dans le camp ne sont pas enregistrés et la police peut les arrêter, supposer qu'ils sont des terroristes et les garder en détention pendant un an », a dit Abdi Ahmed, membre influent de la communauté et président de la Section N de Dadaab. « Toute la communauté de réfugiés vit dans la panique. » Conformément à la nouvelle loi, les terroristes présumés peuvent être maintenus en garde à vue pendant un an sans jugement.

Même les réfugiés enregistrés craignent les restrictions de la liberté de mouvement qui seront systématisées par la nouvelle loi. « Il est actuellement très difficile d'obtenir un laissez-passer et, pour les étudiants, ne pas en avoir signifie rater des cours et parfois des examens », a dit un leader d'un groupe de jeunes de Dadaab, qui a préféré garder l'anonymat. Selon lui, la nouvelle loi va rendre tout déplacement encore plus difficile.

Cette modification de la loi sur la sécurité s'inscrit dans la continuité d'un climat de plus en plus dur pour les réfugiés au Kenya. En avril 2014, des milliers de Somaliens ont été rassemblés dans un stade à Nairobi dans le cadre d'une opération baptisée [Usalama Watch](#). D'autres mesures énergiques similaires ont été prises à travers le pays. De nombreux réfugiés qui vivaient en ville ont été envoyés à Dadaab.

### **La nouvelle loi défendue par le gouvernement**

Le procureur général du Kenya, Githu Muigai, s'est positionné en [défenseur](#) de la nouvelle loi. Dans sa réponse à la requête présentée par l'opposition et plusieurs groupes de défense des droits de l'homme par le biais du solliciteur général, il a avancé que le pouvoir discrétionnaire accordé au Parlement pour augmenter temporairement le nombre de réfugiés autorisés dans le pays empêcherait le refoulement.

Il a ajouté que les lois étaient nécessaires pour combattre le terrorisme. « Nous avons actuellement des forces en Somalie et il est important de noter que le pays a essuyé plusieurs attentats. La loi, telle qu'elle est formulée actuellement, permet au personnel de sécurité de faire face aux menaces faites aux Kenyans. La question de la vie est plus importante que tout », a dit M. Muturi, le solliciteur général.

Les organisations de défense des droits de l'homme ont cependant fortement rejeté cet argument. « Le gouvernement doit traiter la question de la sécurité de manière appropriée et dans le respect des droits de l'homme. Les deux ne sont pas incompatibles », a dit Mme Kagari, d'Amnesty International. « Les trois modifications violent non seulement l'esprit de la Constitution, mais également l'engagement pris par le Kenya en vertu de la Convention relative au statut des réfugiés. »

<http://www.irinnews.org/>

## Libya

### Guerre totale en Libye

le 08.01.15

**Pas de dialogue entre factions libyennes en vue. L'ONU qui cherche à y aller, vient de parler de report après avoir avancé une date. Un report, dit-elle alors, tout en espérant que cela soit réellement le cas, en espérant, comme d'autres parties, que la crise libyenne puisse être réglée par des voies pacifiques. Autrement dit, une solution négociée. Certains y adhèrent tout en cherchant à y être en position de force. Que se passe-t-il donc en Libye ?**

C'est vrai que cette question est régulièrement soulevée, sauf que les réponses ne sont pas les mêmes. Il y a, dira-t-on et avec la même régularité, des éléments nouveaux soulignés par l'ONU, comme le trafic d'armes auquel se livrent les différentes factions libyennes. Ou encore ce communiqué de l'armée régulière libyenne demandant des armes, et affirmant avoir bombardé un navire au large de la ville de Derna (est de la Libye) aux mains d'une faction rebelle.

C'est pour cette raison que ce bateau est qualifié de suspect et donc pris pour cible, faisant deux morts parmi les membres de son équipage. En conclusion, dira-t-on donc, le conflit libyen commence, quoi qu'on dise, à s'internationaliser avec ces fournitures d'armes, achetées ou offertes, et là par qui et pour quel dessein, et ces ventes de pétrole qui en est le fournisseur ? Officiellement, il n'y a pas d'embargo, sauf que l'Etat propriétaire des réserves de pétrole a disparu, des milices s'en étant emparées.

Cela rappelle exactement la Syrie, où les assaillants se sont emparés des puits de pétrole et y ont puisé les moyens de financer leur guerre.

Bien entendu, les questions ne manquent pas, d'autant que la Libye est une zone de guerre et y aller constitue un risque, ce que le propriétaire du bateau et mêmes les autorités de son pays, la Grèce dans ce cas-là, ne pouvaient ignorer.

Un porte-parole du commandement des forces libyennes a expliqué que l'équipage du pétrolier n'avait pas obtempéré aux ordres lui enjoignant de s'arrêter pour être fouillé avant son entrée au port de Derna. Située entre Benghazi et la frontière avec l'Egypte, cette localité est devenue le fief des partisans du groupe extrémiste Etat islamique (EI) en Libye.

Une explication rejetée par Athènes qui affirme que le pétrolier ciblé, a été «affrété par la compagnie d'Etat libyenne National Oil Corporation (NOC) et effectuait depuis de nombreuses années la route Marsa El Brega - Derna sans problème». Une manière aussi de rejeter toute accusation éventuelle, et là, elle porterait sur une contrebande de pétrole, et tout en soulevant une question de coordination, ou encore d'information qui échapperait à l'Etat.

Mais y a-t-il réellement une autorité centrale qui maîtriserait le fonctionnement de

l'Etat et de ses institutions ? La Libye est plongée dans le chaos depuis la chute de Mouammar El Gueddafi en 2011 et les autorités actuelles n'arrivent pas à contrôler et même faire face aux dizaines de milices qui font la loi en l'absence d'une armée et d'une police régulières bien entraînées. Le pays est dirigé par deux gouvernements et deux Parlements qui se disputent le pouvoir à distance.

C'est ainsi que le gouvernement reconnu par la communauté internationale a réclamé, lundi dernier, des armes pour combattre les milices, lors de la réunion de la Ligue arabe au Caire consacrée au «terrorisme» en Libye. Le représentant libyen y a aussi souligné que «plus la victoire militaire contre les milices brutales est retardée, plus leur expansion s'accroît et plus l'on réduit les chances d'une solution politique à la crise». Quelles chances donc pour une solution négociée ?

<http://www.elwatan.com/>

## The Three Legal Questions Left Unresolved by al-Libi's Death

January 3, 2015

Just 10 days before his trial on terrorism charges was set to begin in Manhattan federal court, accused al Qaeda operative Nazih Abdul-Hamed al-Ruquai, from Libya, better known as Anas al-Libi, has died in custody, leaving several pending legal questions unresolved.

"He had liver cancer, but I don't know what killed him," said his defense attorney, Bernard Kleinman, in a telephone interview. Kleinman, along with an imam, was at the Beekman Manhattan Hospital when al-Libi died Friday night at 8:30pm, his third day admitted. An autopsy will determine the official cause of death, Kleinman said. He described hospital staff as "incredibly professional."

Al-Libi's medical problems had been known publicly since shortly after his extradition to the United States in late 2013. He spent portions of his pre-trial detention in hospitals, including a month at a Bureau of Prisons facility in Butner, North Carolina, last year. This morning, federal prosecutors wrote the case's presiding judge, U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan, to advise him of the death:

As the court is aware, on December 31, 2014, Anas al-Libi was taken from the Metropolitan Correctional Center to a New York hospital due to sudden complications arising out of his long-standing medical problems. We write now to inform the court that despite the care provided at the hospital, his condition deteriorated rapidly, and al-Libi passed away yesterday evening.

Al-Libi was due to stand trial starting January 12, along with one other man, Khalid al-Fawwaz, 52, a Saudi who is alleged to have been a former spokesman for deceased al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and a founder of his East Africa cell.

In his last public court appearance, in October, al-Libi appeared gaunt and older than his 50 years. He looked tired and walked unsteadily to the witness stand when he testified about [his interrogation by an FBI agent and investigator for the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York](#) aboard a flight from Europe to the U.S.

Al-Libi's death leaves the legal issue raised that day, whether his statements were voluntary and admissible, and [at least two other legal questions](#), up in the air: (1) the existence of any videotapes of pre-arrest interrogations that occurred while he was in military/CIA custody; and (2) how 2011 letters between al-Libi and bin Laden might be used. Al-Libi testified his confession of membership in al Qaeda and other statements on his flight to the U.S. were not voluntary, despite his initials and signature on an Arabic form waiving his *Miranda* rights, because his state of mind was confused by his detention on a U.S. military ship for the week prior to his extradition.

In October 2013, U.S. Army's Delta Force, in conjunction with the CIA and

FBI, [captured al-Libi on the streets of the Libyan capital of Tripoli](#) pursuant to the indictment stemming from al Qaeda's 1998 twin truck bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which killed 224 people, including 12 Americans, in the group's most lethal attack before 9/11. Al-Libi was [charged with participating in al Qaeda's global conspiracy to kill Americans](#) and specifically of conducting surveillance of the embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, in the early 1990s. His maximum sentence could have been life in prison.

"What's lost is an opportunity at the most basic level to establish my client had no association with the East Africa bombings conspiracy," Kleinman said. For example, the attorney said he would have challenged the veracity of the sources of the al-Libi surveillance — two al Qaeda defectors turned cooperating government witnesses.

Subsequent to the suppression hearing, and in light of the recent [U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee's report on CIA treatment of post-9/11 detainees](#), Kleinman had asked Judge Kaplan to revisit the issue of whether there are videotapes of al-Libi's interrogation and handling aboard the U.S.S. San Antonio, where he was held after his capture in Tripoli. Al-Libi said he saw camera equipment set up on the ship. "The methods of interrogation used on board the San Antonio were of such an enhanced nature as to have rendered any subsequent *Miranda* waiver (especially one made within hours of the transfer) meaningless for all intents and purposes," Kleinman wrote in his December 15 letter.

Judge Kaplan ruled last July there is no proof the sessions were recorded or any videotapes exist. "The government has produced all such materials of which it is aware," Kaplan decided. "Being 'unaware' of an event merely means that the government has made no inquiry of the CIA as to the existence of any such videotapes," Kleinman countered in the new letter. "Of course, this assumes that the CIA would provide a factual response."

In 2005, the CIA misled federal prosecutors and a federal judge on this very question in the trial of 9/11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui in the Eastern District of Virginia, when the agency, through prosecutors, told Judge Leonie Brinkema that no tapes ever existed of CIA interrogations or treatment of al Qaeda captives held in secret CIA prisons overseas such as alleged training camp gatekeeper Abu Zubaydah and alleged U.S.S. Cole attack planner Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, who both now reside at Guantanamo. In fact, the CIA destroyed the tapes as questions of detainee statements were before the trial court and a federal appeals court.

In al-Libi's case, a third unresolved issue concerns six letters to bin Laden that prosecutors intended to show the jury. Two are signed by al-Liby, and four others mentioning him were authored by bin Laden's chief aide during the time the al Qaeda leader was hiding out on Abbottabad, Pakistan. "The letters are both authentic and admissible," Assistant United States Attorney Nicholas Lewin wrote the court just four days ago. "The letters are not hearsay."

Lewin disclosed that a government witness could testify about receiving the letters directly from U.S. Special Forces who removed them from the Abbottabad house after killing bin Laden in May 2011. The witness got the letters after examining bin Laden's bullet-ridden dead body, Lewin said. Earlier, in a December 23 declaration to Judge Kaplan defending the planned usage of the Abbottabad letters, Lewin disclosed both defendants, al-Libi and al-Fawwaz, are named on an al Qaeda "member list" discovered in Afghanistan in 2001, after U.S. forces invaded the country in response to 9/11. "The government anticipates adducing trial proof that Fawwaz was in longstanding, repeated, and direct contact with Mohammed Atef, commonly known as Abu Hafs al-Masri," Lewin wrote, referring to al Qaeda's longtime military commander, who was killed in an October 2001 air strike. "We also anticipate adducing evidence of connections between Fawwaz and al Liby," Lewin wrote.

Now, prosecutors say in today's letter to Kaplan they will file a *nolle prosequi* (Latin for "we will no longer prosecute") with respect to al-Libi. But the prosecution of al-Fawwaz is expected to proceed. Jury selection is scheduled to begin January 12. Hundreds of potential jurors already filled out 10-page questionnaires at the Manhattan federal courthouse last month.

In two separate jury trials, in 2001 and 2010, federal prosecutors in New York convicted five men for the embassy bombings, and all received life sentences. Originally, four men would have sat at the defense table in this third embassy bombings trial. Al-Libi is the second defendant to die in custody. Defendant Ibrahim Eidaous, from Egypt, died in 2008 in England, where he and al-Fawwaz, and another Egyptian, Adel Abdel Bary, jointly fought their extradition to the U.S. for more than a decade while they were incarcerated. All three allegedly belonged to al Qaeda's London cell in the 1990s. Al-Fawwaz and Abdel Bary finally arrived in the U.S. in 2012. Last September, Abdel Bary, 54, pleaded guilty before Judge Kaplan and faces a maximum 25-year sentence, also to be handed down January 12. He is among a half dozen men to plead guilty before trial to the embassy bombings conspiracy.

In a November opinion rejecting separate trials for al-Libi and al-Fawwaz, Kaplan noted al-Libi was "seriously ill." "It is possible that his condition may improve, though the opposite may be more likely," Kaplan presciently wrote, finding further delay caused by severance "may deprive entirely the public of a trial of al Liby...the magnitude and seriousness of which cannot be overstated."

Prosecutors had no comment on the al-Libi and al-Fawwaz trial beyond their letter to the court, said James Margolin, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. "Appropriate arrangements are being made with his family," the letter said.

Kleinman said, "A man died five-thousand miles from home without seeing his family. That's sad."

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Phil Hirschhorn](#) is a fellow at the Center On National Security at Fordham Law School and New York-based journalist who has been covering Al Qaeda and terrorism trials for 15 years.

<http://justsecurity.org/>

## Mali

### Mali : deux ans après Serval, Aqmi reprend ses quartiers au Nord de Tombouctou

09/01/2015



Les jihadistes d'Aqmi multiplient les attaques au Nord de Tombouctou. © AFP

Alors que l'intervention internationale au Mali a débuté il y a précisément deux ans, le 11 janvier 2013, le redéploiement des jihadistes d'Aqmi au nord de Tombouctou est de plus en plus sensible. Avec un nombre croissant d'attaques à la clé.

Début décembre, plusieurs commerçants transsahariens ont fait état de la présence massive de combattants d'Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi) dans la région de Tombouctou, et plus précisément du côté de la frontière avec la Mauritanie. Abdalahi Ould Ali est un commerçant de farine de blé. Il utilise fréquemment les routes du désert pour relier la Mauritanie à l'Algérie, via Tombouctou. Il confie avoir rencontré à plusieurs reprises les jihadistes au Nord-Ouest de Tombouctou.

La dernière fois, c'était mi-décembre, alors qu'il quittait Bassikounou, en Mauritanie, pour rejoindre El Khalil, en Algérie. "Nous venions de traverser les montagnes situées sur la frontière entre le Mali et la Mauritanie [massif du Tibesti, NDLR] et on se dirigeait vers le site Hassi Sidi [à 110km au Nord-Ouest de Tombouctou, NDLR] quand soudain, nous croisons plusieurs pick-up camouflés avec de la boue boue grise, roulant doucement et se dirigeant vers la frontière."

**<> Lire aussi : Attaque de Nampala, huit soldats tués, que s'est-il passé ?**

"Les occupants étaient des hommes en armes, habillés en tenues de camouflage grises comme la couleur des montagnes de la région, poursuit-il. Il n'y avait aucun

doute possible, il s'agissait bien des combattants d'Aqmi qui sont dans cette zone. D'habitude, on ne s'arrête que s'ils nous le demandent, ce qui ne fut pas le cas cette fois-ci", explique le commerçant d'une cinquantaine d'années.

### **Intimidations et enlèvements**

Tous ceux qui croisent la route des jihadistes n'ont pas forcément la vie sauve. Selon une source sécuritaire à Bamako, Aqmi est revenu à son dispositif d'avant 2012, même si le nombre de ses combattants s'est réduit aux alentours de 300 selon plusieurs sources. "Ils distribuent des tracts pour intimider les populations et enlèvent les personnes qu'ils suspectent d'espionnage au compte de tel ou tel pays qui les combat. Ce fut le cas d'un jeune Touareg qu'ils ont ensuite tué au mois d'octobre 2014 à l'Ouest de Tombouctou", assure la même source sécuritaire.

Les combattants d'Aqmi sont si nombreux qu'ils nous apparaissent comme les arbres d'une forêt qui aurait repoussé du jour au lendemain, témoigne un élu de la région.

"Les combattants d'Aqmi sont si nombreux dans la région de Tombouctou, qu'ils nous apparaissent comme les arbres d'une forêt qui aurait repoussé du jour au lendemain", s'étonne un élu de la commune de Salam qui a requis l'anonymat. "À ce rythme, Aqmi risque même de construire des casernes dans ces montagnes", renchérit une deuxième source sécuritaire.

Qui sont ces jihadistes ? D'où viennent-ils ? Pour un haut gradé d'un pays voisin du Mali, il n'y a pas de nouveau combattants étrangers venus récemment grossir les rangs jihadistes, il s'agit toujours des hommes de l'Algérien Yahya Abou El Hammam, chef d'Aqmi au Sahara, qui sortent de leur cachette.

### **Coopération régionale**

"Le 11 janvier 2013, lorsque la France a déclenché l'opération Serval, Paris avait rapidement déployé 4 000 hommes sur le seul territoire malien, aujourd'hui, Barkhane n'en a que 3 000 pour cinq pays, de la Mauritanie au Tchad en passant par le Mali, le Burkina Faso et le Niger, explique l'officier. Le niveau de pression sur Aqmi a baissé. Un exemple : Serval pouvait faire jusqu'à trois cents sorties aériennes par mois, aujourd'hui, c'est à peine si Barkhane en fait une dizaine". Selon lui, tous les groupes jihadistes présents dans le nord du Mali - Mujao ou Ansar Ed-dine - opèrent parallèlement, mais avec le même objectif : s'attaquer aux forces internationales déployées au Mali".

Les jihadistes profitent des "faiblesses" de leur ennemi. Et notamment celles de la coopération régionale. "En 2014, la Mauritanie avait demandé à ce que son contingent au sein de la Minusma soit stationné dans cette zone frontalière, mais le gouvernement malien de la transition avait refusé, regrette un diplomate ouest-africain. Aujourd'hui, la Mauritanie est revenue sur sa décision même d'envoyer des troupes au Mali. Mais je suis persuadé que si le président malien Ibrahim Bou-bacar Keïta se déplaçait à Nouakchott, n'y restait que deux heures et demandait en

personne à son homologue mauritanien Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz d'envoyer à la Minusma des hommes pour boucher ce vide sécuritaire, celui-ci accepterait."

[Jeuneafrique.com](http://Jeuneafrique.com)

## MALI: RISE IN TERRORIST ATTACKS ALARMS UN

JANUARY 8, 2015



*Islamist fighters in northern Mali. File photo*

Northern Mali is seeing a spike in terrorist attacks, abductions and clashes among armed groups.

In just the last week, al-Qaeda terrorists slaughtered 8 Malian troops Nampala, an attack on a convoy killed the mayor of Aderanboukane, and another attack occurred the same day in Tinefewa, in the Timbuktu region.

The UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) also reported armed clashes in the Timbuktu town of Zarho and Bamba, in Gao.

MINUSMA on Friday (January 2nd) expressed concerns about the increasing violence.

As far back as June, the United Nations Security Council expressed concern about the worsening security situation across the entire Sahel, especially Mali, Malian analyst Ibou Samake said.

“But since that date, not much has been done on the ground to deal with it,” Malian analyst Ibou Samake noted.

“The imminent new round of negotiations in Algiers may partly explain this violence, with each party seeking to consolidate their position and prove their presence cannot be ignored,” he said.

He added: “The international community needs to improve co-ordination and put up the resources needed to overcome these repeated waves of violence. In addition, states across the region need to become more involved, so that regional co-operation can be strengthened to deal with the rise in terrorism.”

Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, the UN secretary-general’s special envoy for the Sahel, expressed her concerns at a December 11th meeting of the Security Council.

“The persistence of the conflict in Mali bears witness to the fact that our efforts in the Sahel will be in vain unless the countries in the region commit themselves to certain standards of governance,” Sellassie said.

“The region continues to suffer the disastrous consequences of the crises in Libya. Twenty-thousand firearms coming from Libya have been transferred to the Sahel, and the majority of the 18 tonnes of cocaine reaching West Africa come across the Sahel,” she said.

The UN envoy added: “If the situation in Libya is not brought under control, many countries in the region could be destabilised in the near future.”

Sidati Ould Cheikh, a specialist on terrorism, said Mali’s instability was having repercussions across the entire region. He noted that Algeria, Mali, Niger and Mauritania have set up a unit to monitor weapons coming from Libya into the Sahel countries.

Ould Cheikh said: “Several other initiatives have been set up as part of the co-operation with Western partners like France. In Mauritania, for example, the Special Operations Command (COS) in Atar has set up special intervention groups, Mauritanian Special Forces, who are doing a good job.”

“There’s also the European Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” he added.

Analyst Abdou Ould Mohamed said the situation in Mali had led to the expansion of Islamist movements and terrorist organisations that are regularly attacking countries such as Algeria.

“These countries are well aware of the danger threatening their borders; that’s why they’ve stepped up their meetings to put in place a common strategy to limit the impact of this crisis on their security.”

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/08012015-mali-rise-terrorist-attacks-alarms-un/>

## Mali : Insécurité au nord- Mali : L'urgence de mobiliser des ressources humaines et financières

9 janvier 2015



Patrouille malienne dans la région de Gao, au Mali.  
Olivier Fourt/RFI

**Les attaques contre l'intégrité du Mali interviennent au mauvais moment. La situation est des plus préoccupantes aujourd'hui même s'il est nécessaire de ne pas s'affoler. La MINUSMA, la force Barkhane ainsi que les forces de l'armée régulière malienne sont plus que jamais déterminées à relever le défi de la sécurité dans les régions nord du pays. Mais, force est de constater que l'adversaire dispose de moyens logistiques hyper sophistiqués tel qu'il est nécessaire aujourd'hui plus que jamais de procéder à un véritable réarmement de nos forces armées. Cela est nécessaire et le président de la République, Ibrahim Boubacar Kéita, l'a bien compris. En plusieurs circonstances, il a manifesté sa détermination à bien outiller la vaillante armée nationale afin qu'elle puisse véritablement être à hauteur des attentes.**

A ce titre, il est surtout nécessaire et urgent de créer un comité, ou, en tout cas, une structure composée d'anciens officiers généraux à la retraite ou délibérément mis au garage afin qu'ils harmonisent leurs intelligences et leurs expertises au service des hommes de terrain dans le but d'anéantir les terroristes.

Ces terroristes ont prouvé, ces derniers temps, qu'ils ne sont pas prêts à respecter un quelconque accord. Certes, les négociations doivent se poursuivre, mais comme on le dit : « qui veut la paix, prépare la guerre. » Cela est d'actualité pour le cas du Mali.

Les conseils et stratégies des anciens ne sauraient être une fin en soi. Il est impé-

rieux de doter l'armée malienne d'escadrilles de combats et de chasse. C'est à cette seule condition qu'on pourra dénicher les terroristes des dunes. Il est plus que jamais important de briser la suprématie des terroristes en se payant des aéronefs.

Le président de la République Ibrahim Boubacar Kéita, qui a eu la clairvoyance d'augmenter le budget de l'armée afin qu'elle soit à mesure de faire face aux attaques terroristes, est en train de travailler à réunir les conditions de la matérialisation de ce projet majeur. Il a aujourd'hui l'avantage du soutien de l'ensemble de la classe politique, y compris l'opposition pour arriver à cette fin.

En effet, l'opposition, unie comme un seul homme, est en train de se concerter en vue d'élaborer un document consensuel sur la résolution de la crise dans le Nord. En tout cas, les conditions psychologiques sont réunies pour que l'union des diverses sensibilités du Mali triomphe sur le terrorisme transfrontalier.

<http://maliactu.net/>

## Mayor of Mali town killed as clashes and abuses spike in north

Sat, 3 Jan 2015



French soldiers from Operation Barkhane patrol north of Timbuktu November 6, 2014. REUTERS/Joe Penney

By Adama Diarra

BAMAKO, Jan 3 (Reuters) - The mayor of a town in northern Mali died on Saturday from wounds sustained in an ambush that killed his son, one of a string of attacks highlighting persistent instability in the north of the country.

The death of Aroudeyni Ag Hamatou, mayor of Anderaboucane, came as a United Nations mission expressed concern over human rights abuses and violations of a shaky ceasefire between rebel and pro-government factions.

Two years ago, France dispatched thousands of troops to Mali to drive al Qaeda-linked militants from towns they seized in 2012. U.N. forces have since deployed and militants have mounted a resurgence, while a series of rounds of peace talks with some rebels have failed to deliver improvements on the ground.

Mali's government said Ag Hamatou died as he was being flown by the U.N. to Bamako for treatment. His son was killed and his driver injured when they were attacked on Jan. 1 by unknown gunmen, between Menaka and Anderaboucane in Gao region.

"The government reiterates its pledge to punish those responsible for these crimes and fight against all forms of terrorism to restore peace and security to the whole of Mali," the government said in a statement.

However, a string of incidents in recent days have shown the fragility of any gains.

Faced with French firepower, Islamists initially melted away into the desert and mountains, but they have since hit back at the less protected U.N. troops who deployed in the north, killing more than 30 and injuring 90 since mid 2013.

Mali's government has held a series of rounds of peace talks with rebel groups who distanced themselves from the Islamists. But the U.N. mission said on Friday it had recorded a number of clashes in Gao and Timbuktu regions that were undermining a ceasefire.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms these acts of violence and provocation, especially the hostage-taking and pillaging," U.N. mission chief David Gressly said in a statement.

Gressly said all parties involved in peace talks were responsible for ensuring the ceasefire held so a final round of talks in Algiers can be completed.

<http://www.trust.org/>

## Nigeria

### Boko Haram's brutal rise to power: Reinvigorating an ancient slave trade and using children as human bombs

[January 11, 2015



AFPA screengrab taken on November 9, 2014 from a new Boko Haram video released by the Nigerian Islamist extremist group Boko Haram shows Boko Haram fighters parading on a tank in an unidentified town.

After days of razing villages and massacres, Boko Haram finished the week with its most chilling atrocity.

As shoppers bustled through the Saturday market in the Nigerian city of Maiduguri, a device worn by a 10-year-old girl exploded near the entrance. A witness said the child probably had no idea that a bomb had been strapped to her body.

The explosion just before lunch killed 20, including the girl, and injured 18, according to the police. Boko Haram did not claim responsibility for the attack immediately, but the Islamist insurgents have increasingly used young girls as human bombs as they carve an African "Caliphate" from the plains of northern Nigeria.

Boko Haram controls about 20,000 square miles of territory, an area the size of Belgium. Within this domain, the black flag of jihad flies over scores of towns and villages scattered across the neighbouring states of Borno and Yobe.

The latest conquest was the fishing town of Baga on the shores of Lake Chad, which fell to the Islamists last Wednesday.

“For five kilometres, I kept stepping on dead bodies until I reached Malam Karanti village, which was also deserted and burnt,” one surviving fisherman, Yanaye Grema, said. Boko Haram’s fighters have now achieved mastery over 11 local government areas with a total population exceeding 1.7 million, according to the official 2006 census.

Once, the movement’s fighters would launch hit-and-run attacks on defenceless villages. Now, Boko Haram’s realm stretches from the Mandara Mountains on the eastern border with Cameroon to Lake Chad in the north and the Yedseram river in the west.

The Nigerian army, crippled by corruption and incompetence, has shown itself unable to resist the jihadist advance.

Last September, Abubakar Shekau, the self-styled “Emir” of Boko Haram, proclaimed his ambition to conquer a “Caliphate” and follow the example of Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.

Diplomats believe this was a logical escalation of Boko Haram’s campaign.

“There is a copycat element at work here,” said Andrew Pocock, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria. “If ISIL can declare a Caliphate, then so can we. Boko Haram want to be seen by their peers as grown-up jihadists. They want to show ‘we can control territory, we can control a Caliphate’.”

There is also a clear practical rationale for Boko Haram to capture territory. “Success, and they have had success, creates a different kind of requirement,” added Mr. Pocock. “You need a place where you can base yourself and keep equipment and supplies and, indeed, captives. It means that you’ve got to hold



Haruna Umar / Associated Press  
In this Sunday April. 21, 2013 file photo taken with a mobile phone, the ruins of burnt out houses stand in Baga village in Nigeria. Hundreds of bodies — too many to count — remain strewn in the bush in Nigeria from an Islamic extremist attack that Amnesty International suggested Friday is the "deadliest massacre" in the history of Boko Haram

territory.”

Shekau has established Boko Haram’s unofficial headquarters in the town of Gwoza in Borno state. This stronghold has been chosen with great care.



AFP The leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, seen in video released by the extremist group in November.

Gwoza is shielded from attack by the volcanic peaks of the Mandara Mountains spanning the nearby frontier with Cameroon. Most important of all, the surrounding area is the homeland of Shekau’s own ethnic group, the Kanuri.

From this base among his brethren, Shekau sends his fighters to strike across a vast area. The border with Cameroon means nothing to Shekau, since it slices directly through the area inhabited by the Kanuri. His men have frequently attacked villages in the neighbouring country, killing 68 of Cameroon’s soldiers in the last month alone.

Sometimes, Shekau’s goal is to grab more territory, as with the assault on Baga last week. Just as often, he dispatches his fighters on what can only be described as slave raids.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/>

## Afrique – Terrorisme : Les connections régionales et internationales de Boko Haram

06/01/2015



Capture d'écran du 9 novembre 2014 d'une nouvelle vidéo publiée par Boko Haram et obtenue par l'AFP, montrant des combattants du groupe islamiste sur un tank dans une ville non identifiée – Boko Haram

En 2014, Boko Haram a considérablement étendu ses opérations au Nigeria, sa cible et la base primaire. Les responsables nationaux de sécurité s'attendent à une intensification des attaques à l'approche des élections nationales en Février 2015. Alors que Boko Haram opérait principalement au Nigeria, il a également entrepris des opérations circonscrites au-delà des frontières du pays et établi des contacts avec des associés dans la région, en particulier au Niger et au Tchad. Les attaques régionales et internationales sur les groupes djihadistes au Mali et en Somalie semblent avoir perturbé les liens de Boko Haram avec ces groupes. Les États de la région ont créé un cadre de sécurité régional visant à faire face au groupe armé, avec le soutien de l'Occident, français et autres.

Le Président nigérian Goodluck Jonathan dépeint Boko Haram comme une opération régionale d'Al-Qaïda liée à des réseaux internationaux de terrorisme djihadiste, mais toutes les indications indiquent que le groupe reste une question principalement nigériane, et des solutions politiques et de sécurité doivent être trouvées au niveau national. Les réponses internationales doivent prendre en compte le contexte national spécifique dans lequel la menace de Boko Haram a émergé afin de ne pas risquer une régionalisation du conflit.

**Boko Haram: Aspect régional**

L'annonce d'une trêve entre l'armée nigériane et Boko Haram le 17 octobre 2014 a montré à la fois la complexité du conflit dans sa dimension nationale et régionale. Bien que les deux responsables nigériens qui ont annoncé la trêve – le chef d'état-major de la défense aérienne, vice-maréchal Alex Badeh et le secrétaire principal de la Présidence Hassan Tukur – ont un degré élevé de crédibilité, la poursuite des attaques par des factions de Boko Haram après l'annonce ont montré combien il sera difficile de mettre en oeuvre tout cessez-le-feu même si des progrès considérables ont été accomplis dans les négociations.

De même, le rôle régional restera important. De hauts responsables nigériens ont confirmé que la dernière série de négociations ont commencé à la fin Août, après qu'une faction de Boko Haram ait approché le président Idris Déby Itno du Tchad. Par la suite, le président Déby a convoqué une réunion avec le président Jonathan à N'Djamena, réunion à laquelle a été également assisté Ali Modu Sheriff, un ancien gouverneur de l'Etat de Borno au Nigeria avec des liens historiques avec des factions au sein de Boko Haram. Dans les négociations ultérieures entre des responsables nigériens dirigées par Hassan Tukur et des représentants de Boko Haram, le président Déby a agi à titre de courtier, après avoir gagné la confiance d'au moins une faction de la milice. Le premier test de cet arrangement a été la libération le 10 Octobre par Boko Haram de 27 otages, dont 10 travailleurs chinois, qui avaient été enlevés dans le nord du Cameroun dans deux attaques séparées en mai et Juillet de cette année. Cet arrangement a aidé à établir la bonne foi des représentants avec lesquels Boko Haram négociait.

Les succès militaires de Boko Haram au Nigeria avaient des implications régionales. L'occupation de Dikwa, Gamboru Ngala, Gwoza et Marte dans l'État de Borno, Madagali dans l'Etat d'Adamawa, et Buni Yadi dans l'Etat de Yobe en Juillet et Août 2014, a souligné une tentative concertée pour contrôler des pans entiers de territoire, la quasitotalité de cette zone contiguë aux voisins du Nigeria, le Cameroun, le Tchad et le Niger. Ce sont les opérations d'épandage de Boko Haram dans la région -et sa menace pour les intérêts économiques et de sécurité de ces pays voisins du Nigeria – qui semblent avoir incité la participation des responsables tchadiens et camerounais dans les négociations de cessez-le-feu. En mai 2014 le président Goodluck Jonathan et ses homologues régionaux – Idris Déby Itno du Tchad, Paul Biya du Cameroun, Mahamadou Issoufou du Niger et Boni Yayi du Bénin – se sont rencontrés lors d'un sommet sur la sécurité régionale à Paris, convoqué par le président François Hollande de la France. L'un des résultats a été la création d'un cadre de sécurité régionale, y compris la nouvelle Multilateral Joint Task Force (MJTF), composé du Tchad, du Niger, du Bénin et du Nigeria, et soutenu par l'Opération française Barkhane. En outre, le cadre facilite la coopération et la coordination des mesures bilatérales et régionales. Basé au Tchad, le MJTF disposera des unités de bataillon de résistance des États coopérants, à l'exception du Cameroun, qui a été jusqu'ici réticents à engager des forces militaires.

Parmi les quatre pays qui se sont associés à l'alliance de sécurité régionale contre Boko Haram, le Nigeria et le Cameroun ont ceux qui ont été les plus touchés et sont susceptibles de continuer à recevoir le choc des attaques de la secte jusqu'à ce qu'ils puissent améliorer leurs systèmes d'alerte précoce et de renseignement.

### **Cameroun**

Jusqu'à l'été 2014, le Nigeria restait sceptique sur le rôle du Cameroun dans les efforts pour lutter contre Boko Haram. Les fonctionnaires à Abuja semblaient convaincus que le Cameroun payait de l'argent à Boko Haram pour sa protection, permettant à la secte d'établir des bases sur son territoire à partir desquelles les insurgés pourraient traverser la frontière et attaquer le nord-est du Nigeria. Cependant, des attaques de Boko Haram sur deux cibles dans le nord du Cameroun – un poste de police à Kousseri et une société d'ingénierie chinoise basée près de la frontière – juste avant le sommet de Paris a changé cette dynamique. Le président Biya a annoncé plusieurs mesures pour remédier à Boko Haram, y compris la coopération en matière de sécurité, des patrouilles frontalières conjointes et l'échange de renseignements avec le Nigeria. En interne, Biya a réorganisé le secteur de la sécurité du Cameroun, avec l'augmentation du nombre de soldats dans les différentes sections de l'armée et de la gendarmerie.

Cependant, le Cameroun a opté de ne pas se joindre à la MJTF. Dans une certaine mesure, le schisme nord-sud dans la politique du Cameroun reflète celui du Nigeria. Le nord du Cameroun est majoritairement musulmane, et ses une bonne frange de ses habitants sont principalement de l'ethnie Kanuri, comme le sont les gens du nord-est du Nigeria (et la direction de Boko Haram). Comme le Nigeria, le nord du Cameroun a été gravement négligé par le gouvernement central en termes d'écoles, des dispensaires et des routes. Bien qu'Ahmadou Ahidjo, un musulman du nord, ait conduit le Cameroun vers l'indépendance en 1960, Paul Biya, un chrétien du sud, a dirigé le pays depuis 1982. À la fin de Juillet, Boko Haram a kidnappé chez l'un des confidents de Biya, un de ses principaux ministres, Ahmadou Ali. Ce qui a déclenché un flux d'accusations et de contre-accusations sur les liens de la secte avec des politiciens locaux et des officiers supérieurs. Biya a répondu à cela avec une nouvelle série de licenciements et de réorganisation des services militaires et de renseignement. Une partie de l'administration du pays est convaincu que les opposants politiques de Biya travaillent avec Boko Haram pour lui nuire.

### **Tchad**

Le Président Déby du Tchad, un général lui-même, est un maître à exploiter les crises de sécurité régionales à un avantage local. Il a envoyé deux des meilleurs bataillons du Tchad, comprenant environ 2 000 soldats, pour combattre aux côtés des troupes françaises de l'Opération Serval au Mali; les troupes tchadiennes ont pris le dessus sur les forces d'Ansar el- Din et à les mettre en fuite alors qu'elles s'étaient emparées de Kidal. Le Président Déby a offert d'accueillir à la fois le MJTF établie en mai, puis la nouvelle Opération Barkhane. Cette dernière est une reconfigura-

tion des 3000 forces françaises dans la région et est destinée à cibler à la fois les forces djihadistes dans le nord du Nigeria et les combattants islamistes qui demeurent au Mali, tout en suivant le conflit en Libye. Boko Haram a déjà menacé le Tchad pour cette nouvelle coopération avec la France, mais dans leurs engagements limités avec Boko Haram, les forces tchadiennes sont eux-mêmes mieux que tous leurs homologues régionaux, acquittées.

### **Niger**

Jusqu'à 2014, le président Issoufou s'est toujours avisé d'affronter Boko Haram, craignant que cela ne lance des attaques internes au Niger dans la guerre avec ses adversaires politiques. Il y a une présence très active de Boko Haram, mais pas au Niger: plusieurs de ses membres avaient vécu dans le nord du Nigeria, mais ont été expulsés par les autorités qui ont découvert qu'ils étaient des citoyens nigériens. Cela signifie qu'à l'heure actuelle, ils lancent des attaques transfrontalières dans l'Etat de Yobe au Nigeria, puis se replient vers le Niger. Leur opération la plus grave au Niger était l'attaque contre une prison de Niamey en Juin 2013 au cours de laquelle plusieurs membres de Boko Haram et d'autres jihadistes ont été libérés. Le Niger acceptant la coopération régionale avec le Tchad et le Nigeria contre Boko Haram et la volonté d'accueillir des drones, font de lui une cible importante pour le groupe. Boko Haram et de son chef Abubakar Shekau originaire du village de Shekau, qui se trouve sur la frontière avec le Niger dans le district de Tarmuwa, Etat de Yobe. Il a été plusieurs fois signalé qu'il voyageait clandestinement par le Niger pour se rendre vers le Mali.

### **Mali**

Au Mali en 2012, une force de quelque 6.000 combattants djihadistes a pris les trois plus grandes villes dans le nord du pays (Tombouctou, Gao et Kidal) et a commencé à avancer vers le sud. Pendant cette période, plusieurs membres de Boko Haram ont combattu et se sont formés avec les groupes djihadistes, renforçant les liens régionaux. Leur expérience de ces batailles et de la formation qu'ils ont reçue en Libye dans l'utilisation d'armes lourdes indique que Boko Haram a le potentiel pour lancer des attaques concertées à grande échelle sur des cibles militaires au Nigeria, y compris sur les bastions comme Maiduguri.

### **Libye**

La bataille actuelle entre les milices islamistes alliées avec les Frères musulmans de Libye et les forces laïques fidèles au général Khalifa Haftar Belqasim affectera Boko Haram. Une grande partie de son matériel militaire étant venue de Libye après le renversement du colonel Mouammar Kadhafi et plusieurs de ses combattants ayant reçu une formation en Libye. Une victoire pour les forces islamistes en Libye serait donc un coup de pouce stratégique pour Boko Haram, mais leur défaite concluante par les forces laïques, avec le soutien régional, pourrait encourager la coopération militaire plus efficace entre le Nigeria et ses voisins.

### **Des connexions à Al Qaïda ?**

Le chef de Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau a fait l'éloge des dirigeants tels que Ousama ben Laden et Abou Omar al-Baghdadi comme ses «frères moudjahidin» dans les vidéos de YouTube, mais des liens organisationnels semblent être médiés par des groupes affiliés dans la région. Les premières allégations sur les liens que Boko Haram avait avec Al Qaïda reposaient en partie sur les appels de Ben Laden pour le jihad au Nigeria en 2002. En 2004, des documents saisis à partir d'un service de messagerie d'al-Qaïda à Khartoum comprenaient un rapport de reconnaissance sur les conditions politiques au Nigeria: elle a conclu que le Nigeria était «mûr pour le djihad». Des fonds importants en provenance d'Arabie saoudite ont été consacrés à la sauvegarde des groupes wahhabites au Nigeria et d'autres pays dans la région. Ces fonds ont été versés pour les mosquées, l'importation de textes wahhabites et les frais de voyage des imams (principalement au Pakistan) prêchant le salafisme. Les agents de sécurité au Nigeria pensent que Mohammed Yusuf, qui a fondé Boko Haram en 2002, avait initialement accès au financement d'Arabie lorsque le groupe faisait essentiellement du prosélytisme et avait installé son siège juste au nord de Maiduguri. En 2006 Yusuf a été arrêté avec Mohammed Ashafa, un envoyé du Tablighi Jamaat du Pakistan, qui avait des affiliations avec al-Qaïda.

Ils ont été accusés d'envoyer des jeunes pour la formation militaire dans des camps djihadistes au Mali, en Mauritanie et au Niger. Boko Haram fonctionne différemment de son groupe dissident, Ansaru. Les deux groupes ont constitué des capacités militaires importantes, mais ils diffèrent en termes de stratégie. Ansaru, dont les dirigeants ont reçu une formation en matière d'explosifs et de stratégie militaire d'al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (AQMI), est prêt à entreprendre des opérations terroristes plus complexes. Boko Haram, cependant, limite sa capacité militaire à l'intensification des attaques de guérilla sur les institutions de l'Etat et aussi sur les écoles, où les élèves sont soit massacrés soit enlevés. Ansaru perçoit également le massacre aveugle de musulmans par Shekau comme étant contreproductif dans la perception qu'ont l'occident et le gouvernement d'Abuja. En conséquence, Ansaru plutôt que Boko Haram est devenue la filiale d'Al-Qaïda au Nigeria.

Ces désignations peuvent faire peu de différence en termes opérationnels: les deux groupes ont reçu du matériel militaire, des munitions et de la formation d'AQMI. Les responsables de la sécurité nigériane affirment qu'il est inutile désormais de parler d'entités distinctes entre Ansaru et Boko Haram. La décentralisation et l'augmentation de la force de frappe de Boko Haram tient d'une structure cellulaire avec des objectifs communs et une stratégie globale. Mais les décisions sur ce qu'il faut attaquer, quand et comment sont souvent prises au niveau local. La décentralisation, la mobilité et la fluidité sont des adaptations pertinentes à l'état d'urgence dans les trois États du nord-est du Nigeria, appuyées par une surveillance intensive des communications. L'augmentation de la puissance de feu de Boko Haram se traduit par une évolution des tactiques militaires au cours des cinq dernières années,

avec des attaques à la bombe, des assassinats et des enlèvements à grande échelle, des attaques de types hit-and-run et des combats de tir direct avec l'armée.

### **Aspects internationaux**

Au-delà de la région, il y a beaucoup moins de preuves tangibles de la portée internationale de Boko Haram, même si elle a attiré l'attention de plusieurs agences de renseignement occidentales. Les États-Unis la fichent maintenant comme une organisation terroriste, l'adhésion et des relations financières s avec ce groupe constituant désormais une infraction criminelle. Il est également proscrit en Grande – Bretagne, où les services de sécurité ont été à la recherche de signes de réseaux de Boko Haram parmi environ un million de Nigériens qui vivent dans ce pays. Jusqu'à présent, ils ont trouvé peu de signes montrant que Boko Haram a pris racine en Europe. Le président Jonathan a utilisé les dimensions régionales et internationales de Boko Haram pour expliquer l'échec du gouvernement à repousser la secte, établissant des parallèles avec l'occident et la lutte des forces britanniques contre les talibans en Afghanistan ou les insurgés islamistes en Irak.

Alors que les gouvernements occidentaux peuvent avoir des doutes sur les tactiques politiques et militaires du Nigeria contre Boko Haram, ils ont engagé le pays dans plusieurs réunions de sécurité de haut niveau en 2014 pour coordonner les politiques dans la région contre la secte et à offrir une coopération militaires et de renseignement accrue. Laquelle s'est intensifiée à la suite de la campagne internationale après l'enlèvement des écolières Chibok. La récente campagne de Boko Haram pour cibler les principaux ponts reliant le Nigeria et le Cameroun, le Tchad et le Niger ressemble à une tentative pour perturber le commerce et causer encore plus de difficultés dans la région, et peut-être à détourner les ressources et l'attention de ses plans pour prendre Maiduguri. Une attaque de Boko Haram sur Maiduguri exigera une grande partie de ses ressources. Une telle attaque serait un tournant dans l'insurrection, encore plus que l'enlèvement de plus de 250 écolières de Chibok. Le succès ou l'échec des opérations de Boko Haram au Nigeria permettra de déterminer sa stratégie dans les pays voisins.

### **Conclusion**

Avec un ensemble sans précédent de mesures de sécurité mises en place, soutenu par les conseillers militaires américains, français et britanniques, il est à noter que les forces militaires du Nigeria – le plus important en Afrique – peinent encore à perturber sérieusement les progrès continus de Boko Haram. Bien que le gouvernement du Nigeria souligne régulièrement les liens de Boko Haram avec d'autres forces djihadistes étrangers tel Al-Qaïda et d'expliquer son manque d'efficacité militaire, les vues d'un vétéran de la politique du nord du Nigeria ont une résonance particulière en vue des élections nationales de février prochain: «Le problème est beaucoup plus politique que militaire».

<http://www.camerpost.com/>

## Somalia

### Somalia: Defection of Senior Al-Shabaab Official Rekindles Debate Over Amnesty Programme

2 JANUARY 2015



Mogadishu — The defection of former al-Shabaab intelligence chief Zakariya Ismail Ahmed Hersi has sparked debate on the Somali government's amnesty offer and the benefits of pardoning al-Shabaab officials who seek to leave the group.

Hersi, who surrendered to Somali troops stationed in Gedo region on December 27th, was wanted by the US government for a \$3 million bounty. He defected from al-Shabaab with a few of his men days before the amnesty extended by Somali President Hassan Shaikh Mohamud was set to expire.

"I can confirm that a few days ago Zakariya Ismail Ahmed Hersi came under the custody of the [federal] government and is now being held by security agencies in Mogadishu," government spokesperson Ridwan Haji Abdiweli told Sabahi on Friday (January 2nd).

Abdiweli said he was not aware whether the president's amnesty offer would continue into the new year, but said an announcement on the matter would be made at a later time.

Hersi's surrender offers an opportunity for the Somali government to increase access to the inner workings of the militant group and to engage others who would like to defect, security analysts say.

It also provides an opportunity for the government to re-evaluate how it deals with

al-Shabaab defectors, said retired Colonel Ahmed Omar Ga'al, who served as the deputy intelligence chief in Gedo during the Mohamed Siad Barre regime.

Hersi left al-Shabaab months ago after clashing with former al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane, who was killed in a US airstrike in September, but could not find an opportunity to come over to the side of the Somali government, Ga'al said.

"I was told by his relatives that this man wanted to give himself up before, but he was afraid as he did not have much confidence in the government's amnesty programme," he said.

When the president announced that the government would extend amnesty to al-Shabaab defectors, there should have been a plan in place to infiltrate the group as a way to gather intelligence and to provide fighters with information on how to leave, Ga'al said.

Somalia's security agencies should have known about Hersi's fallout with Godane and should have reached out to him to offer amnesty, he said.

To make the amnesty programme work better in the future, the government should adopt three strategies, he said.

"First, it should use money to entice many people to leave al-Shabaab. Second, it should take advantage when conflicts arise within the enemy group and [members] are willing to spy on one another. Third, patriotic people should be planted within the enemy so that they can save their country."

Ga'al said following those steps would make it easier to acquire valuable intelligence and defeat al-Shabaab. "It is when you have information that you have an advantage over your enemy," he said.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201501050384.html>

## Uganda

### There is African answer to terror

JANUARY 3, 2015



Last week Ugandan authorities discovered an al-Shabab terrorist cell in our biggest city, Kampala. Explosives were discovered in the raid, and there is little doubt that this group of terrorists had no other intention but to cause carnage on the streets of the city.

It is not the first time we have had to face down the menace of al-Shabab. It was only four years ago when bombs planted by extremists ripped through two locations as crowds gathered peacefully to watch the football World Cup. While that attack strengthened our resolve to meet the scourge of terrorism head on, it brought home to our citizens the very real threat on our front door. Now almost a year from the barbaric events of the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, these latest developments show that governments throughout East Africa can never let their guard down.

The government of Uganda has taken immediate steps to shore up our national security – increasing security in public places, partnering with organisers of public events and activating further counterterrorism measures, including surveillance.

#### **Coalition of expertise**

Yet, it is the nature of how last week's discovery came about that is worth examination. Along with other recent successes in defenestrating key branches of terrorist cells in East Africa, our tactics were based on a broad based coalition of expertise – of intelligence sharing by various AU nations, with additional international assistance.

The absence of any major attack since is vindication of the steps we have taken in Uganda since the outrages of 2010. But we know that complex and often sophisticated terror networks cannot be met by a single nation's resolve alone. Terror networks like al-Shabab have proven that they can operate effectively across porous borders, utilising technology and sophisticated criminal networks – child trafficking, poaching, and drug smuggling – that do not recognise the rigid boundaries of nation states.

And with Ahmed Abdi Godane, the spiritual leader of al-Shabab now dead courtesy of a US air strike with African AMISOM forces operating in partnership on the ground in Somalia, it seems a flexible, multipronged international coalition is the answer to effectively challenge the once creeping dominance of extremist Islamic factions in East Africa.

The Kampala terror cell was an uncomfortable reminder that it takes more than targeted air strikes to sever the tentacles of extremist cells that operate throughout our region. But AMISOM's relative success in Somalia does indicate that Africa can be at the epicentre of the successful stymieing of terror on our continent.

As Ugandans, our commitment to fight terrorism on our continent manifested itself at the very beginning when we were the first country to deploy troops in Somalia. We operated for almost two years before other troop contributing countries joined.

### **Web of warlords**

When AMISOM soldiers arrived – in which a Ugandan contingent was at its core – they were repelled by fierce opponents and many saw the mission as having little chance of success. US forces in the thousands, and other foreign contingents, had previously come and gone with few tangible gains. Yet AMISOM is now a credible peacekeeping force that has negotiated Somalia's deeply divided and fractured web of warlords, clans, and militant factions to bring a semblance of stability to the capital, Mogadishu. Somalia has some distance to go before it can boast of restoring the fundamental pillars of a functioning state, but it was an African force, with western financial commitment and technology, that has made the most progress. AMISOM has been a story of international cooperation. The financial commitment was considerable – some \$1.5bn in aid, with additional funds for the AU Mission. Yet in comparison to peacekeeping operations in DRC or Afghanistan, what has been achieved by a coalition of African nations for the resources expended is considerable.

But it also will be proactive action among communities where the most progress will be made. In Somalia, troops were taught responsible fire control to reduce civilian casualties. They reached out to local populations, including supplying basic medical care. And when terror cells continue to perpetuate the narrative of western intervention in foreign lands, the presence of a united, regional African force

shows we can win the hearts and minds of those who doubt our motives.

Defeating terror is of course much more than conquering territory, or parading conspirators on television. As politicians our mission also lies in fixing the fundamentals. That means strengthening institutions, securing borders, raising education standards, standing up for the vulnerable and making sure that we suffocate the intoxicating allure of extremism by offering a genuine alternative.

There have of course been setbacks. Some of them have resulted in grave loss of life, homes and livelihoods. But the arrests of last week – and the advances of the last year – have shown that international cooperation, with African nations at the very heart, is the most effective answer to terrorism. This will of course require our wealthier international partners to play a key role. But in Africa, we are proving we can meet these challenges on our own two feet. This war will only be won if it is led from within.

<http://sunnewsonline.com/>

## Terrorism in the World

### Arab order versus caliphate-Mohamed Al-Said

January - 4 - 2015



The Jewish State project is the other side of the coin of the Islamic State project, with both feeding off the other and presaging the collapse of the Arab order. If 2011 was the year of Arab revolutions and uprisings in many Arab countries and 2012 and 2013 were years of testing the results and repercussions of those revolutions, then 2014 was the year of warning. It was a very stern one. It said that the Arab order is teetering precariously as a consequence of the upheavals of the revolutionary uprisings and that its slowness and hesitancy in stimulating the means of recovery and establishing a more effective and coherent order will hasten its demise. The caution is more ominous yet as it adds that the alternative that is likely to supplant the old Arab order will be a very different one: the theocratic Islamic caliphate that was declared on 29 June 2014 in the Grand Mosque of Mosul by ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. On that day, Al-Baghdadi issued two decrees: he changed the name of ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Syria) to "Islamic State"; and secondly, he proclaimed himself "caliph".

The setbacks of the revolutions: The looming threat accompanies major setbacks and failures in most countries of the Arab Spring revolutions, above all in Libya, Syria and Yemen. In Libya, the revolution brought the almost total collapse of the state as a consequence of the failure to establish a coherent national order capable of achieving the aims of the revolution, namely ending dictatorship, eliminating cor-

ruption and founding a democratic system of government to realise justice and dignity. In tandem with this failure, warfare between Salafist and Muslim Brotherhood militias and the Libyan army or remnants of that army now dominate the course of political developments. That conflict has brought the country to the brink of civil war and the spectre of partition.

A similar process is under way in Yemen and perhaps in a more serious way as the ousted president, Abdullah Ali Saleh, has returned to the political scene and asserted himself as a critical influence by allying with one of the three major socio-political forces fighting between themselves and over power. These forces are the Houthi militias (Ansar Allah), Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (which in Yemen calls itself Ansar Al-Sharia), and the proponents of secession in the south (the Southern Movement). Saleh favoured the Houthis so as to obstruct the transition process, throw a spanner into the Gulf initiative and the Gulf role in Yemen in general, and entrench Yemen as a hotbed of tension in the southern flank of the Arabian peninsula by creating a channel of communication with Iran, thereby also hampering the Saudi role in Syria and Iraq.

In Egypt, the Egyptian people's success in setting into motion the 30 June 2013 revolution that sought to reclaim the 25 January Revolution from the Muslim Brotherhood faces two major challenges. The first is terrorism at hands of the Muslim Brotherhood in alliance with "Salafist jihadists", a threat augmented by the possibility of a channel of communication with ISIS, especially now that the Sinai-based Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis organisation has proclaimed its declaration of allegiance to the IS. Add to this the fact that the Americans have confirmed the presence of pro-IS cells in Libya and that the Muslim Brotherhood has set 25 January as a date for another violent confrontation against the new order in Egypt.

The second challenge resides in the acquittals that were won by ousted President Hosni Mubarak, his two sons and officials from his security apparatus. Immediately, old regime figures seized the opportunity to "acquit" the regime and reassert its legitimacy in an attempt to undermine the 25 January Revolution on the grounds that it was a "coup". The ultimate aim is to contain the post-30 June order and obstruct its project of realising the aims and aspirations that drove the people to rebel against and overthrow the Mubarak order.

As serious as these challenges are they naturally pale in comparison to what is happening in Iraq and Syria, both faced with partition, or repartition, in view of the IS project and the ambitions of the Kurds in Syria and Iraq to exploit the circumstances of the crises in these countries in order to create an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and another one in northern Syria. This conforms with the American outlook, as expressed by US President Barack Obama in an interview with The New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, on a new Middle East that will super-

sede the “Sykes-Picot” order and that is being born from the potential repercussions of the IS project.

Only the Tunisian revolutionary experience has succeeded in escaping the fate of reversal. It succeeded in imposing the revolution’s demand for democracy by means of parliamentary elections that eliminated the spectre of Muslim Brotherhood hegemony over the post-revolutionary Tunisian order. Nevertheless, the Tunisian revolution still faces a crucial test, which is whether or not the Zein Al-Abdine Ben Ali regime will be ushered back in by the Nadaa Tounes Party, headed by a figure from the Ben Ali regime, Beji Caid Essebsi, who just won the presidential elections.

The Arab order and Gulf leadership: Against the general backdrop of deterioration and disintegration, attention has turned towards the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the hope that its member countries will act to bolster the Arab order and prevent it from crumbling.

Two factors have contributed to this hope. The first is that these countries are the only ones that were spared from the revolutionary uprisings, apart from the popular protest movement that swept Bahrain, which is still suffering from the repercussions, and another movement in Oman that the Omani leadership succeeded in containing with its customary acumen. (The Bahraini and Omani experiences differ significantly in another way. Whereas Oman experienced no outside intervention to speak of, Bahrain was the victim of Iranian pressure and meddling in support of what Tehran called “the revolutionary uprising” and against the intervention by the GCC Peninsula Field Forces to restore security and stability in Bahrain.) That the GCC countries largely escaped the fallout from the revolutionary uprisings of the Arab Spring enhanced their ability to influence — positively or negatively — the evolution of the revolutions in some other Arab countries. The second factor to favour a strong Gulf role in rescuing the Arab order is that these countries — Saudi Arabia in particular — possess important means of influence, regionally and internationally, that can work to safeguard the cohesion of the Arab order.

GCC countries possess huge financial capacities that carry considerable weight in the global financial system and they command vast wealth in oil and gas resources. In addition, they possess other forms of soft strength, such as diplomatic sway and a strong media machinery that played significant roles in the Egyptian, Libyan and Yemeni crises, not to mention those they have played in the crises in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.

Yet the Gulf role in rescuing the Arab order faces some serious challenges at the levels of the GCC, the Arab world and the Middle East, especially as pertains to the relationship with Iran.

With respect to the Gulf, the problems primarily stem from differences among GCC members that could diminish their efficacy. Oman and Qatar figure prominently at the centre of disputes. In an attempt to enhance its security, Riyadh tried to give the GCC a powerful boost by promoting its transformation into a “Gulf Federation” in the hope that this would strengthen the Gulf vis-à-vis other regional powers such as Iran and Turkey and enhance its ability to counter threats. However, the day before the GCC summit that was held in Kuwait in December 2013, Omani Foreign Minister Youssef Ben Alawi, addressing the Manama Dialogue Conference in Bahrain, announced that his country was opposed to the proposal to create a Gulf Federation to replace the GCC. He added that his country also opposed introducing the GCC as a party in the conflict with Iran, and threatened that Oman would withdraw from the GCC if Riyadh pressed ahead with its drive to create a federation. As a result, that project was shelved indefinitely.

At the same time, it came to light that Muscat had hosted a secret Iranian-US dialogue that was instrumental in creating the circumstances for direct US-Iranian communications, as reflected in the successes of the newly elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during the UN General Assembly meetings in New York in September 2013 and in Obama’s phone call to him at the airport in New York just before he was about to fly back home to Iran. That phone call and the US-Iranian talks in Muscat before that paved the way for successful talks between Iran and the P5+1 group in Vienna, which produced an interim agreement for resolving the Iranian nuclear programme crisis. Oman’s actions and positions naturally clashed with the policies of Saudi Arabia and the UAE that view Iran as a threat to Arab interests and the interests of the GCC and accuse it of meddling in the internal affairs of these countries.

Qatar presented a different problem. It positioned itself against Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain by siding with the Muslim Brotherhood and supporting that organisation’s activities, which jeopardise the security and stability of those countries not to mention the threat they pose to Egyptian national security. Tensions over this issue reached a point that the three above-mentioned countries withdrew their ambassadors from Doha. However, new developments in the region cleared the way for a meeting in Riyadh on 16 November 2014 that resulted in the three countries’ agreement to send their ambassadors back to Doha and in a Saudi appeal to Egypt to turn over a new leaf in its relationship with Qatar. These results were essentially prompted by three motives.

The first had its roots in the anxieties of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain that Iran might succeed in reaching a solution with the West over the question of its nuclear programme. Riyadh, above all, was concerned by other items on the Iranian-Western negotiating agenda. It was particularly alarmed by the prospect of a resolution to the Iranian nuclear question resulting in a US-Iranian accord that would

bolster Iran as a regional power and give it an American-sanctioned say in a number of crucial issues in the Arab region, especially the war against terrorism and the Syrian crisis. With respect to the latter, it could pave the way to a solution that could permit Bashar Al-Assad to remain in power.

The second motive stems from the mounting peril of terrorism at the hands of IS, which proclaimed itself an Islamic caliphate thus thumbing its nose at Saudi Arabia's religious status in the Islamic world. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, or what IS calls the "land of the two sanctities" (Mecca and Medina), has been incorporated into IS plans for territorial expansion, perhaps with even greater priority than that accorded to Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Algeria, not to mention the whole of Iraq and Syria. The inability of the US-led international alliance to put an end to the so-called "IS legend" threatens to transform that legend into a dangerous peril that all countries in the region must confront.

Purely Gulf concerns are behind the third motive. Though the convening of the GCC annual summit this year has lessened fears of widening cracks within the alliance, tensions between Saudi Arabia and Oman, and the latter's conspicuous absence from the Riyadh summit in November, are indicative and lend weight to Saudi fears over the future of the GCC in light of Muscat's earlier threat to withdraw from that organisation if Riyadh continues to insist in transforming it to a "Gulf Federation".

As all motives above all relate to real threats to the peace and security of the GCC countries, they compel reconciliation. Yet, as such motives are fluid they do not furnish a solid foundation for real reconciliation. The same will ultimately apply to Egyptian-Qatari reconciliation.

— At the level of the Arab world, the chief challenge to an effective Gulf role resides in the profound conflicts and turmoil in a number of Arab countries, some so severe and intractable as to threaten the continued cohesion of the state amid full-fledged civil war. The crises that are flaring in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya will impede the establishment of a new Arab order until those crises are resolved. In addition, the threat of partition that looms over those countries, combined with the spectre IS and its "caliphate" project, restricts the role that the Gulf could play in the construction of an Arab order capable of confronting the challenges. This problem is compounded if we add to this the absence of Egypt and the consequent absence of the strategic weight and capacities it could lend to that role due to its preoccupation with domestic crises.

— The regional challenges to the development of an effective Gulf role in building a new Arab order derive primarily from Turkey, Iran and Israel.

Turkey's bias in favour of the Muslim Brotherhood and its formation of an alliance, even a temporary one, with Qatar against Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have detracted considerably from the role that Turkey could play as a weight to even the keel in the relationship between Iran and the Arab states. Moreover, Ankara's hesitancy to engage in the fight against IS, its conditions inimical to Syrian independen-

cy, plus evidence of Turkish support for IS have driven the Gulf countries further away from it.

The reluctance of Recep Tayyip Erdogan to join the US-led international coalition against IS and Al-Nusra Front did not emerge out of the blue. Erdogan harbours a strong resentment against Washington for its reluctance to make the goal of toppling the Bashar Al-Assad regime a top priority of that coalition. Erdogan had to choose. He could enhance his alliance with IS and forfeit his relationship with his US and regional allies, or he could join the coalition and forfeit the interests that IS serves. These are related to oil and strategic interests in Iraq and Syria. The alliance with IS gives him three pressure cards, one to play against the central Iraqi government in Baghdad (which is based on a Shia majority), the second to play against Iran and its powerful influence in Iraq, and the third to play against Masoud Barzani and the Iraqi Kurds so as to ensure that his influence in Iraq is not contingent solely on Barzani who had begun to coordinate with the Kurds in Syria over the establishment of a greater Kurdistan without taking into consideration Turkey's interests. On top of this, Erdogan's alliance with IS in Syria helps ensure the arrival of gas and oil shipments from Central Asia (the Caspian Sea in particular) and from Iraq to Turkey's Ceyhan port on the Mediterranean, as some of the pipelines pass through areas under IS influence in Syria.

For Erdogan to agree to take part in the anti-IS coalition, he would need to be tempted by some enticing offers that would compensate him for the losses he would incur by sacrificing his alliance with IS. Of particular interest to him would be guarantees to obviate the creation of a Kurdish statelet or autonomous region in northern Syria that could eventually become an inspiration to Turkish Kurds to create the state or autonomous region that they have dreamed of in Anatolia or that could at least serve as a safe refuge for Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militias and a base for their attacks against the Turkish army.

Erdogan had imagined that he could get what he wanted regardless, whether by sustaining his alliance with IS or signing up with the coalition. Therefore, he persisted in his refusal to intervene to prevent the fall of Ain Al-Arab, more commonly referred to in the international media by its Kurdish name, Kobani. He believed that he would come out the winner in both cases. He thought that the US and other coalition members would ultimately cave in to his conditions, which were to intervene to topple Al-Assad and to create a no-fly zone in northern Syria that would eventually come under Turkey's influence. He simultaneously banked on a IS victory in Kobani that would destroy the capacities of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria, which is lead by Saleh Muslim Mohammed who is allied with Al-Assad's regime and leads the Kobani resistance against IS. So, he played a waiting game and remained deaf to the cries for help from the Syrian Kurds under attack in Kobani and disdainful of the protest demonstrations that erupted in Istanbul and other

major Turkish cities, particularly those with Kurdish majorities, demanding that the Turkish army take action to protect the lives of their fellow Kurds in Syria. Iran poses a powerful regional challenge to the GCC countries and a source of divisiveness within the GCC on many issues, chief among which are the question of the Iranian nuclear programme and the question of Iranian influence and intervention in purely Arab crises, most notably in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and, most recently, in Yemen through its support for the Houthi movement which has become the dark horse in Yemeni political equations.

The common denominator in the two questions is the US, which is the most important cornerstone of Gulf security strategy. Iran has managed to insinuate itself into a position that has enabled it to break down US hostility in the hope of winning a form of friendship or partnership that will turn the page on nearly four decades of antagonism since the fall of the Shah and the victory of the Iranian Revolution on 11 February 1979.

The negotiations over the Iranian nuclear programme in Vienna in November 2014 might be theoretically described as a “partial agreement”, but in fact it constituted an agreement on the part of the international community that Iran was now a “nuclear power”. The rest are details. These concern preparing the stage domestically in the countries of the parties concerned for the acceptance of this new fact. They also involve hammering out the details over the political understanding between Iran and the West concerning the boundaries and limits to the Iranian regional role and the costs that Iran will be expected to pay in exchange for the gains it has won. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamed Javad Zarif presented an account of what happened in those negotiations that took place from 18 to 24 November 2014. Speaking at a press conference he said, “There were 10 phases of various meetings and sessions regarding the Iranian nuclear question. Ideas were put forward but we need more work, although we would have preferred to finish in Vienna.” Most crucially, Zarif had the following to say: “The most important result we reached was that the [Iranian] nuclear programme will continue in a full and comprehensive manner ... The project of frightening the world of Iran has failed ... The Iranian people have resisted all pressures in order to obtain their rights.”

The remarks of Iranian President Rouhani echoed the sentiments of his foreign minister and confirmed the above assessment of the Iranian breakthrough. He said that that six-day negotiations “permitted for a resolution to most of the differences and for the confidence that this will lead to a final agreement”. He added that the differences with the other side were now focused on “how to convert the understandings into a written agreement”.

This is precisely what was accomplished in Vienna: “understandings”. These are what count and that was what Rouhani stressed in his comments on the general

framework of the negotiations that opted for the compromise solution of extending the negotiating period for seven months until the end of June 2015. Pitching his remarks to domestic public opinion and the conservative opposition above all, the Iranian president said: "We had two important goals: not to relinquish our nuclear programme and to try to get the sanctions lifted." As evidence of his government's credibility in its commitment to those two goals he added: "Throughout this period the centrifuges continued to operate," after which he stressed, "And these machines will not stop operating."

If the Iranian officials' remarks are not sufficient support for this assessment with regard to the upshot the Vienna negotiations, the remarks by John Kerry lay out bare the facts. The US secretary of state lauded the "great success" achieved by the negotiations that sought a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear question. The world now felt more reassured than it had been on this issue, he said. As to why an agreement had not been signed in November and the negotiating period was extended, he said: "We need more time for more work," as this was not about signing any old agreement but rather an agreement that was "proper, deep and strong". Therefore, after the "real and important progress" that was made in Vienna, he urged the international community and the US Congress to support the decision to extend the negotiations for seven months. "This is not the time to give up," he said. Perhaps it was the realisation that the announcement of a final and comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme would have stirred some major difficulties with various powers in the Middle East that prompted the parties to the Vienna negotiations (Iran and the P5+1) to keep the substance of what had been accomplished in those negotiations under wraps. They needed time to reassure allies and the US administration had to come to terms with a Republican majority Congress over the agreement. But there is another possibility. The extension of the negotiation period could be connected to the fact that both Iran and the US realise that they need the crisis plagued conditions surrounding their "understandings" to ripen further, especially as pertains to circumstances in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon.

In any case, the important factor that was revealed in that secret negotiating round in Muscat and then again in the Vienna negotiations was the compatibility and harmony between Kerry and Zarif. This is clearly indicative of a US-Iranian rapprochement and an American conviction that it was now time to deal with Iran as a "partner" rather than an "enemy" since, from the American strategic perspective, it was no longer possible to ignore the role that Iran had to play in regional crises. Therefore, the US will be dedicating the forthcoming months until the middle of 2015 to bringing its regional allies around to its point of view after which the comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran will be signed.

With that prospect comes the potential dangers of attempts to leverage the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme to produce US-Iranian understandings or

arrangements on matters pertaining to the Arab order and, specifically, the Iranian role in the Gulf, in Iraq and in the future of the Syrian regime.

Whether Iran had been excluded from the international coalition against IS or whether Tehran, itself, had opted to avoid association with that coalition so as to remain untainted by its repercussions and possible failures, Iranian support for the Iraqi government in its fight against IS and reports of Iranian strikes against some IS strongholds in Iraq without incurring US objections demonstrate the extent to which the Iranian role rivals if not opposes that of the Gulf. Perhaps the remarks by senior Gulf officials in the Manama Conference on 6-7 December 2014, and specifically by Saudi Foreign Minister Nazar Ben Obeid Al-Madani and Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled Ben Ahmed Al-Khalifa, underscore the extent to which anxieties regarding Iran dominated the thinking of the participants in that conference that was primarily devoted to the question of how to manage the conflict with IS. Al-Madani underscored three principles for dialogue with Iran: “credibility, trust and transparency”. As for the Saudi foreign minister’s Bahraini counterpart, he was of the opinion that Al-Qaeda and IS were not the most important threat to the region, but rather that this was Hizbullah “which receives support from countries that are, themselves, involved in funding terrorism”.

But if the “Iranian peril” is of such a priority to some members of the GCC, it is clearly not such an obsession with others. This applies to Oman in particular which, in November 2014 hosted, officially and publicly this time, a round of negotiations between Iran and the US and EU. This division over Iran and the prioritising of the Iranian threat poses a major challenge to the Arab order and Gulf leadership in stimulating and rebuilding that order.

The Israeli danger aggravates all the challenges in view of the Israeli determination to put paid to the two-state solution in favour of its “one land for one people” solution, which is to say transforming Palestine into a single country exclusively for the Jewish people and without Palestinians. The Israeli cabinet’s decision to approve the “state judaicisation” bill and free the government’s hand for settlement expansion confirms the end of the two-state solution. But it also confirms that the conflict with the Zionist entity has, by virtue of an Israeli decision, shifted from a “political conflict” to a “religious conflict”.

That shift will generate dangerous and pivotal ramifications in view of the rise of the Salafist jihadists who are bent on imposing a theocratic project, or reborn Islamic caliphate, as the alternative to the Arab order. In other words, religious conflict reaching new and dangerous territory will escalate in the coming years.

The Islamic caliphate “alternative”: Clearly, the huge challenges facing the Arab order, in terms of the fragmentation of Arab states into ethnic and sectarian state-

lets, a process aided by the dangerous repercussions of the obvious failures and setbacks of the Arab revolutions, threaten the disintegration of the current Arab order and the advent of an alternative. That alternative is the system of the Islamic caliphate posed by the creation of IS on 29 November 2014. That project, should it succeed, will pose a serious threat to the future of the Arab region for three reasons.

Firstly, its priorities deviate from current Arab priorities, which accord a central position to the Palestinian cause. To IS, the importance of the liberation of Palestine and the conflict against the Zionist entity recedes in favour of its project of establishing an Islamic caliphate. Therefore, it prioritises the tasks required to achieve that aim, namely destroying existing Arab states on the grounds that they and their societies are all heretical, so that it can build its envisioned caliphate on the ruins. Then it will have to fight more “heretics” in the process of consolidating that new order. Ultimately, the confrontation against “the Jews” will probably be deferred to the “end of time”.

The IS project was initiated by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, cofounder of the “Islamic State in Iraq”, with Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi. The project had its origins in a dispute between Al-Zarqawi and Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden leading the former to break away from Al-Qaeda. In the first edition of Dabiq, a magazine produced by IS in English, the organisation asserts that it was Al-Zarqawi who paved the way for the Islamic State. After he was killed, Abu Hamza Al-Muhajer and Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi proclaimed the establishment of the “Islamic State in Iraq” with Al-Baghdadi as its “emir”. Then Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi assumed control over the organisation founded on the antitheses of the priorities of Al-Qaeda.

Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi derived his ideas for building the “Islamic State” from those of Al-Zarqawi and Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi. When vowing to create the Islamic State, Al-Zarqawi said that this would take place in several stages: firstly, the elimination of the enemy (i.e overthrowing the heretic states and corrupt tyrannies that stand in the way of the establishment of the caliphate); secondly, the establishment of the Islamic State; thirdly, military campaigns to seize control over all other Islamic countries; and fourthly, doing battle against the heretics. This is the reverse order of the priorities of Al-Qaeda, which ranks doing battle against heretics first and creating the Islamic State last.

Palestine does not fit into either of these sets of priorities. Or if it does, it comes at the end, after overthrowing the heretic states and societies, establishing the Islamic State, expanding that state to impose the caliphate over the rest of the Islamic world, making war on heretics (the West) and, lastly, fighting the Jews. According to IS thinking, the day of judgement will not come “until the Muslims do battle with and kill the Jews”. In its second edition, on page 4, Dabiq remarks: “With regard to

the massacres taking place in Gaza, the actions of the Islamic State speak louder than their words. It is only a question of time until we reach Palestine to fight the barbarian Jews.” Yet at the same time, IS regards the calls by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas for legislative elections as “an act of apostasy”.

The second reason why the IS project constitutes a threat to the Arab world is that its top priority of overthrowing “heretical” Arab states helps to strengthen the Zionist entity. Destroying these states means destroying their armies, their economies, their political and social entities and fabrics, and clearing the way for fragmentation and partition and the creation of sectarian and ethnic petty states on the ruins. The Zionist entity could not dream for more. With the destruction of the armies in Iraq and Syria, the exhaustion of national resources and capacities, and the revival of the project to partition the Arabs, there will be no cohesive force left to fight the Zionist entity. The significance of Kurdish activity in northern Syria near the borders with Turkey in the framework of their defence against the onslaught of IS should not be lost on us. In fact, it is noteworthy how preference is given to the attribute “Kurdish Kobani” over “Syrian Ain Al-Arab” when referring to one side of that war. It serves to remind us that that war, and Kurdish activity in its context, is preparing the way for the eventual secession of a Kurdish entity from the Syrian state and that a similar process is underway in Iraq. Moreover, these will be just the beginning of the project to partition and fragment the Arab world.

The third reason behind the IS danger resides in how closely the “Islamic State” project harmonises with the Zionist project to create a “Jewish State” in Palestine or, more precisely, the Netanyahu government’s project to impose Israel as a Jewish state. After all, the so-called “Jewish State” bill is effectively another term for the scheme to create the envisioned “Greater Israel” as an exclusively Jewish state on the ruins of the peace process founded on the two-state solution. Netanyahu and other prominent Israeli officials have been working to lay the concrete foundations for that scheme by stepping up settlement construction and the judaicisation process in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

In a press conference held with UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon on 13 October, during the UN secretary general’s visit to Israel following an Egyptian-Norwegian sponsored conference on the reconstruction of Gaza in Cairo, Netanyahu took pains to respond, if “indirectly”, to the proceedings in that Cairo meeting. He felt it his duty to clarify certain “ambiguous issues” related to the project of the “Jewish State”, or his scheme for voiding the two-state solution of all substance so as to be able produce “one land for one people” on the whole of historic Palestine. Accordingly, in the presence of the UN secretary general, he asked all concerned, which is to say the Palestinian people and their leaders and the Arab people and their leaders, to differentiate between what was happening in Gaza and what was happening in the West Bank on the grounds that “there is no Israeli occupation of Gaza”. The

inference, of course, was that the status of the West Bank was different: it was part of Israel and Israel had the right to build on it, to continue to expropriate territory and Palestinian property on it, and to construct settlements.

The crucial message that Netanyahu wanted to drive home to all is that there is no such thing as the Palestinian cause. Or rather, if such a cause exists, it is not the cause of the conflicts that are taking place in the Middle East. Those conflicts are borne from conditions within their own societies. They are a product of the realities of the “failed” Arab states, which were incapable of realising national cohesion because they contained ethnically and religiously heterogeneous peoples and because they were dictatorships and not democracies.

To further clarify the ultimate objective of his drive, the Israeli prime minister took advantage of the commemorative ceremony marking the anniversary of the death of minister Rahbaam Zaifi to say, “The war of liberation that began in 1948 has not ended yet. It will continue for years to come.” By “war of liberation” he referred to the first Arab-Israeli war that ended with the creation of the State of Israel. His purpose was to revive the Old Testament-based claim that the whole of Palestine belongs to the Jews and that, in 1948, the Jews “liberated” it from its Palestinian or Arab occupiers. As the Arabs and Palestinians remain antagonistic towards Israel and reject Israel as a Jewish state, the Jews must continue their war of liberation in order to impose that state as a reality on the whole of the “Promised Land”. He put all this more explicitly when he stressed, on the same occasion, that: “United Jerusalem has always been and will remain the eternal capital of Israel.”

The Netanyahu project chimes well with the IS project that seeks to impose sectarian and ethnically based theocracies as the alternative to the nation state and the aim of realising Arab unity. It simultaneously supports US views that conflict with Washington’s official position as an advocate of the two-state solution in Palestine. The fact is that the US does not seek a viable peace settlement on the basis of the creation of a Palestinian state within the pre-June 1967 borders. The Kerry initiative made no mention of the need to establish a sovereign Palestinian state, to halt Israeli settlement construction, to establish a timeframe for the declaration of Palestinian statehood or any other of the crucial issues. The same applies to the ideas that are currently taking shape in the US for fresh negotiating efforts that may or may not go beyond the PR purposes that prevailed during the run-up to the Congressional midterms and that sought to court the support of pro-Zionist organisations for Democratic Party candidates in part by touching up the image of US-Israeli relations that had been strained by differences between Obama and Netanyahu over Iran.

The Jewish State project is the other side of the coin of the Islamic State project, which is why Israel is counting on IS’s success. This is a major reason why the IS pro-

ject is so dangerous. It is the “spearhead” for a drive to overthrow Arab regimes and dismantle Arab states in favour of a project whose architects use the name of Islam as a mere facade in order to promote a new form of tyranny that will destroy societies, damage Islam and the Islamic creed, and lend weight to the campaigns to make Islam or “Islamic terrorism” the substitute for communism in the so-called civilisational war that has once again captured the attention of Western think tanks and strategic planning rooms.

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## Afghanistan

### AFGHANISTAN: UNACCOMPLISHED MISSION, UNCERTAIN FUTURE – ANALYSIS

JANUARY 8, 2015



*NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg with Afghanistan's Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai. Photo credit: NATO.*

NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan has officially ended, but the United States and other member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have not ended their military presence in this country and have only changed its appearance. Continued presence of 13,500 US troopers in five military bases has been made possible according to the new definition of that mission in the Bilateral Security Agreement, which has been signed between the governments of Afghanistan and the United States. From now on, the American forces are supposed to provide the Afghan military with consultation and training without being directly involved in combat operations, unless, of course, under special circumstances and when requested to do so by Afghan officials. However, there are some considerations about the termination of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan thirteen years after the country was invaded by Western armies:

**A) The ideological and ethnic challenges to power in Afghanistan have been exacerbated and currently exist at two levels:**

.1The challenge of power between the central government and the armed opposition, especially the Taliban group;

.2The challenge of power within the Afghan government between two groups, one

supporting a centralized government and the other one advocating distribution of power along ethnic lines;

**B) Regional and international rivalries to gain more influence in the country have been intensified at three levels:**

- .1 Political and territorial rivalries between India and Pakistan;
- .2 Ideological rivalries among Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey; and
- .3 Rivalries among the United States, China and Russia for gaining more influence in the war-torn country.

Under such a tense atmosphere of domestic, regional and international rivalries, the main question now is what will be the possible consequences of the termination of NATO's military mission in Afghanistan? More importantly, what future outlook is imaginable for peace and stability as well as power structure in this country? There are many things which can be said about this, but in general, the future outlook for developments in Afghanistan can be studied at three short-, medium- and long-term levels. In the short term, the most possible turn of events is further escalation of domestic rivalries at a military level between the Taliban militants, on the one hand, and Afghan army, government and security forces, on the other hand. At the same time, it should be noted that escalation of conflicts between the Taliban and the central government is actually aimed at gaining more concessions by either side, not at absolute victory of one of these two sides over the other. Therefore, there will be ripe conditions for the escalation of guerrilla warfare between the two sides, at least through the coming spring and early summer. As a result, the most possible guess at this level is further intensification of domestic conflicts in the country in the form of more suicide attacks and strikes by the Taliban against the positions of Afghan army and security forces.

At the government level, a national unity government has been finally established through mediation of the United States and the agreement between the country's President Ashraf Ghani and the chief executive officer, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. However, this has failed to put an end to ethnic and ideological rivalries and there is no end imaginable to such rivalries over the short run. This is true as such rivalries run on fertile domestic grounds. Rivalries within the Afghan government are, in fact, rivalries between two different ways of thinking and two different approaches to power. There is a traditional ethnic approach which believes that the government and political power is a basic right for the Pashtun ethnic group that is being represented by Ashraf Ghani and which derives its legitimacy from Loya Jirga. There is also the semi-modern approach of Dr. Abdullah, which seeks ethnic distribution of power in the form of some sort of federalism and non-centralized power structure. He aims to revive the post of prime minister and turn the country's government from a presidential one into a parliamentary one where the government will gain its legitimacy through ballot boxes, and the national consultative assembly will be an additional source of legitimacy for the government. These two different approaches have currently faced the new national unity government with certain problems and that unity can be only maintained through effective interference of the United States backed by its continued military presence in the country.

At a regional level, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are the main contestants which claim to be good models for an Islamic model of power for Afghanistan. Therefore, these three countries are sure to continue their rivalries in this country. The termination of NATO's military mission may even add fuel to such ideological rivalries. Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to cooperate for the construction of an Islamic center, whose cost has been

estimated at 100 million Saudi riyals, and is supposed to accommodate up to 10,000 students on a round the clock basis. The agreement is a clear sign of intensified rivalries between two schools of thought and ideological discourses that are being represented by the Islamic Revolution in Iran and Salafi-Arab school of Saudi Arabia. A more or less similar situation is imaginable for the intensification of political and territorial rivalries between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan. The support accorded to Baluch separatist forces by India and New Delhi's cooperation with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Taliban Movement of Pakistan) are, in fact, a response to jihadist policies followed by the Pakistani army and are aimed at undermining Pakistan's standing in Afghanistan. As a result, this situation will certainly lead to intensified rivalries between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan.

At international level, the termination of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan will most probably result in the intensification of rivalries to gain political and economic influence in Afghanistan and gain access to the country's mineral resources among the United States, Russia and China. These countries will also try to make the most of the geostrategic and geoeconomic position of Afghanistan as a result of which their rivalries may well extend into Central Asia. In this way, one may claim that the "big game" of the past, which has been raging among major global powers in Afghanistan and Central Asia since the middle of the 19th century, will continue in new forms proportionate to the new conditions in the world. In a more general approach, it is quite imaginable that China will try to use its influence in Afghanistan and Pakistan to get more access to the Middle East and energy resources of the Persian Gulf. It will also use the same path to extend its influence into Central Asia and gain access to energy resources of the Caspian Sea.

Russia can also use Afghanistan as a route to realize its traditional goal of having access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. In the meantime, the most natural goal for the United States will be to prevent further increase in the influence of China and Russia in Afghanistan and to keep them away from its own security sphere in Central Asia. Therefore, the termination of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan will not be a termination of rivalries, but on the contrary, can be expected to further intensify those rivalries. Now, in view of these realities, the main question is in which direction will future Afghanistan move and with what kind of developments it will be possibly faced? The main issue in this approach is the continued challenge of power and influence as a result of which, and theoretically speaking, there are a few possible scenarios imaginable:

.1Continuation of the status quo, and the preservation of the fragile unity government;

.2Continuation of national reconciliation talks with the Taliban after a short period of escalation of conflicts followed by efforts to give a share in the power system to the Taliban in those regions of Afghanistan that are dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group. The Taliban can be also given a share of the central power in Kabul;

.3Federalization of the political system and distribution of power along ethnic lines among major ethnic groups such as Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazara people and Uzbeks; and

.4Disintegration of Afghanistan into two new countries. There could be a Pashtunistan special to Pashtuns and another country possibly called Khorasan for all ethnic groups other than Pashtuns that live in eastern, southern, western and northern parts of Afghanistan.

There is no doubt that disintegration of Afghanistan will not be beneficial to any domestic or regional political current and can trigger a crisis of secession across the region. Therefore, it should be the last resort kept for the conditions of absolute deadlock and when other options have failed to bear fruit. However, it should not be ruled out totally. Non-Pashtun ethnic groups and possibly Russia are certainly concerned about further growth of radicalism in the form of Salafi and jihadist ideology. China, on the other hand, has been already plagued with radical forces in its Xinjiang province and, to protect its own national security, it will certainly prefer to see a barrier between its Xinjiang region and the Muslim-dominated areas of Central Asia which are a breeding grounds for this ideology. As a result, Beijing will certainly prefer such a barrier because it is possible for both Russia and the United States to use Salafi and jihadist currents as a tool against China.

Under these circumstances, it seems that the most suitable solution for the problems facing Afghanistan is to change the centralized power structure and modify the mentality that power is a historical right of Pashtun people. As a result, a model should be adhered to which will distribute power among all ethnic and geographical regions of Afghanistan and allow each ethnic group to be satisfactorily represented in the central government. At the end of the day, maintenance of peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as sustainable development of the country in all political, social, economic and cultural areas will need reduction of rivalries at domestic, regional and international levels. This will allow Afghanistan to continue its drive along the path of modern nation building and state building, and also forge a compromise between traditions and modernity in the country through an effective combination of sources of legitimacy of power, which include the Loya Jirga and the national consultative assembly. In the long term, the best solution is to help Afghanistan gain its new international status as an impartial country, end foreign intervention in Afghanistan, and acceptance of the new conditions in Afghanistan by regional and international rivals. Of course, this is a goal which cannot be achieved easily. If such solutions are not pursued, the last resort then may be disintegration of the country along ethnic lines, which of course, should not be a desirable option for any of the parties that are involved in Afghanistan.

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## France

### Paris lessons can improve our anti-terror measures

JANUARY 12, 2015 12:00AM

**INTERNATIONAL** analysis of the Paris terrorist atrocities has matter-of-factly referred to Sydney's Martin Place siege, along with Ottawa and earlier attacks in France, as portents of a new wave of Islamist terror being inspired, if not controlled, by groups in the Middle East. After much dissembling from some quarters in Australia about whether to take the jihadist motivation of the Lindt cafe siege seriously, this frankness is welcome but sobering. With warnings from Tony Abbott and security agencies that we must expect more terrorism, thoughts of something on the scale of Paris are frightening. So as French authorities continue their investigations and examine how they could have thwarted these attacks, it is prudent to consider the adequacy of the anti-terror responses on our shores.

Over the past year The Australian has been supportive of the Abbott government's multidimensional steps to deal with the exacerbated threat and we have praised the strong bipartisan support offered by Bill Shorten and Labor. The most difficult political decision has been the deployment of our military personnel to join with the US, Britain and others in bolstering Iraq's efforts to overcome Islamic State. This has been crucial from a humanitarian stance to stop the vicious slaughter of defenceless civilians. It is also vital from a strategic point of view, to underpin Iraq's survival and prevent an escalation of the conflict across other borders into Turkey and Iran. But also, the initial success of Islamic State in establishing a caliphate and calling for global jihad has inspired terrorists around the world — including the gunman in Martin Place and a teenager in suburban Melbourne — so defeating Islamic State in the Middle East helps to preserve security at home.

Changes to domestic policy have included increased funding for security and intelligence agencies at a time of widespread fiscal stringency. We can also expect greater mandatory storage of communications metadata. Legal powers have also been enhanced, including in relation to foreign fighters. Given what we know about the activities of terrorists who previously have fought or trained in Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and Iraq, as well as those who have trained in countries such as Yemen, these provisions are prudent, although we are yet to see how they will work in practice. Recent experience also bears out the good sense in new laws against advocating terrorism, as well as in imposing control orders on suspects. It is little comfort to know the jihadists in Australia, Paris and Ottawa had been known to police and had come under attention for extreme beliefs because, despite that, they were able to unleash horror. We need to be wary on two fronts with these laws: that they do not go too far in depriving us of the very liberties we seek to preserve; and that our agencies use them with sufficient diligence that extremists do not slip

through their net.

In combating Islamist extremism we must also focus on the responsibilities, vulnerabilities and disparate nature of our Muslim communities, and engage in open and robust discussion without compromising the openness and liberty that define our democracy. To ensure radical Islamists don't taint all Muslims it is incumbent upon politically moderate Muslims to help tackle the extremists. By killing cartoonists the terrorists have tried to weaken our resolve on free speech, and divide us. "It would be a travesty if we were robust in our criticism of everything except that which might do us harm," says Mr Abbott. "We have to be prepared to call things as we see them."

He is right. And the government has been presented with a good place to start. It should question how the national broadcaster has been allowed to effectively outsource some of its live news coverage and analysis of the Paris atrocities to the Al Jazeera television network. To have our public network simply relay the content of an outfit owned by the Qatari government is bizarre enough. But when internal emails from Al Jazeera show its staff were encouraged to consider this was "not a broad attack on the French population" and that the terrorists' radicalisation was linked to Abu Ghraib we ought to seriously question Mark Scott's right to present this material on behalf of the ABC. The national broadcaster needs to value plurality and robust debate. But it should not outsource that national duty to Qatar.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/>

## **Opinion: We need a new anti-terror strategy**

The Paris attack on *Charlie Hebdo* and the subsequent events in France serve as an unfortunate reminder that the threat of terrorism is a real and present danger, and that nobody is safe from it.

Today, it is difficult to completely secure capitals or major cities, and this is something that can be seen in all the major terrorist attacks that have struck urban centers over the years. What is even more dangerous is that terrorists are now seeking the softest targets in order to maximize the death toll as much as possible. Targets now are chosen based on their propaganda value in order to secure the highest level of media coverage. The latest attacks, for example, have granted Al-Qaeda media coverage that the victims of Assad's terrorism in Syria can only dream about.

What happened in France confirms, once again, that there must be a real resolution to this phenomenon of terrorism—not just a temporary solution, with the world going about its business as it was before. What happened in France this week recalls the deadly Mumbai attacks of 2008, particularly with regards to the prolonged pursuit of the terrorist attackers. What we need to do now, in the aftermath of this terrible attack, is review the way that terrorism is dealt with internationally, and put forward an entirely new comprehensive strategy to deal with it. This strategy should be based on dealing with the hotbeds of conflict that are feeding this terrorism phenomenon, whether we are talking about Iraq or Syria, Yemen or Lebanon, or Somalia.

When we look at what happened in France, we can easily recall other terrorists attacks that have taken place around the world in quick succession: the Saudi-Iraqi border attack carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) earlier this week; the suffering of the Syrian people at the hands of the Assad regime; the Parliament Hill shootings in Ottawa last year. Terrorism is a global phenomenon.

Today, we must target the conflict zones that incubate this deadly phenomenon, as well as enact new laws to deal with incitement to hatred and violence. If restricting the financing of terrorism is vital; no less vital is the confronting of all those who justify terrorism and the ideology that goes with it. This comes at a time when social media has, unfortunately, become an important stage where this kind of hate-filled extremist ideology is being spewed and promoted. The issue here is not just prevention but deterrence—freedom of opinion is different from inciting and justifying hatred and terrorism.

The major problems facing the world today is that terrorism, like any phenomenon, is developing and mutating. Therefore, confronting this requires quick reactions and thinking outside the box. So the issue now must go beyond monitoring and targeting terrorist financing; we must confront the foundations of this terrible phenomenon. Every state must be responsible for what is happening in their region, but within the framework of a new global effort to deal with this threat.

The international community must work together to deal with these hotbeds of conflict, and confront the countries that are facilitating this dangerous situation, particularly Syria and Iran. There must be a decisive international stand against terrorism, particularly as, if the signs are to be believed following the events in France, things will get worse before they get better.

<http://www.aawsat.net/2015/01/article55340290>

## **A world in the shadows of terrorism**

Saturday, 10 January 2015

The terror attack on Charlie Hebdo, the worst on French soil in 50 years and the clashes it spawned, showed in bold relief how vulnerable are open democratic states to the diabolical machinations of a handful of trained killers. Paris, the political and cultural heart of France, a country of 66 million people, and a major world power with a nuclear arsenal, was neutralized for two days by four terrorists, according to preliminary reports.

Never have a few people, disrupted the lives of so many, with such low cost. In recent years, until the shocking rise of ISIS last summer, the literature on terrorism was dominated by the relatively new strain of terror threat cyber-attacks. Huge financial and significant human resources have been allocated to defend against this kind of terrorism that could cripple a modern economy, and to develop offensive cyber capabilities, particularly after major American corporations and key national security structures like the Pentagon have been subjected to successful hacking attacks. But conventional terror attacks, as we have seen recently in Canada, Australia and now France are as deadly and as crippling as ever.

### **Asymmetrical warfare**

Asymmetrical warfare is as old as the age of ancient empires. The 'barbarians', (the name given by the Romans to those less developed than them and who fought them and laid siege to Roman cities) and particularly the fierce Germanic tribes waged this kind of war against the center of gravity of the Roman empire, usually using unconventional, hence asymmetrical tools to gradually degrade and weaken the empire.

Until the mid-twentieth century, empires, then powerful Nation-states dealt harshly with the varieties of 'barbarians' they encountered on the battle fields, whether they were trying to breach the ramparts of the civilized cities, or when they were in their own habitats. The empires and the powerful states that dominated the West (and the world) since the fall of Constantinople in 1453 had a high threshold of pain in the pursuit of their political, strategic and economic interests. Any review of the costs of wars and conflicts from the Napoleonic wars to the Second World War reveals the astonishing pain States were willing to exact on their own societies and peoples to finance even unnecessary wars. These attitudes to casualties and to the human/material costs of conflicts in general began to change, because of the rising cost of warfare, and critical public opinions and free media and the need for democratic governments to convince parliaments that their national security policies are prudent.

### **Terrorism in a globalized world**

Until the 19th century, the impact of terrorism was limited; after all what can you

do with a dagger even if you are willing to die. The cult of the 'assassins' (from the Arabic Hashshashin, but properly they were known as Nizari Ismailis, an offshoot of the Shiite sect) in medieval Syria and Persia, led by charismatic men in their mountainous redoubts, Rashid ad-Din Sinan, also known as the Old Man of the Mountain at Masyaf, Syria and Hassan-i-Sabbah at Alamut, Persia dispatched young Fedayeen armed with a dagger to assassinate publicly. They were so brazen in Syria that they tried twice unsuccessfully to assassinate the famed Kurdish leader Saladin (Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub), arguably the most important Muslim leader in the war against the Crusades.

The marriage of political anarchy and the modern weapons of hand guns and grenades in the 19th century elevated terrorism into a higher ground. In that century Terrorism shook every European capital, from Madrid to Moscow. Many political figures were publicly assassinated. Terrorism was so ubiquitous, that it informed the works of the greatest novelists of the era, from Dostoyevsky and Turgenev in Russia, to Emile Zola in France and Charles Dickens in England. The impulses that animated the 'assassins' of the middle ages, and the anarchists of the 19th century as well as al-Qaeda foot soldiers maybe the same, but their means, and their worlds were radically different. The war waged by al-Qaeda against the U.S. although it involved a miniscule number of terrorists, but because of the tools they employed, using commercial airplanes as missiles, and the targets they destroyed, the damage was exponential and unique in the annals of terrorism. On 9/11, nineteen young Muslims shocked the world into the era of terrorism in a globalized world.

### **Altered modern states**

The biggest asymmetry between the U.S. and al-Qaeda is in cost each party incurred on 9/11. Al-Qaeda spent less than a half a million dollars plotting the attacks to destroy the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and probably the congress. If one includes the cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Cost for the U.S. is a least \$3.3 Trillion according to the New York Times, and the cost is rising. The attacks forced the U.S. to establish a huge security bureaucracy, and called it the Department of Homeland Security, which has intruded in unprecedented ways on the lives of ordinary Americans. This is a not so brave new world altered by the actions of a handful of people; some of them are still on the run in the mountains of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. These are the new 'assassins', who can be found in their faraway readouts, just as next door, in New York or in Boston.

It is true that the U.S has so far preventing al-Qaeda and other terrorists groups from executing another successful major attack against the homeland, but terror in a variety of forms and levels remained with us. There were so many close calls, and everyone knows that the nature of the beasts means that even the best national security measures cannot be one hundred percent proof. The aggressive campaign against, al-Qaeda in Yemen, al-Shabab in Somalia, and in the last few months the war against ISIS in Syria and Iraq has kept the war overseas, with occasional visits

to the homeland.

### **From the grave**

The apparent connection between the perpetrators of the Paris attacks and Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born al-Qaeda leader killed by an American drone in 2011 is another astonishing proof of the resilience and the malignancy of the fanatical modern-day terror. Anwar al-Awlaki was a modern version of the old man of the mountain, in that he was charismatic, articulate terror guru who appealed in his perfect English to alienated, disgruntled Muslims in the West to join the cause against America. In fact al-Awlaki is responsible directly or indirectly for almost fifty attacks or attempted attacks against U.S. Targets. And apparently he is still haunting France and possibly the U.S. from his grave, three years after he was dispatched to the lowest levels in hell.

Anwar al-Awlaki has 'inspired' people like Nidal Hassan, the U.S. Army major who gunned down 13 fellow soldiers in Fort Hood in 2009. Major Hassan was allegedly a 'pen pal' with al-Awlaki chatting regularly on line. On Christmas day 2009, a young Nigerian student named Omar Farouk Abdulmuttalab tried to destroy an American earliner over the city of Detroit. Abdulmuttalab met al-Awlaki and listened to his preaching of Jihad against the U.S. in Yemen.

### **Threshold of pain**

Although, most European societies have experienced repeated acts of terror, whether home grown or from abroad since the Second World War, their threshold of pain has been diminishing. Ten years ago al-Qaeda bombed the Madrid Metro killing 201 people. The objective was to force Spain to withdraw her small military contingent in Iraq. Al-Qaeda won, when a new government in Madrid ended Spain's unpopular participation in the Iraqi war. In recent years, European countries have shown great reluctance to engage in military campaigns or missions even in the Balkans or in nearby African states with the exception of France and to a lesser extent England. Their threshold of pain in Afghanistan and Iraq was very thin. Europe could not stop the bleeding of Kosovo and Bosnia without the direct involvement of the United States.

But even the diminishing American ability to absorb the pain of human casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq, the two longest conflicts in the country's history, is a testament that we are living in a new altered state, that what the country used to endure in the past is no longer acceptable today. The Obama administration is so concerned that it could suffer casualties in Iraq or Syria, that it has neutralized itself. The war on al-Qaeda and ISIS and against terror in a globalized world, has exposed modern day democracies – given their transparent political institution, and their people's high standards of living- to new dangers that cannot be addressed effectively without demonstrating the willingness and readiness to suffer sacrifices and endure pain. This simple fact is fully understood by the modern day 'assassins'

planning terror in their redoubts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Raqqa and Yemen. Those who have a higher threshold of pain will win and inherit the future.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/>

## Attaque de Charlie Hebdo: et maintenant les explications

09/01/2015

CHARLIE HEBDO - Deux individus cagoulés, armés jusqu'aux dents, qui abattent froidement 12 personnes, et en blessent autant dont certaines gravement ; parmi les disparus, des caricaturistes de grand talent : Cabu, Wolinski, Charb, Tignous, Honoré, ainsi que deux policiers en service, tel est le scénario abject qui s'est déroulé à Paris, hier matin, dans les locaux de Charlie hebdo. Sous couvert de foi musulmane (qu'ils déshonorent), ces hommes ne sont en réalité que des fanatiques, devenus criminels de droit commun, de misérables assassins au sens du droit pénal (puisqu'il y a préméditation). Aujourd'hui identifiés, ces individus, si leur culpabilité venait à être avérée, encourent les peines les plus graves, à hauteur de leur méfait.

Nous ne reviendrons pas ici [sur ce que nous avons déjà dit](#), que cet acte criminel est une redoutable atteinte à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, de la presse en particulier, une violation dangereuse de la sécurité des biens et des personnes. Concentrons-nous sur la personnalité des deux criminels supposés. On les connaît aujourd'hui grâce à la carte d'identité de l'un deux, découverte dans la Citroën C3, abandonnée dans la rue de Meaux, après l'agression. Il s'agit de deux frères, d'origine algérienne, Chérif et Saïd Kouachi, âgés respectivement de 32 et 34 ans. Ces deux jeunes ont grandi dans le XIXe arrondissement de Paris, quartier des Buttes Chaumont, ont appartenu à la bande de ce quartier, puis, repérés par des prédicateurs, ont fréquenté la mosquée de Barbès. L'on connaît mieux la vie du cadet, Chérif, petit fumeur de cannabis, buveur, "musulman occasionnel" selon ses propres termes. Le jeune homme aurait tenté, en 2005, de gagner l'Irak pour se battre aux côtés des islamistes contre les Américains.

Mais il est arrêté à l'aéroport. Chérif, titulaire d'un brevet d'Etat d'éducateur sportif, aurait exercé différents petits boulots dont celui de livreur de pizzas. Connu des services de police, il est condamné en 2008 à une peine de trois ans d'emprisonnement. Chérif Kouachi, au moment des faits, était domicilié avec son compagne à Gennevilliers, dans les Hauts-de-Seine. Son frère vivait en couple à Reims.

Le parcours de ces deux jeunes est en vérité semblable à celui d'autres jeunes de cités (ils auraient pu à cet égard être d'une origine différente, et même ne pas être issus d'une immigration particulière).

C'est celui de jeunes que la société n'a pas su insérer par la réussite scolaire ou la mise au travail (bien entendu, tout jeune en échec scolaire ou en inactivité ne devient pas délinquant ou fanatique : il n'existe aucun déterminisme). Celui d'une jeunesse des milieux populaires abandonnée à un sort peu enviable, dépourvue de soutien familial. Voilà bien qui ressemble à de la misère sociale, une misère génératrice de frustrations, de ressentiments, d'agressivité, de "haine". D'une jeunesse partant à la dérive, manipulée par des fondamentalistes islamistes, d'une jeunesse

à qui l'on fait miroiter, via les réseaux sociaux souvent, le projet d'une "guerre sainte" contre l'Occident. Cette jeunesse, à qui la société ne reconnaît pas d'identité, qui ne voit plus le sens de sa vie, est alors prête à s'offrir à toutes les identités substitutives. Pour obtenir une reconnaissance.

Concluons en rappelant quelques données établies. Toute la jeunesse des cités n'est pas une jeunesse perdue, loin s'en faut. Dans leur majorité, les jeunes des quartiers sont des garçons et des filles studieux, laborieux, créatifs, imaginatifs. Toute la jeunesse, de confession ou de sympathie musulmane, n'est pas une jeunesse terroriste qui, au nom du prophète, serait prête à se livrer aux crimes les plus abominables. Tous les Mohamed, Karim ne sont pas des Chérif ou des Saïd, loin s'en faut. L'Islam, faut-il le rappeler, est une religion de paix, de concorde et de fraternité. Honte aux extrémistes qui salissent son image !

La lutte contre le terrorisme, qui implique des éléments jeunes, passe donc, on l'oublie souvent, d'abord par une prévention générale de nature économique (la construction de parcours professionnels positifs), une prévention spécifique de nature éducative (soit une plus grande implication des familles auprès de leurs enfants dans leur tâche de transmission des valeurs ; une véritable formation des élèves aux droits de l'Homme et du citoyen, aux principes de la démocratie). Elle passe par une plus grande surveillance des réseaux sociaux qui présentent aux jeunes les projets les plus criminels. S'agissant des djihadistes en action à l'étranger, et qui rentrent, ou viendraient à rentrer en France, il ne semble pas que la réponse répressive, de type carcéral, soit la plus appropriée, c'est-à-dire la plus efficace. Une prise en charge psychologique, comme c'est le cas aux Pays-Bas, qui vise à une véritable désintoxication mentale, est seule de nature à provoquer des changements durables de comportement, préalables au retour à une vie sociale plus ordinaire. Pour ceux qui en revanche commettent des agressions sur le sol français, une action vigoureuse de la justice demeure la seule issue concevable dans un Etat de droit.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/>

## Who's who: The five Paris terror suspects

January 9, 2015

Twin hostage standoffs rocked France on Friday as police mounted simultaneous attacks, killing two terror suspects holed up in a warehouse north of Paris and a gunman who seized hostages at a kosher supermarket in the capital.

Here's what's known about the suspects:

### **HAYAT BOUMEDDIENE, 26: WANTED**

Boumediene is wanted in connection with the shooting death of a policewoman, Clarissa Jean-Philippe, 27, on Thursday and may be the girlfriend and accomplice of supermarket gunman Amedy Coulibaly, 32. Boumediene is Coulibaly's common-law wife. She remains at large and is believed to be armed and dangerous.



**Hayat Boumediene, 26, is wanted in connection with the shooting of a French policewoman.**  
*(Photo: Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire)*

### **AMEDY COULIBALY, 32: KILLED**

Coulibaly — suspected in the shooting of the policewoman Thursday — was the gunman behind the supermarket attack Friday.

In a telephone interview with French broadcaster BFMTV during the standoff, Coulibaly claimed to belong to the Islamic State and said the attacks were "coordinated" with the two



**Amedy Coulibaly has been identified by French officials as the gunman holding as many as five people at gunpoint at a kosher supermarket at the Porte de Vincennes in eastern Paris on Jan. 9.**  
*(Photo: Paris Prefecture)*

brothers accused of the mass murders at a French satirical newspaper Wednesday. Coulibaly and the brothers "are all part of the same network," said Thomas Joscelyn, a terrorism analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "The attack and what they're trying to do is consistent with what (al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) had been trying to do."

Coulibaly was sentenced to five years in prison in 2013 for his role in a plan to free Smain Ait Ali Belkacem, who was convicted in a bombing of a rail station museum in 1995, according to the French weekly *Le Journal de Dimanche*. He was released early from prison.

### **CHERIF KOUACHI, 32: KILLED**

In a telephone interview with French broadcaster BFMTV during the standoff Friday, Cherif Kouachi, accused in the massacre at the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper, claimed he was sent and financed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Around 2004, Kouachi met Farid Benyettou, a radical street preacher, according to court records revealed in 2008. Kouachi helped Benyettou recruit, train and send at least a dozen young men to fight alongside al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Police arrested Kouachi in 2008, days before he planned to leave for Iraq via Syria. His lawyer argued that his client had gotten involved with the wrong crowd and was a reluctant participant.

In 2010, Kouachi was arrested again, accused by France's Anti-Terrorism Directorate of participating in the failed plot to free Belkacem, the railway museum bomber.

### **SAID KOUACHI, 34: DEAD**

French authorities told their U.S. counterparts that Said Kouachi, 34, made a trek to Yemen in 2011, according to a U.S. official who is not authorized to comment on the case publicly. He said French authorities believed Kouachi traveled there before

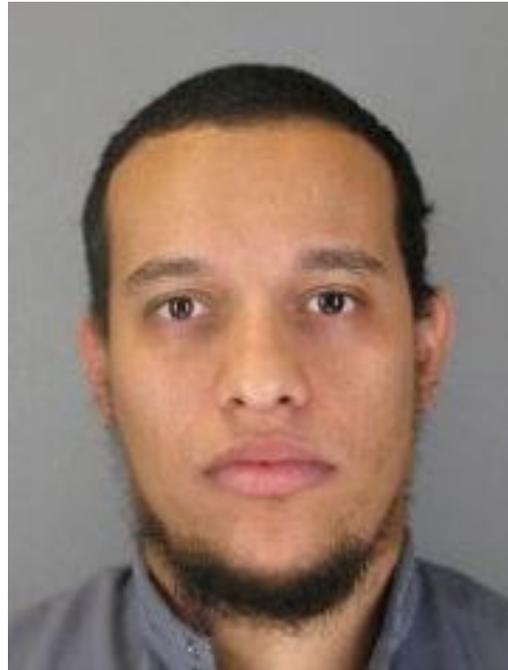


**Cherif Kouachi, 32, was wanted in connection with an attack at the satirical weekly "Charlie Hebdo."** (Photo: Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire)

Sept. 30, 2011, when the senior al-Qaeda operative in Yemen, U.S.-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, was killed by a U.S. drone strike.

Whether Kouachi had any direct contact with al-Awlaki was not known, the official said.

Both Kouachis were well-known to French police, and their names have been on U.S. "no-fly" terror lists for years, the U.S. official said. They were French citizens, born in Paris to parents of Algerian descent.



**Said Kouachi, 34, was wanted in connection with an attack at the satirical weekly "Charlie Hebdo."** *(Photo: Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire)*

#### **HAMYD MOURAD, 18: SURRENDERED TO POLICE**

Not much is known about Mourad or his connection to the Kouachi brothers. A third suspect in the assault on the newspaper's Paris offices, Mourad surrendered at a police station early Thursday in Charleville-Mezieres, a small town in France's eastern Champagne region, Paris prosecutor's spokeswoman Agnes Thibault-Lecuivre said.

Mourad's role in the attack, if any, remains unclear. The teenager has an alibi, telling authorities he was at school at the time of the mass murder, the BBC reported.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/>

## After Paris attacks, questions about intelligence failures

January 9 2015



Security forces moved in on a kosher market in Porte de Vincennes on the eastern outskirts of Paris to free hostages.

French security services are likely to face intense pressure to explain how known militants — including one trained by an al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen — faced no apparent scrutiny before they launched this week's terrorist attacks in Paris, including the daytime assault on a satirical newspaper, a long-declared Islamist target.

The search for answers is likely to focus on a three-year period preceding this week's shooting during which two of the alleged gunmen, Said and Chérif Kouachi, seemingly dropped out of the view of French intelligence services as well as their U.S. counterparts.

U.S. counterterrorism officials said they have spent the days since the attack on the newspaper Charlie Hebdo scouring databases maintained by the CIA and National Security Agency, among others, for clues to whether [the Kouachis](#) kept in communication with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) during what one official described as a "dark period" in a decade-long chronology.

Chérif Kouachi, speaking to a French journalist shortly before he was killed by security forces Friday, said he and his brother were acting on behalf of "al-Qaeda in Yemen," and that the U.S.-born cleric and operative Anwar al-Awlaki had played a role in the training received by Said Kouachi during his trip to Yemen in 2011.

A member of AQAP said in a statement that [the group directed the Paris attack](#), but

U.S. intelligence officials said they had found no evidence to support the claim. They said the Yemeni group, which has been overshadowed in the past year by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, may simply have seized on the opportunity to associate itself with the attack.

French authorities launched a massive dragnet this week following the massacre at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. Here are the key moments so far. (Jorge Ribas/The Washington Post)

But security officials said the Paris attack has raised anxiety beyond concern over a re-emergence of AQAP.

A senior U.S. official noted that more than 3,000 European citizens, including at least 1,000 from France, [have flocked to Syria](#) to fight with the Islamic State and other militant groups. Some have returned to Europe and could perhaps go for years without drawing attention — much as the Kouachis did — before it is clear whether they pose a threat.

“They are potential time bombs,” the official said.

If so, the fuse leading up to the Paris attack often seemed to burn in plain view.

The target, Charlie Hebdo, had long been in the sights of Islamist groups angered by the publication’s mocking of Islam. Its offices had been firebombed in 2011, and it was listed among AQAP’s priority targets last year in the group’s “Inspire” magazine.

The Kouachis had been under the scrutiny of French authorities at least as early as 2005, when the younger brother, Chérif, was arrested as he attempted to leave for Syria as part of an alleged plan to join insurgents in Iraq. He also appeared in a French television documentary on jihadist networks.

During three years in detention, French officials said, Chérif Kouachi became acquainted with another radical, Djamel Beghal, accused of planning an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Kouachi was released in 2008.

Cherif Kouachi, one of the suspected gunmen in the attack on Charlie Hebdo newspaper in Paris, was seen in a 2005 episode of “Pièces à Conviction” on young jihadists. Kouachi was killed Jan. 9, 2015, during a shootout with police. (National Audiovisual Institute)

Three years later, Said Kouachi traveled to Yemen, apparently to seek training from AQAP, a group that had already set in motion a series of plots, including the failed attempt to blow up a U.S.-bound airliner on Christmas Day, 2009, with a bomb sewn into an operative’s underwear.

The brothers had also surfaced on counterterrorism screens in the United States. Lauren C. Anderson, the FBI’s top agent in Paris when Chérif Kouachi was arrested in early 2005, said he and others were placed on U.S. counterterrorism databases shortly afterwards.

“There were indications they were trying to go to Syria to get into Iraq,” said Anderson, who later directed FBI counterterrorism operations in New York. “That’s how they got on the no-fly list.”

That list would also likely have prompted the NSA and other spy agencies to scour U.S. intelligence databases for intercepted communications or other intelligence fragments connecting Chérif Kouachi to terrorist groups.

U.S. officials said they are also seeking to determine whether the older Kouachi met with Awlaki in 2011. Officials said they see that as plausible because Awlaki was in charge of AQAP’s external operations and presumably would have been acutely interested in a recruit from Europe. But they have uncovered no evidence of such an encounter.

Awlaki was killed in a CIA drone strike shortly after Kouachi’s return to France, raising speculation that the cleric’s death may account for the brothers’ extended period of inactivity — that they shelved plans or cut off communications with AQAP as part of a broader effort to maintain a lower profile.

Either way, the brothers appear to have faced diminishing levels of scrutiny from French security services that over the past two years have become increasingly consumed with tracking an exodus of French citizens to Syria.

France is widely seen as the most aggressive country in Europe in its surveillance of Islamists, as well as its willingness to seize its own citizens’ passports and take other measures to prevent them from departing for Syria’s civil war.

But even before this week’s attack, France has been at the center of a series of apparent security lapses.

Last year, French citizen Mehdi Nemouche killed four people in a shooting at a Jewish museum in Brussels, even though French authorities knew he had gone to fight in Syria and had been told by German officials that he had returned to Europe.

In 2012, a French national, Mohammed Merah, killed three Jewish schoolchildren, a rabbi and three French soldiers in a series of shootings in southwestern France. He had been on a U.S. no-fly list since 2010 after he was detained in Afghanistan and sent back to France, where he had a criminal record and was known for his extremist views.

Merah was killed in a shootout with French commandos in Toulouse on March 22, 2012. At the time, the French interior minister, asked if the security services could have done more, said that “expressing opinions, showing Salafist opinions” — a reference to a fundamentalist strain of Islam — “is not enough to bring someone before justice.”

*Julie Tate and Karen DeYoung contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

## **RESPONDING TO THE PARIS ATTACK: BEWARE THE FATAL ERROR – ANALYSIS**

JANUARY 9, 2015

The killings in Paris have resulted in panic and public concern, but the authorities should not give the attackers what they seek. States and security forces should avoid the trap of reacting to terrorist violence with overwhelming state violence, which would serve the interests of radical militant groups to sow distrust and antagonism.

By Farish A Noor\*

By now the world has been made aware of the tragic killings that took place at the office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris, France. The fact that we know about this event, and are reporting and writing about it, already means the attackers have won the first round in their terror campaign: this is to publicise their deeds and to strike fear in the hearts of many. Having made this concession, we cannot afford to allow them to gain any further ground.

Charlie Hebdo, like its counterpart publication Le Canard enchaîné, happens to be a satirical publication that has lashed out on a range of issues, from racism to political corruption, shady business dealings to abuse of political power. In the course of its work, it has also targeted politicians, celebrities, populist demagogues and religious figures.

### **Playing into the hands of the attackers**

Ironically, its readership – which has never been as large as the more popular and populist tabloids – is made up of left-leaning better-educated professionals who have traditionally been associated with the more democratic, open-minded, more tolerant sectors of French society. The fact that the paper has been consistently raising questions about the treatment of minorities and immigrants, and has been a thorn in the side of right-wing nationalists in France tells us something about where its political leanings lie.

But by attacking Charlie Hebdo's office, and killing some of its editorial staff and cartoonists, those responsible seem to be driven by a more nihilistic intention of deliberately sowing even more racism, discord and distrust among the French public. There has been condemnation of the attack by European Muslim intellectuals like Tariq Ramadan, and the French media have highlighted the fact that among those killed was a French-Muslim policeman.

Still, this latest incident is bound to fall right into the hands of right-wing nationalists who will use it as an excuse for an even more vocal campaign against minorities and immigrants in the country. What happens in France in the coming days and weeks will be a test of the country's national resilience, and whether French society

can come together at a time of national crisis.

### **Shift to the right?**

Should the political centre of French society move to the right as a result of this event – as we are seeing now in Germany, with demonstrations held against Muslim minorities there – then that would signal a singular victory for the terrorists themselves, who remain a minority within a minority in their own community.

Rising anti-minority sentiment would only divide French society further, and weaken the voices of the moderate democrats who wish to uphold the principles of French republicanism, which happens to include the defence of free speech and the protection of the press. It would also add fuel to the anxiety of the minorities themselves, some of whom may feel that they are not loved or welcomed in the adopted country of their birth, and who feel that there is no hope for them to integrate and succeed in France.

This can only lead to a deeper societal division between the minority and majority communities, and create an oppositional relationship that will lead to more antagonism and racism. The net result would be a situation where the moderate middle ground shrinks even further, and the extremists on both sides grow bolder – which is precisely what some radical militant groups would like to see happen.

The other thing to watch is how the state security services in France deal with this genuine security problem, and whether the effort to stem the problem of extremism can and will include the active and meaningful participation of all communities. This is particularly poignant in this case, for the magazine Charlie Hebdo was known for its staunch and consistent defence of civil liberties for all.

When dealing with the very serious problem of violent extremism, states and security forces need to avoid the trap of reacting to violence with an even greater threat of overwhelming state violence, which merely heralds the way for repression. That would be a fatal error.

Should they respond in that manner, it would lead to a situation where the terrorists have won an even greater victory, for the whole country would then be in a state of constant fear. When dealing with terrorism of any kind, states and societies need to be firm, but above all we must never let the terrorists get what they want, which is a widespread moral panic for all.

*\*Farish A Noor is Associate Professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University.*

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

## Attentat à Charlie Hebdo: "La lutte contre le terrorisme est très efficace en France"

08/01/2015

Une chasse à l'homme est organisée depuis mercredi midi pour retrouver les frères Kouachi, soupçonnés d'avoir commis l'attaque terroriste au siège de *Charlie Hebdo*. La police ratisse actuellement la Picardie. L'analyse de Philippe Migaux, professeur à Sciences Po, spécialiste de la sécurité internationale.



Le GIPN et le Raid ratisse la Picardie à la recherche des frères Kouachi, suspectés d'avoir commis l'attaque à Charlie Hebdo.

AFP PHOTO / FRANCOIS LO PRESTI

**L'[attentat contre Charlie Hebdo](#) a été commis mercredi midi. Ce jeudi en fin de journée, [les deux principaux suspects courent toujours](#) malgré un important dispositif policier. Comment expliquer que cette traque prenne tant de temps?**

38heures pour des hommes aussi déterminés et armés ne me paraît pas extrêmement long. Souvenez-vous de la traque de Khaled Kelkal [*un terroriste impliqué dans plusieurs attentats dans les années 1990, ndlr*]: il est parvenu à se cacher pendant près de trois semaines avant d'être repéré par des cueilleurs de champignons.

D'autant que [l'attaque de ce matin à Paris](#), qui même si elle ne semble pas directement liée, a mobilisé des services de police. Le fait qu'ils soient actuellement probablement dans des zones de campagne [*Picardie, ndlr*] peut ralentir le travail des enquêteurs: il y a moins de témoins, plus d'endroits pour se cacher. Par ailleurs, avec la multitude d'[informations qui circulent dans les médias](#), ils suivent probablement les avancées policières. Il faut bien avoir à l'esprit que les premiers à écouter la radio sont toujours les malfaiteurs pour avoir les dernières infos.

**Mais l'un des deux était connu et fiché depuis longtemps pour son [implication dans des activités terroristes](#). Il a été condamné en 2008 pour avoir tenté de monter une filière vers l'Irak. Est-ce une négligence des services de renseignements?**

Il y a une augmentation considérable du nombre de djihadistes ces derniers mois avec [la montée en puissance de l'organisation terroriste Etat islamique](#). Ils sont de plus en plus formés à la clandestinité: ils n'utilisent pas de portable, ne se connectent pas à Internet... C'était notamment le cas de [Mohamed Merah](#). Parallèlement, le nombre de cibles potentielles est en augmentation. Néanmoins, la lutte contre le terrorisme est très efficace en France: en 2014, six attentats ont été déjoués en France. Mais le risque zéro n'existe pas.

**Peut-on imaginer qu'ils cherchent à fuir la police pour éviter d'aller en prison ou ils veulent rejoindre un lieu public pour faire un nouvel attentat?**

Ils semblent déterminer à aller jusqu'au bout d'un processus. Pour mourir en martyr, il faut mourir en tuant ses ennemis.

**Peut-on parler de loups solitaires?**

C'est bien trop tôt pour le dire, ils sont peut-être impliqués dans des filières. Autant Al-Qaeda que l'Etat islamique a intérêt à commettre des attentats en France. Les attentats n'ont pas été revendiqués, simplement "salués" par l'organisation terroriste Etat islamique. Mais s'en prendre aux caricaturistes du Prophète a toujours été une cible d'Al-Qaeda. Au moment des caricatures en Suède, un terroriste de ce mouvement avait pénétré dans l'appartement d'un dessinateur suédois avec une hache. Il avait pu être arrêté au dernier moment.

<http://www.lexpress.fr/>

## Syria

### JAMAAT ANSAR AL-ISLAM IN SYRIA JOINS THE ISLAMIC STATE? – ANALYSIS

JANUARY 10, 2015

As outlined [previously](#) and [elsewhere in my writings](#), Jamaat Ansar al-Islam (JAI) is a jihadi group that originated in Iraq and expanded into Syria in 2011 thanks at least in part to the efforts of one Abu Muhammad al-Muhajir (an Iraqi himself who was later killed near Mosul while returning from Syria to Iraq). A [rival of the Islamic State \(IS\)](#) because it did not accept the statehood claims of IS or its previous incarnations, JAI tried to ride the initial rapid wave of IS-spearheaded insurgent gains in Iraq beginning with the fall of Mosul in June 2014 but soon found itself suffering from arrests, killings and defections at the hands of IS.

By the end of August 2014, a statement had been issued in the name of JAI Iraq's Majlis Shura affirming the dissolution of JAI in Iraq and joining IS. Although this statement was denied by those controlling JAI Iraq's official Twitter account, it is apparent that the affirmation of allegiance to IS represented the vast majority of JAI Iraq, leaving the remnant loyalists no choice but to quit the field, with the result that there have been no more releases in the name of a JAI Iraq, including a very significant break from previous years with the lack of an Eid al-Adha message or media release. Therefore, for all intents and purposes, JAI Iraq has ceased to exist.



*JAI Syria reportedly in the 'Sahel' region of Syria (Latakia). Photo released last month by the @ansarulsham account.*

All this is in contrast with JAI's Syria branch, which had originally spanned the entirety of northern Syria but on account of conflict with IS became confined mainly to Aleppo and Idlib provinces, more recently making a claimed showing in Latakia province. JAI Syria, which put out photos for Eid al-Adha, continued to advertise its presence on the ground with photos displaying its banner and members via its official Twitter account @ansarulsham.

Now, however, a controversy has arisen whereby the @ansarulsham account has [issued a statement](#) declaring a supposed decision by JAI Syria's leadership for the group to pledge allegiance to IS:

**Statement 449**

**17 Rabi' al-Awal 1436**

**8 January 2015**

**Allegiance of JAI in Bilad al-Sham [Syria] to IS**

[...]

Indeed we give good tidings to the Islamic Ummah in the east and west of the land of the fact that 'JAI in Bilad al-Sham' is following the example of their brothers from 'Ansar al-Islam in Iraq' and so we announce our pledge of allegiance (bay'ah) to Caliph Ibrahim- may God protect him- the Caliph of the Muslims...And this pledge of allegiance is to be considered the dissolution of 'JAI in Bilad al-Sham' in answer to the command of God Almighty both to do away with division and unite the Muslims under one banner and Caliph who may implement the ruling of God's law in the land, declare all tyranny of idolatry to be disbelief, defend the sanctities of the Muslims, give victory to the Ahl al-Sunna in every region of the Earth, while not compromising his religion for the material world or bartering at the expense of the upright direction [program]. We have announced this pledge of allegiance and hope it to be a source of pain for all the disbelievers and hypocrites and a source of joy and happiness for all the Muslims.

This statement is to be considered the last from the group in Bilad al-Sham and this account is the sole official account for the group and any statement issued after this number as false and coming from factions not linked to us (...).

**Leadership of JAI in Bilad al-Sham.**

**17 Rabi al-Awal 1436**

**8 January 2015**

This statement had been *preceded* in time by the establishment of another account on Twitter- [@ansarulislam sh](#)- that claimed the @ansarulsham account had been hijacked:

“After we lost connection with our account @ansarulsham and until we recover it, we will tweet and work using this new account. And we inform you that the group is not responsible for what is published on the aforementioned account, including

the last two tweets [from January 5 urging followers to expect a new release] and what will be published after. And the brothers are currently working to recover it, so until then this is our sole official account on Twitter.”



Photo from the latest series released by @ansarulislam\_sh

The account then published a [series of images](#) of a graduation of a new cohort of children from Qur’an memorization school- a program said to have been done in cooperation with JAI Syria. The date given is 17 Rabi al-Awal 1436 AH, though the corresponding Gregorian date given (4 January 2015) appears to be incorrect. Perhaps there is a confusion in that the photos may have been produced on 4 January 2015.

So what is going on here? Which of the two accounts represents the majority of JAI Syria? Is this the end of JAI Syria?

To answer the last of the above questions in a short phrase: probably not. To preface though, one should not give too much credence to Ansar al-Islam fanboy accounts like @ansaruna, who has his/her facts confused in [claiming a logical contradiction](#) between this purported allegiance to IS by JAI Syria and a supposed IS claim that ‘hole [sic: whole] Ansar al-Islam give them bay3a [bay’ah]’ 5 months ago. Actually, the original statement put out in JAI Iraq’s name by the majority of IS loyalists in August 2014 never claimed the dissolution of all of JAI but only the Iraq branch, while urging the Syria branch to follow its example.

In any case, the situation in Syria vis-a-vis JAI and IS is not exactly analogous to that in Iraq. In Iraq, territory can be divided three ways: Sunni insurgent control, central

government forces control, and Kurdish control. For the non-IS insurgent groups in Iraq, the latter two do not offer a 'third way' of safety from the power of IS in the way that remaining rebel-held territory in Syria does. Already another notable difference exists in that the @ansarulislam\_sh account is at least trying to substantiate JAI Syria's continued existence with visual evidence, something which the JAI Iraq remnants that controlled the official Twitter account failed to do after denying the statement of joining IS (with no subsequent statements, photos, videos etc.). Further, in Iraq, the eventual statement by IS loyalists in JAI Iraq did not come from nowhere but had rather been the product of two months of direct pressure on the group from IS' power with a series of pledges of allegiance first advertised by IS in [late June 2014](#).

There is also the issue of practicality: being spread in Idlib, Aleppo and Latakia, would it be so easy for the entirety/majority of JAI Syria, if it merged with IS, to evacuate to IS-held territories? Here, some further context and clarification of the JAI Syria presence are needed. According to a Jabhat al-Nusra member from Aleppo with whom I spoke on [my trip to the Azaz district last month](#) (18th-22nd December), JAI Syria is thought to have "hundreds" of members and has been working with Jabhat al-Nusra on e.g. the contested Handarat front in Aleppo province. This is so even as some members of JAI Syria have given allegiance to Jabhat al-Nusra. Further, the spokesman of Northern Storm, which also fights on the Handarat front, claimed to me that JAI Syria is specially protected by Jabhat al-Nusra (I would add that there appears to be a [close bond](#) with the independent jihadi coalition [Jabhat Ansar al-Din](#)). Indeed, it was precisely my asking about JAI Syria that attracted the suspicion of Jabhat al-Nusra in the Azaz area, on the grounds that I might be gathering information on Jabhat al-Nusra and JAI Syria positions to hand over to the coalition.

Yet the control of the @ansarulsham account by IS loyalists within JAI Syria's ranks could not have come from nowhere. Some serious defections have clearly happened. Indeed, Abu Obeida the Salafi- JAI's 'intellectual heavyweight' based in Iraq and still supporting JAI in Syria- [wrote on Twitter](#) before the issuing of the allegiance pledge by @ansarulsham: "How odd! *Some* [emphasis my own] of the soldiers and amirs from JAI don't know of the coming decision...." He thus concedes that the allegiance pledge has involved at least some commanders within JAI Syria.

It is also evident here that IS has pursued the familiar strategy it applied to JAI Iraq and Jamaat Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis in Sinai/Gaza: that is, urging those within the group ready to pledge allegiance to issue a statement in the name of the entire group announcing allegiance in the hope of overcoming those who object. That some high-rank JAI Syria members might choose to join IS should not come as much of a surprise: similar defections have happened within Syria's other jihadi groups. But the evidence at present does not quite suggest that this latest IS move against JAI Syria is fatal. In short, expect JAI Syria's presence to continue on the ground for the time being, though it is possible that those from JAI Syria who have

not pledged allegiance may end up fully merging with Jabhat al-Nusra and/or Jabhat Ansar al-Din if it is felt the group's continued existence is an unviable project. On the whole, looking at the big picture in Iraq and Syria, JAI is a mere shadow of its former self.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

## United Kingdom

### Radical Islam, Nihilist Rage

JAN. 3, 2015

LONDON — FACED with a horror like the slaughter of 148 schoolchildren and school staff members by the Taliban in Pakistan, it is tempting to describe the act as “inhuman” or “medieval.” What made the massacre particularly chilling, though, is that it was neither. The killings were all too human and of our time.

The Peshawar massacre may have been particularly abhorrent, but the [Taliban have attacked at least 1,000 schools](#) over the past five years. They have butchered hundreds through suicide bombings of churches and mosques. And beyond Pakistan lies the brutality of groups like the Islamic State, Boko Haram and the Shabab.

What seems to bind these groups together is that they claim to act in the name of Islam. Why, many ask, do so many of today’s most vicious conflicts appear to involve Islamists? And why do Islamist groups seem so much more vicious, sadistic, even evil?

Muslims are not the only religious group involved in perpetrating horrors. From Christian [militias in the Central African Republic reportedly eating their foes](#) to [Buddhist monks organizing anti-Muslim pogroms in Myanmar](#), there is cruelty aplenty in the world. Nor are religious believers alone in committing grotesque acts. Yet, critics argue, there appears to be something particularly potent about Islam in fomenting violence, terror and persecution.

These are explosive issues and need addressing carefully. The trouble is, this debate remains trapped between bigotry and fear. For many, the actions of groups like the Islamic State or the Taliban merely provide ammunition to promote anti-Muslim hatred.

Many liberals, on the other hand, prefer to sidestep the issue by suggesting that the Taliban or the Islamic State do not represent “real Islam” — a [claim made recently, in so many words, by both President Obama](#) and [David Cameron, the prime minister of Britain](#). Many argue, too, that the actions of such groups are driven by politics, not religion.

Neither claim is credible. A religion is defined not just by its holy texts but also by how believers interpret those texts — that is, by its practices. The ways in which believers act out their faith define that faith. The fact that Islamist extremists practice their religion in a manner abhorrent to liberals does not make that practice less real.

Nor does it make sense to think of the Taliban or the Islamic State as motivated simply by politics, any more than it does to imagine them as purely religious. Radical Islam is the religious form through which a particular kind of barbarous political rage expresses itself.

Instead, we need to ask why political rage against the West takes such nihilistic forms today. And why has radical Islam become its principal vehicle?

The character of anti-Western sentiment has changed strikingly in recent decades. There is a long history of anti-imperialist movements stretching from the Haitian revolution of the 1790s to the independence movements of the 1960s and '70s in Africa and Asia. While these challenged Western power and often used violent means, they were rarely "anti-Western" in an essential sense. Indeed, their leaders often embraced revolutionary ideas that came out of the West, self-consciously locating themselves in the tradition of the European Enlightenment.

Frantz Fanon, the Martinique-born Algerian nationalist, was one of the most important anticolonial theorists. The aim, he suggested, was not to reject Western ideas, but to reclaim them.

"All the elements of a solution to the great problems of humanity have, at different times, existed in European thought," [he wrote](#). "But Europeans have not carried out in practice the mission which fell to them."

Anti-imperialists of the past saw themselves as part of a wider political project that sought to modernize the non-Western world, politically and economically. Today, however, that wider political project is itself seen as the problem. There is considerable disenchantment with many aspects of modernity, from individualism to globalization, from the breakdown of traditional cultures to the fragmentation of societies, from the blurring of moral boundaries to the seeming soullessness of the contemporary world.

In the past, racists often viewed modernity as the property of the West and regarded the non-Western world as incapable of modernizing. Today, it is radicals who often regard modernity as a Western product, and reject both it and the West as tainted goods.

The consequence has been the transformation of anti-Western sentiment from a political challenge to imperialist policy to an inchoate rage against modernity. Many strands of contemporary thought, including those embraced by "deep greens" and the far left, express aspects of such discontent. But it is radical Islam that has become the lightning rod for this fury.

There are many forms of Islamism, from the Taliban to Hamas, from the Muslim Brotherhood to Boko Haram. What they have in common is a capacity to fuse hostility toward the West with hatred for modernity and, seemingly, to provide an alternative to both. Islamists marry political militancy with a conservative social sensibility, a hostility to globalization with the embrace of a global ummah (the worldwide community of Muslim believers). In so doing, they turn the contradictory aspects of their rage against modernity into a strength.

Jihadism provides Islamist ideology with a military form and seemingly creates a global social movement, at a time when radical alternatives have collapsed. What

jihadism does not possess is the moral and philosophical framework that guided anti-imperialist movements. Shorn of that framework, and reduced to raging at the world, jihadists have turned terror into an end in itself.

The slaughter in Peshawar, like the mass beheadings by the Islamic State, tells us something about the character of contemporary Islam and of Islamism. It tells us even more about the state of contemporary politics, and especially of radical politics.

Kenan Malik is a contributing opinion writer and the [author](#), most recently, of “The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

USA

## PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA ON TERRORIST ATTACK IN PARIS – STATEMENT

JANUARY 8, 2015

By US President Barack Obama,



White House — I've reached out to President Hollande of France and hope to have the opportunity to talk to him today. But I thought it was appropriate for me to express my deepest sympathies to the people of Paris and the people of France for the terrible terrorist attack that took place earlier today.

I think that all of us recognize that France is one of our oldest allies, our strongest allies. They have been with us at every moment when we've — from 9/11 on, in dealing with some of the terrorist organizations around the world that threaten us. For us to see the kind of cowardly evil attacks that took place today I think reinforces once again why it's so important for us to stand in solidarity with them, just as they stand in solidarity with us.

The fact that this was an attack on journalists, attack on our free press, also underscores the degree to which these terrorists fear freedom — of speech and freedom of the press. But the one thing that I'm very confident about is that the values that we share with the French people, a belief — a universal belief in the freedom of expression, is something that can't be silenced because of the senseless violence of the few.

And so our counterterrorism cooperation with France is excellent. We will provide them with every bit of assistance that we can going forward. I think it's going to be important for us to make sure that we recognize these kinds of attacks can happen anywhere in the world. And one of the things I'll be discussing with Secretary Kerry today is to make sure that we remain vigilant not just with respect to Americans living in Paris, but Americans living in Europe and in the Middle East and other parts of the world, and making sure that we stay vigilant in trying to protect them — and to hunt down and bring the perpetrators of this specific act to justice, and to roll up the networks that help to advance these kinds of plots.

In the end, though, the most important thing I want to say is that our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who've been lost in France, and with the people of Paris and the people of France. What that beautiful city represents — the culture and the civilization that is so central to our imaginations — that's going to endure. And those who carry out senseless attacks against innocent civilians, ultimately they'll be forgotten. And we will stand with the people of France through this very, very difficult time.

Thank you very much, everybody.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

## Yemen

### Yémen : 37 morts dans un attentat contre une académie de police



L'explosion d'une voiture piégée devant l'académie de police à Sanaa a fait au moins 37 morts et 66 blessés dont plusieurs grièvement ce mercredi.



L'attentat a eu lieu au petit matin alors que des centaines de jeunes hommes faisaient la queue devant l'académie de police pour présenter leurs dossiers d'inscription. C'est un minibus piégé, déclenché à distance qui a provoqué l'explosion a dé-

claré un responsable des services de sécurité.

"C'est un massacre", s'est exclamé un témoin de la scène, horrifié. Un correspondant de l'AFP sur place confirme l'horreur de la scène et décrit des morceaux de chair humaine sur le trottoir, mêlés à des débris de véhicules soufflés par l'explosion. Cette dernière a été commandée à distance.



Un somalien a été arrêté en possession d'explosifs alors qu'il tentait d'entrer dans l'hôpital où ont été admis des victimes de l'attentat, a indiqué une source sécuritaire.

Al-Qaïda responsable ?

Pour le moment, l'acte n'a pas été revendiqué. Même si un membre armé des "Comités populaires", appellation que se sont donnés les miliciens d'**Ansaruallah** (une rébellion chiite qui proteste contre ce qu'ils considèrent comme la corruption du gouvernement) a déclaré : "C'est l'oeuvre d'éléments d'Al-Qaïda". Une accusation renforcée par les propos de la haute commission de sécurité (gouvernementale) : "Cette lâche action criminelle témoigne du caractère sanginaire et sauvage des terroristes du réseau Al-Qaïda".

Des accusations réfutées par un dirigeant d'Ansar al-Charia, lié à Al-Qaïda, cheikh Saleh Abdallah al-Dhahab. Sur son compte Twitter, l'homme écrit : "Al-Qaïda n'a rien à voir avec l'incident." Il ajoute : "Ceux qui ont perpétré cette action, ce sont les houtis", faisant référence à l'ennemi juré de son réseau, la milice chiite Ansaruallah.

La violence s'est accrue ces derniers mois au Yémen, instable depuis l'insurrection populaire de 2011, qui a poussé au départ le président Ali Abdallah Saleh, dans le sillage du Printemps arabe. La milice Ansaruallah, partie de son fief de Saada (nord), a lancé en 2014 une offensive fulgurante qui lui a permis de prendre le con-

trôle de Sanaa le 21 septembre, puis d'élargir son influence progressivement vers l'ouest et le centre du pays où elle est combattue par Al-Qaïda et des groupes sunnites.

<http://www.itele.fr/>

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