

THE EXPERIENCE OF TERRORISM IN KENYA: WHAT ARE THE VULNERABILITIES AND STRENGTHS?

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Abstract

The 8 August 1998 attack on US embassy in Nairobi opened a new chapter in Kenya's national security concerns. Henceforth, the country has endured the burden of terror attacks from domestic, regional, and international groups than any other country in the region. This paper seeks to examine why Kenya has been a target of attacks and why some of these attacks have succeeded. It adopts the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) framework to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. The authors argue that among other things, Kenya's perceived association with western powers, instability in Somalia, domestic group-grievances, and corruption within its security apparatus makes the country vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Similarly, the study identifies improving counterterrorism strategies, support from international actors, domestic socio-economic and political reforms as well as growing stability in the region as some of the strengths and opportunities available for Kenya in its war on terror.

Keywords: Terrorism, SWOT, Horn of Africa, Kenya, Counterterrorism

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, concerns over national, regional and international security have transformed. Increasingly, attention has been on how non-state actors and 'new wars' continue to shape security. Coined by British academic Mary Kaldor (2013), new wars are reflected in the proliferating post-Cold War era asymmetrical violent conflicts between state and non-state networks. In several cases, these violent conflicts are attached to the weakening of the state as a legitimate source of norms. Terrorism has stood out as one of the main threats states have to contend with in an increasingly intertwined and complex international system. Globally, the number of terrorist groups and attacks have increased in scale and intensity (Shinn, 2003) and the events of 9/11 and subsequent attacks in

many European capitals including London, Ankara, and Paris have shown that no country is immune to terrorism. Even more concerning is the challenge of trying to eliminate terrorist groups using current strategies (interventions, targeted killings, and extrajudicial processes) which have proved counterproductive. For over two decades of trying to get rid of Taliban in Afghanistan, to Nigeria’s efforts to eliminate Boko Haram, the Houthis in Yemen, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia, represent some examples of failed counterterrorism efforts(Jackson, 2017).

Africa like other regions in the world is dotted with territories under the control of terrorist groups with local and international affiliations. In the Horn of Africa, a combination of political instabilities, ungoverned spaces, fragile states, corruption, hard and soft social bond networks have made the region vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Economic constraints, marginalisation, religious extremism, and radicalisation especially of the youths have given terrorist groups a fertile ground to recruit, train, and launch attacks. Equally, strong ethnic and clan bonds have made it difficult for governments to collect intelligence needed to overcome terrorist groups. Instead, local communities choose not to cooperate with government agencies in reporting terrorists and their sympathizers out of perceived loyalty to blood groups or due to fear that government will not provide protection especially in ungoverned localities.

The consequence of not effectively dealing with terrorism in the Horn of Africa has had severe impacts in the region and this study focuses on the experience of Kenya. It acknowledges that the attacks in Kenya have been a result of regional and national constraints and therefore adopts a SWOT analysis to explore the weaknesses and threats that have made attacks in the country possible as well as the opportunities and strengths the country can rely on to overcome any future threats from terrorism. Combating terrorism is not only a matter of national security but also a matter of economic security as the country strongly relies on tourism and persistent cases of insecurity tend to scare potential visitors to the country.

Trends of Terrorist Attacks in Kenya

According to the United States (US) reports on Terrorism 2019, the attack on Dusit D2 hotel complex in Nairobi by Al-Shabaab was the worst since 2015 after significant improvements in operations and coordination were achieved within the Kenyan security sector. Al-Shabaab attacks in Nairobi and other urban places mostly targeted civilians with notable use of suicide vests and the other attacks in remote areas of the country bordering Somalia that targeted security officials significantly relied on the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (United States Department of State, 2019).

Kenya has experienced quite a number of terror attacks chronologically over the years (see Table 1 below). According to official government statistics released by the Ministry of Interior contained in the Note Verbale forwarded by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya in Geneva to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, the country recorded 12 major terror attacks in the period 1980 to the year 2015 (Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, 2017) and several other attacks since then.

Table 1: Chronology of major terrorist attacks in Kenya (1976-2020)

| <i>When</i> | <i>Where</i> | <i>What</i> | <i>Why</i> | <i>How</i> | <i>Who</i> |
|-------------|--------------|--|--|-------------------|--|
| 28 Jan 1976 | Nairobi | Plan to shoot down an EL AL passenger plane thwarted | Islamic fundamentalism and the struggle against Zionism and US interests | Plotters arrested | Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine & Baader Meinhof |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| 31 Dec 1980 | Norfolk Hotel | 20 people killed more than 100 injured | Revenge for Kenya's assistance to Israel's rescue operation to free hostages in Kampala | Bombing | Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) |
| 7 Aug 1998 | US Embassy | 250 killed & 5000 injured; nearby buildings destroyed. | Attack on US Interests | Truck Bomb | al-Qaeda |
| 28 Nov 2002 | Paradise hotel & Israel Passenger plane, Mombasa | 13 people killed 80 injured; Attack on plane missed | Attack on Israel interests | 2 Missiles targeted the plane | al-Qaeda affiliated; 'the Army of Palestine' |
| Sept 2011 | Kiwaiyu Safari Village | Attack on British Couple killing man, abducting woman | Targeted foreigners for ransom | Guns | Armed Somali Men |
| Oct 2011 | Manda Island | French Woman Kidnapped and crossed to Somalia | Targeted foreigners for ransom | Guns | Armed Gang |
| 24 Oct 2011 | Mwauras Night Club Nairobi | 14 people injured | Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia | Hand grenade | Al-Shaabab |
| 27 Oct 2011 | Mandera | Ministry of Education Officials attacked 4 died | Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia | Guns and explosives | Al-Shaabab |
| 5 Nov 2011 | Pentecostal Church Garissa | 2 people killed | Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia | Grenade attack | Al-Shaabab |
| 21 Sept 2013 | Westgate Mall Nairobi | 67 people killed 175 injured | AMISOM Retaliation | Guns and grenades | Al-Shaabab |
| 15 – 16 June 2014 | Mpeketoni | At least 65 people in multiple attacks | Alleged execution of Muslim clerics | Explosives, machetes, guns | Al-Shaabab |
| 22 Nov 2014 | Mandera | Nairobi bound bus attacked 28 people killed | Religious Intolerance | Guns and Explosives | Al-Shaabab |
| 2 Dec 2014 | Mandera | 36 Quarry workers killed | Retaliation for Kenya Military in Somalia | | Al-Shaabab |
| 2 Apr 2015 | Garissa University College | 148 killed 79 injured | Revenge attack against Kenya | Guns and Explosives | Al-Shaabab |
| 15-16 Jan 2019 | Dusit D2 Hotel, Nairobi | 21 killed & 28 injured | Retaliation against KDF in Somalia | Operatives storm hotel complex with guns, suicide vests & grenades | Al-Shabaab |
| 16 Feb 2019 | Primary school Wajir | 3 Christian teachers killed | Religious Fundamentalism | Gun Attacks | Al-Shaabab |
| 15 Apr 2019 | Mandera town | 1 police officer killed & 2 Cuban doctors abducted | Scuttle government operations | Ambush with firearms | Al-Shabaab |
| 15 Jun 2019 | Wajir County | 11 police officers killed; 1 injured & 3 Police Reservists abducted | Undercut security operations | IED | Al-Shabaab |
| 26 Oct 2019 | Garissa County | 11 General Service Unit (GSU) officers killed | Hamper security operations in the region | IED | Al-Shabaab |
| 6 Dec 2019 | Wajir County | 6 police officers and 4 civilians killed | Instil civilian fear | Gun attack on public transport bus | Al-Shabaab |

| | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------|
| 5 Jan 2020 | Manda Bay | 3 Americans killed; 2 contractors injured | Response to US moving embassy in Israel to Jerusalem | Indirect and small-arms fire | Al-Shaabab |
| 7 Jan 2020 | Saretho village in Garissa | 4 children killed; 3 wounded | Target telecommunication infrastructure | Firearm attack/light bombs | Al-Shaabab |

Source: Author Compilation

From the Table 1, the main terrorist organization that attacks Kenya is the Somali based Al Shabaab terror group whose impact has necessitated critical (re)thinking and deep reflection on Kenya’s security. Cannon and Pkalya (2019: 12) provided a strong argument to the critical question of why Al-Shabaab targets Kenya when they noted that:

“Al-Shabaab targets Kenya more than other frontline states because of the opportunity spaces linked to Kenya’s international status and visibility, its relatively free and independent media that widely publicizes terrorist attacks, a highly developed and lucrative tourist sector that provides soft targets, the comparatively high number of Kenyan foreign fighters within the group’s ranks, the presence of terror cells in Kenya, expanding democratic space, and high levels of corruption.”

A SWOT analysis

Kenya’s strengths against Terrorism

Kenya is an active member of several international organizations within the United Nations (UN) framework and other global coalitions whose mandates are to eliminate the effects of terrorism, thus, a key actor in coordinating counterterrorism initiatives in the region (Kagwanja, 2006). The country has been able to enhance terror investigations, prosecutions, and incident response measures which have disrupted terrorist activities such as planning of terror, recruitment, and movement of jihadists as part of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) with the United States. The first of its kind to be located outside the United States, the multi-agency counterterrorism investigative force seeks to share experiences and sensitive intelligence to facilitate counterterror investigations in accordance with international law and treaties and respect for human rights which is anchored in the constitution of Kenya (FBI National Press Office, 2020).

International collaboration is also a source of finance to support critical counterterrorism strategy. In 2016-17, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) reported £1.6 billion was issued in bilateral aid programming to priority countries which included Kenya and Nigeria (Great Britain et al., 2018: 56). The country has also benefited from the US State Department Bureau of Counterterrorism Fund which was launched in Nairobi in 2017 to develop a Public Prosecutor Training Institute (PTI) (Lawyers Without Borders (LWOB), n.d.). Apart from financial support of these partnerships, Kenya collaborates to deny terror organizations the resources to organize violence through its membership in the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group where it is represented by a permanent Director General from the Financial Reporting Center (FRC) established in 2012 (Financial Reporting Centre (FRC), 2017).

Kenya’s hosting of the United Nations (UN) Office in Nairobi equally provides an important centre for international and regional coordination of efforts against terrorism. The Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) participation in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

serves as an important platform to share information and further incapacitate the terror networks together with the regional allies. Leveraging on the country's elaborate multilateral framework to combat terrorism, Kenya has for instance, co-sponsored UN Security Council resolution 2396 on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters in December 2017 (United Nations Digital Library, 2017). The country has thus become a major hub for disrupting the activities of terror organizations such as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda that threaten international peace and security.

Over the last decade, the country has taken measures to address institutional weaknesses by overhauling police training curriculum and pursuing recruitment of high calibre graduates into the security institutions. Police equipping has also improved and there is better access to quality body armours, specialized firearms, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and Armoured Personnel Carriers among others. Key legal reform frameworks within the Kenya Police include the National Police Service Commission Act 2011, the National Police Service Act 2011, and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority Act 2011. Collectively, they seek to ensure transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency within the Kenya Police and facilitate better scrutiny by the public, civil society organizations, constitutional oversight bodies and international organizations (National Police Service Kenya, 2019). The recognition that fighting terrorism requires whole of Government institutional approach has also necessitated similar reforms in the justice system with the training of judges and prosecutors on how to handle terror related charges.

Kenya's weaknesses against Terrorism

Kenya security sector has been accused by human rights groups for violation of basic rights of terror suspects during counterterrorism operations. Such allegations against security officials include extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and torture of suspects especially in the coastal and North-eastern regions of the country (Ombuor, 2016). Protection of human rights in responding to terror threats remains a steep learning curve for the security sector. The domestic and international legal challenges have raised doubts of a fair trial with terror related cases delaying significantly in the judicial processes (Khamala, 2019). Specifically, legislation of anti-terrorism laws has remained a challenge for the country and has often elicited strong resistance in parliament and outside especially from the civil society. Nonetheless, different groups of Kenyan citizens perceive the process of legislating tough terror laws as the "government's submissive response to pressures by the US and Britain" the de-facto global leaders of the war on terror. The citizens therefore are conditioned to resist the pressures of both the US and Britain on Kenya. Similarly, it is also plausible that public debate is distorted by elements of the terror groups in the general population.

However, these legislative challenges are not only unique to Kenya because most democracies face difficulties explaining to the citizens the essence of restrictive individual and public freedoms that is often associated with most anti-terror laws. Democracies face moral and legal dilemmas in the face of protecting civil liberties, human rights and the rule of law while fighting terrorism at the same time (Gross, 2015). Democracy puts pressure on leaders making it difficult for newly elected democratic governments to publicly cooperate in the fight against terrorism (Whitaker, 2008). The suppression of Terrorism Bill introduced to parliament by the Grand Coalition Government in 2003 to give government more powers to fight extremist groups faced a lot of resistance. Similarly, there was chaos and physical fights in parliament in 2014 when Security Laws Amendment Bill was passed into law amid widespread resistance from a section of legislators because of its "draconian" nature (BBC News, 2014).

The perception of Kenyan public towards terrorism has been a source of weakness. The Kenyan public has been on slow learning curve as some of its sections perceive threats from local armed groups such as Mungiki and threats like HIV/AIDS to be more serious compared to the threat of terrorism (Krause and Otenyo, 2005). The security agencies have taken time off operations to interact with members of the public to discourage them from aiding terror suspects because of social ties especially in the North-eastern regions where Al-Shaabab militants are a menace. According to Amnesty International, police reforms in Kenya remain inclusive because of other contextual and structural barriers. Contextual barriers include corruption and the deliberate disrespect of the law by the members of the police service despite the reforms largely taking a legalistic approach. The strong legalistic approach has also hampered the opportunity to achieve holistic reforms within the police service because of the limited attention to the social and policy development. Structural limitations on the other hand, are mainly within the service itself with resistance towards public vetting and to some extent unnecessary duplications that impact on delivery (Amnesty International, 2013).

The country's justice system has increasingly become a victim of manipulation by terror suspects who end up spending years abusing the justice system while continuing with the terror activities. The case in point is that of the Akasha brothers who were immediately convicted by the US court for terror links including terror financing, weapons and drug trafficking (US Department of Justice, 2019). They had successfully devised mechanisms of evading the long hand of the law while in Kenya up until when the country decided to extradite them to the United States. It seems the decisions by the country's bureaucrats to deport terror suspects to other jurisdictions emanates partly from the fears of the weak justice system in the country. However, the deportation, extradition and rendition of alleged terrorists has not gone without challenges with the courts often ruling against the decision to deport terror suspects to other jurisdictions (Horowitz, 2013).

The war against terrorism in Kenya has also suffered from declining public trust, perception, and confidence especially from the minority ethnic communities that largely occupy North-eastern Kenya. Whereas the large part of the Kenyan community perceive the actions of the police as consistent in the fight against terror, the Somalis hold an exception, often accusing the security forces of targeting and harassing them deliberately. Some believe that they are subjected to unnecessary intrusive surveillance, extortions, disappearances, and killings among other human rights abuses (Muiibu & Cubukcu, 2021). The anti-terror operation '*Rudisha Usalama*' which translates to "restore peace" of April 2014 amplified the cries from the urban based Somali communities that were rounded up and taken to Kasarani stadium for a security screening procedure aimed at weeding out terrorist cells (Amnesty International, 2014). Some scholars have even argued that Kenya's domestic counterterrorism infrastructure is unevenly built skewing towards a few minorities. Allegations of Kenyan Muslims of Arab descent becoming main suspects in terror investigations after US Embassy bombing have been advanced in a non-native alienation history notion (Pretholdt, 2011). The securitization of Somali refugees "Somalinization" in counterterrorism operations is a derogatory from the doctrine of non-refoulement which is protected by both domestic and international law (Mwangi, 2019).

The AMISOM operation despite registering successes also created a dilemma for Kenya. AMISOM operations are usually inhibited by budget shortages making it ineffective and inefficient. There are critical calls to restructure the force and streamline funding to respond to emerging needs of the liberated areas to avoid recapture by Al-Shabaab. According to the Chief of Defence Force of Kenya, the country has had to unilaterally shoulder many security operations inside Somalia due to the inefficiencies of the AMISOM force, budget and logistical

constraints. It is also highly likely that in the event the AMISOM winds up, Kenya security forces will have to devise mechanisms of filling up the gap that is likely to witness a resurgent of the Al-Shabaab. It is from this recognition that the country is only committed to leaving Somalia only when the Al-Shabaab threat is eliminated and stability established (Daghar et al., 2020).

The question of whether the Kenya Defence Forces should have deployed inside Somalia in the first place or just within the Kenyan borders remains an elusive one. It has elicited a huge public debate in the past with some holding that the Kenyan troops should be withdrawn from Somalia and be deployed within the country's borders. The main proponents of this argument cite international law as having established limits of acting in another jurisdiction. Despite defeating Al-Shabaab from the source being the most critical aspect in securing Kenya and the region, some scholars hold contrary arguments and cite the increased random small scale retaliatory Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya as the main reason to pull Kenyan troops from Somalia. They label the Kenya Defence Forces capture and liberation of the port city of Kismayu from Al-Shabaab as merely a suspension of hostilities (Odhiambo et al., 2014).

Questions continue to be raised about the efficacy of border walls in the fight against terrorism with one study claiming that the Kenya-Somalia border wall is simply going to ignite border disputes in addition to separating communities that are bound together by blood (Cannon, 2016). These doubts combined with institutional challenges such as corruption, limited expertise and funds make the Kenya – Somalia wall less likely to achieve the intended objectives. The recommendation is for the country to shelve the desperate counter-measure to other effective interventions that will demoralize the terror groups from targeting interests in Kenya. Addressing the root causes of insecurity and violent extremism in the Northern corridor can be effective and may even achieve the unity and trust among the communities living across the borders making it easier to share useful security information.

Opportunities for Kenya against Terrorism

The spread of social media provides an opportunity for both the security actors, all emergency responders as well as the general public to leverage in defeating the efforts of terrorists. According to a study that analysed the use of twitter during the Westgate Mall attack, the use of social media enabled “bi-directional flow of information” cutting across geographies, cultures, languages and organizations (Simon et al., 2014). With the proper integration and synchronization of information the power of the social media is immense during emergencies such as terror attacks, and hostage takings.

Secondly, Kenya enjoys wide political and diplomatic coverage across the world compared her counterparts in the region. The country has been able to attract allies both in the East and the West thereby creating an opportunity for cooperation in counterterrorism which continues to be highly regarded as very important by policymakers particularly in the context of accessing intelligence and special equipment needed for counterterrorism operations. Through the United States Security Governance Initiative (SGI) where Kenya is one of six countries participating, the country has been able to access US Government assistance to both the military and police (Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield, 2017). Equally, the United Kingdom, has been assisting in training and modernization of security personnel and infrastructure. Israel has also been among the first responders working side by side with Kenyan authorities to technically support counterterrorism operations.

Thirdly, Kenya should strive to resolve the question of “ambiguous citizen”. According to Scharrer (2018), many Somalis do not question their Kenyan citizenship but rather their “belongingness” to Kenya given that their reference to Somalia, Somaliland, or Puntland in the

last decade as their focal identity has been waning. However, their existence withing a grey space within the society that makes them neither fully integrated nor eliminated in the economic and political realms of the society have become a source of frustration especially amongst the vulnerable youths. According to Abdullahi (2014), “*Kenyan Somalis at times naively buy into this national delusion until they are violently awakened to the reality by events like the current exercise (operation usalama watch), and then put in their rightful place. Fifty years of abuse and neglect is too long to endure. But it is not that Kenyan Somalis don’t want to be part of Kenya. It is Kenya that does not want Somalis in Kenya*” As such, the government can seize this opportunity and counter these sort of sentiments by developing mechanisms that enhance the involvement of marginalised groups in mainstream economic and political activities such as participation in electoral processes or observation, better representation in political parties and the civil service, and reform exclusionary public institutions, processes, and laws.

However, perhaps the most important opportunity for Kenya is the cooperation with Somalia. The two neighbouring countries working together to deal with cross border threats and other issues of governance that will result in a relatively stable Somalia will go a long way in addressing the threats for Kenya. Cooperation enabled voluntary return of some of the refugees from the refugee camps in Kenya to areas liberated by the Kenya security forces inside Somalia. These group of refugees are now able to continue with their normal lives in their homes (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2021). Kenya and Somalia have no better option than cooperating on regional issues that affect the stability of both the two countries.

Threatsfacing Kenya against Terrorism

The presence of Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps on Kenyan soil continues to pose a major security challenge and threat to the country. The government has tried to close the camp on several occasions without success and the Ministry of Interior has continued to engage various stakeholders including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to close the two camps in manner consistent with the international law and norms. The two refugee camps which collectively hosts more than four hundred thousand refugees mainly of the Somali origin has also faced legal setbacks with the Judiciary ruling against some pronouncements of the Interior Ministry. However, the threats that emanate from the camps cannot be ignored because the two recent largest attacks on Kenyan soil are believed to be organized or aided by individuals inside the camps (Gettleman, 2017). Academic opinion is also divided on Kenya’s decision to close the two camps with some observers arguing that the decision taken by the country is just but a reflection of the deep embedded structural flaws in the international refugee regime (Cannon and Fujibayashi, 2018).

The issue of foreign fighters continue to pose another dilemma assome Kenyan citizens have been recruited by terrorist groups while al Qaeda and ISIS have also sent foreign terrorists to the country. Despite rolling out domestic counter-extremism programs targeting vulnerable youths, the challenge is yet to be fully addressed (US Department of Justice, 2020). The US Justice Department referred to the case of a Kenyan national who was arrested in the Philippines and indicted on six grounds of terrorism including conspiring to hijack aircraft in order to conduct a 9/11-style attack. Moreover, it’s a paradox that Kenyans form a significant number of Al-Shabaab foreign fighters if not the majority which complicates the response from the security in Kenya when confronted with groups that want to return home. The re-integration program faces challenges with some of the Al-Shabaabreturnees disappearing without trace a few days latermainly in the Coastal counties of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, and Mombasa (Wasike, 2021).

Al-Shabaab rise in Somalia is often directly related to increased radicalization and recruitment of Kenyan nationals to its ranks. The main victims in the past have been the Kenyan Muslim community or recent converts. Al-Shabaab exploits the perceived social and economic exclusion of the Kenyan Muslim community to lure them to its ranks (Anderson and McKnight, 2015). The group has in the past targeted school going children for radicalization thus hampering to a greater extent the delivery of learning programs in the country. It is from this understanding that the government decided to send troops across the border to counter the insurgents in Somalia. Al-Shabaab recruiters with links to Kenya are a challenge for security forces as they are able to easily integrate within the society because of linguistic and cultural connections. The extent of the radicalization is feared to have spread far and wide including potentially reaching youths and other groups that are considered non-Muslim, non-marginalized, non-Somali and educated (Speckhard and Shajkovci, 2019). Al-Shabaab radicalization and recruitment is an issue that goes beyond the obvious Somali and Kenyan-Somali nationals. It brings on board individual elements of socialization in the society. In addition, the ability of Al-Shabaab to camouflage and forge alliances with different terror networks such as ISIS and al Qaeda proves that the group presents a global threat and not just a threat to Kenya (United Nations, 2021).

Youth unemployment rate in Kenya is also a huge challenge making it almost impossible to counter both domestic and international radicalization (Hellsten, 2016). The country ranked 139 out of 181 countries on the 2020 Global Youth Development Index (Wanzala, 2021). The shrinking opportunities calls for combined efforts in dealing with the issue of youth unemployment. According to Rosenau, (2005) unemployment in Kenya provides a fertile ground for recruitment and radicalization of youths because of high rates of poverty, weak policing, porous borders, and corruption. Although opinions remain divided, several scholars hold that terrorism in Kenya is partly as a result of disillusionment with the internal socio-economic and political marginalization especially of the Muslim minority communities.

The widespread public opinion that Kenya's counterterrorism strategy is imposed by the outside Western powers also weakens the fight against terrorism. Kenya needs to prove that the actions against terrorism are independent and based on existential threats on her interests. It is for these fears that attempts to pass anti-terrorism legal frameworks have faced strong resistance from the civil society and different sections of the Kenyan community who quickly dismiss such efforts as serving the interests of Western powers and not priorities of millions of Kenyans. Newly established security institutions such as the Anti-Terror Police and the National Counter Terrorism Centre are struggling to gain for legitimacy amid claims of being established and run by foreign security agencies with Kenya having little to do with the operations of the institutions (Kamau, 2021). Scholars have even doubted the entire framework of Kenya's counterterrorism arguing that it is a representation of the colonial continuities in the country due to its perceived neglect of critical national peculiarities. Local actors had no place at all in coming up with the counter-terror interventions and strategies leading to possible lack of ownership. There is a need to come up with an "indigenous African counterterrorism" approach within the global counterterrorism framework and for this case an indigenous counter-terrorism framework for Kenya (Oando and Achieng', 2021).

Kenya has to find a strategic balance on the role played by foreign aid and diplomatic pressure on the country's counter-terror operations which is impacting the relationship between the society and the state with unbearable long-term consequences (Lind & Howell, 2010). Studies have shown that foreign donor funding and projects aimed at addressing the root local issues such as conflict prevention and resolution and violent extremism with the view of achieving peace and security through the investments rarely achieve intended purposes with the donors

continuing to apply conditions or ignore human rights concerns at the recipient destinations (Bachmann andHönke, 2010).

The approach taken in the fight against terrorism is also as important as the outcomes of such an effort. The Government of Kenya has been found wanting in its war on terror with claims of targeting some sections of the society like the country's Muslim population in the North-eastern and along the Coastal strip. Some scholars have even argued that Kenya's counter-terror efforts have contributed to the institutionalization of radicalization and its link to Islam. The country's social construction of radicalisation and violent extremism mainly based on theology and social networks relegates other relevant understandings such as economic and political marginalisation (Breidlid, 2021). Kenya's security responses to the al-Shaabab threats such as the increased policing of Somali/Muslim communities, extra-judicial killings and crackdown on refugees have likely led to the Al-Shaabab problem becoming an inborn problem in the country (Lind et al., 2017).

Conclusion

The threat of terrorism in Kenya has long term implications on human security, economic and national security. The dilemma facing the government of Kenya and its partners in dealing with the crisis is that the resilience of groups such as Al-Shabaab have been boosted by the very efforts that are meant to defeat such groups. Indeed, while the efforts stop terrorist groups from operating in the country have sometimes reduced their momentum, in some cases, actions by the government have been interpreted to mean further marginalisation and oppression thus terrorist groups have used these as evidence radicalise even more people. But amid the uncertainty of where the future of terrorism in Kenya is heading to, there are glimmers of hope. For example, the global war against terrorism has seen a sharp decline in the activities of larger terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Domestic reforms, including but not limited to introduction of devolved system of government have paved the way for the integration of previously marginalised groups into the country's development agenda thus reducing the communities' grievances. The Kenyan military has good international networks which combined with the country's diplomatic advantages can help strengthen its response to domestic and regional terrorist activities. Other political, economic and security reforms that have been experienced since the promulgation of the 2010 constitution will go a long way in addressing the some of the deep rooted causes of radicalisation in the country. These strengths and opportunities should be further explored and combined with new sustainable strategies of dealing with the problem of terrorism in Kenya.

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