African Journal on Terrorism

ACSRT

Volume 13 • Number 1 • June 2023

ISSN: 2617-8478

A JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM

African Journal on Terrorism

Volume 13 • Number 1 • June 2023

A JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM

The African Journal on Terrorism is published by The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), Algiers, Algeria (hereafter referred to as the Centre) which was established in 2004 as a structure of the African Union, in conformity with the protocol of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The African Journal on Terrorism is strategically positioned as a tool for attaining the objectives of Centre and the African Union guided by African Solutions to African Problems.

African Journal on Terrorism aims to create space for robust, rigorous and innovative research and policy-related papers on terrorism and violent extremism, and encourages fruitful intellectual engagement between policy practitioners and academia. In particular, the Editors are looking for empirical, theoretical and policy-oriented articles that recognize the inherently problematic nature of terrorism on the African continent and employ a critical-normative perspective on the subject.

The scope of subject matter of interest for the journal includes conceptual and field research on terrorism, violent extremism, insurgency and radicalization as well as issues related to Human Security and building community resilience in Africa. African Journal on Terrorism provides a forum for the publication of original theoretical and empirical research articles, disciplinary debates and assessments, editorial commentary, special issues and sections, end of mission reports, research notes, announcements and book reviews.

Publisher's contact details:
Chahid Boukhazara
Abdellah Street
P. O. Box 141 Post Office,
El-Mohammadia,
Algiers, Algeria
Tel.: + 213 23 82 09 44 /46
Fax: + 213 23 82 09 47
Website: www.caert-ua.org

Editorial Correspondence: Papers are to be submitted anytime in the year. Accepted papers would be published in appropriate volumes. Articles and papers for submission to the journal should be sent to the Journal Manager, ACSRT, Algiers (Algeria) via email at journalmanager@acrst.org.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in contribution to the African Journal on Terrorism do not necessarily reflect those of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the African Union (AU) or African Union Member States (AUMS). Any errors of fact are the responsibility of the authors

ISSN-2617-8478

Editorial Advisory Board Members

Contributions

African Journal on Terrorism is a continental, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal. The journal seeks to publish quality grounded research on all aspects of terrorism, counter-terrorism and violent extremism. The journal seeks to provide a platform that encourages critical analysis and sustained reflection of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent.

Procedures

All submitted manuscripts are subject to an initial blind peer-review by the Editors, and, if found suitable for further consideration, to a second peer review by at least two independent, anonymous expert referees. The Editor in Chief and Editors review the comments from reviewers, and where appropriate communicate them directly to the author. The Editors will inform the author if the original or revised paper has been accepted for publication in the journal.

Length and Format

Authors submitting papers for the consideration of the journal should limit their works to between 5000 and 6000 words, including references, text, all tables and figures. They are encouraged to support their arguments with relevant statistics, pictures and graphical illustrations. The preferred referencing format of the journal is the electronically generated endnotes. The referencing style, however, is the Harvard referencing style. The abstract should not exceed 300 words with at least five keywords.

Contents

Editor's comments

This is the first edition of the African Journal on Terrorism in 2023. The papers in it, especially the commissioned technical paper concluding the edition, clearly show that more work would have to be done to arrest the growing tide of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. The commissioned paper focuses on how more foreign terrorist fighters find their way into different parts of the Sahel-Sahara Region of Africa. They kill, maim, and by so doing, add to the adverse effects of terrorism on trade and economic activities, investors' confidence, and human security generally in the continent. Some recommendations are made on how to actionably manage worrisome situations. One of these efforts is to keep searching for new knowledge about the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism across the African continent. More knowledge is also needed on the gains and gaps in the past and ongoing intervention strategies. The knowledge gained through research in this respect serves as the basic ingredient for organizing the interventions that work not just for Africa, but the rest of the world, supporting peace processes across the continent.

The foregoing informs our continuous search for academic and policy-relevant papers across Africa to be published in this journal, whose readership grows by the day, given how the papers in our past editions are now widely cited across academic platforms, especially in Google Scholars worldwide. The nine papers in the present volume further boost our efforts. The first two speak to some conceptual and theoretical issues about terrorism in Mozambique and Somalia and how this helps to further elucidate the experiences in the two countries. The third paper is on how narcotic trade fuels terrorism in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The issues raised in the paper apply to many other African countries experiencing terrorism and violent extremism. The perpetrators of these dastardly acts are usually under the influence of drugs; they kill and maim without qualms. Stopping them requires that the fight against drug trafficking must be given a further boost across Africa.

The fourth paper is on the different approaches for dealing with the farmer-herder crises now ravaging different parts of Africa. The paper gives special attention to the situations in Ghana, but it holds cursory lessons for the rest of the continent. The fifth paper is on how the youth could play, and indeed do, positive roles in the management of religious crises. This paper invites us to break loose the existing practice of always seeing young people as perpetrators of violence rather than as agenda of peace. The sixth, seventh and eighth papers in this edition of the Journal are on the competing

approaches for demobilizing and reintegrating ex-fighters. Do we negotiate with them, free them, and how do we rehabilitate them? Reference is already made to the last paper, which summarises a commissioned report of the African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the AUC Department of Political Affairs, Peace & Security (PAPS) on foreign terrorist fighters. This is a growing problem in many parts of Africa as global terrorist organizations expand their Africa reach. African countries can limit their activities through measures on border control, criminal justice, and information-sharing. We welcome future papers on the problem and the competing strategies for handling difficult situations.

A lot goes into the production of every edition of this journal. It is, therefore, apt for us to conclude this short piece with some words of commendation for those responsible. The most appreciated are the authors of the nine papers. They are warmly appreciated and thanked for their efforts. Our past authors are equally prized. In addition to publishing in the journal, many have included the Journal in the reading list of the peace and security studies courses they run. Hence, more and more libraries hold editions of the Journal. What a better way to disseminate our idea!

Editor in Chief
Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert,
Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Managing Editor
Mr. Idriss Mounir Lallali,
Acting Director, ACSRT

TERRORISM: INOPERABILITY OR NEED FOR CONCEPTUAL ADAPTATION FOR THE MOZAMBICAN CASE?

Rufino Sitoe
Lecturer and Researcher at Universidade Joaquim Chissano, School of International Relations, Mozambique

ABSTRACT

On 5 and 6 October 2017, there were attacks in Mocímboa da Praia, in Cabo Delgado Province, in the Northern region of Mozambique, against police stations and civilian targets carried out by men in Islamic clothing. From how the protagonists presented themselves, it was deduced that it was terrorism driven by Islamic extremism, based on what has been happening in Somalia and Nigeria through Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. However, more than four years after the violence began, not only has the group not declared its objectives and identity, but its leadership is still hidden, which makes us stray from the already known terrorist pattern. Therefore, this article aims to conceptually frame the phenomenon in Northern Mozambique through evolutionary and historical analysis of the concept and phenomenon of terrorism, while inviting other concepts adjacent to the debate to support the best denomination, namely, Islamic extremism, Islamic radicalism and insurgency. To this end, it resorts to a bibliographic and documentary review supported by field information. The main conclusion reached is that the phenomenon in Mozambique fits more into sabotage than insurgency and Islamic extremism, contrary to the trend of literature and political discourse in Mozambique.

Keywords:
Terrorism; Extremism; Radicalism; Insurgency; Sabotage

INTRODUCTION

On 5 and 6 October 2017, there were attacks in Mocímboa da Praia, in Cabo Delgado Province, north of Mozambique, against police stations and civilian

targets carried out by men in Islamic clothing. Furthermore, these attacks began to grow in their geographic area, covering other districts of the same province, such as Quissanga, Muidumbe, Ibo, Mueda and Nangade. They also became more sophisticated in moving from violence using machetes and simple firearms to increasingly sophisticated firearms and drones.

When the attacks began, from the way its protagonists presented themselves – the clothes and the speech of appeal to an innovative Islamic religious identity – it was deduced that it was Islamic extremism, as it is known from what has been happening in Somalia and Nigeria through Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. In such a way, this group's initial denomination in the popular local speeches was Al-Shabaab. However, when studying terrorism, a central element in the manifestation of the phenomenon is that the terrorist action is accompanied by a claiming process in which terrorists declare intentions or objectives that move their terror agenda against the state or the political system being.

More than four years after the violence began, not only did the group not declare its intentions and its identity (even though it was recruiting and carrying out its terror actions), but also, when an idea of who they could be glimmered, it was through a website of the Islamic State and later, still in 2020, through a press release from the Department of State of the United States of America (USA).[i]

This whole scenario of uncertainty, unrevealed identities, and escape from the usual and historical pattern of manifestation of terrorism leads to the question of whether we are facing another probable phenomenon, such as sabotage, given that there is a clear consequence of this violence that has been making the gas exploration agenda in the Rovuma Basin unfeasible. Or whether we need a conceptual adaptation to make the manifestation of the phenomenon in Mozambique fit into the concept of terrorism, especially looking at the myriad of denominations and concepts that have accompanied the violence until today, such as insurgents and violent extremists.

This article intends to do so through a historical and evolutionary analysis of the concept and phenomenon of terrorism, while inviting other concepts to the debate to support the best denomination, namely, Islamic extremism, Islamic radicalism and insurgency. This will be done based on a bibliographic and documental review supported by the collection of field information.

TERRORISM AND THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE PHENOMENON

Terrorism is a fighting resource that many societies have used throughout history. For example, ancient records point to this method used by Jewish Zealots against the Roman Empire (40 to 70 AD) when they systematically attacked Roman and Greek political and religious figures while trying to drive the latter out of the holy land. In Russia, for example, anarchists used to assassinate prominent state officials, such as Tsar Alexander II, to accomplish their agenda.

Rapoport (2004) points out the evolutionary process of terrorism in four main waves. The first wave pointed out by the author, the Wave of Anarchists,[ii] was characterized by the departure from the conventional expression of ideas based on posters and pamphlets that would end in a peaceful demonstration towards actions that go beyond the morally acceptable, including intimidation, physical and psychological violence, through murders using dynamite and other resources.

In the following years (from the first half of the 20th century until the 1960s and 1970s), the national liberation movements were also called terrorists due to their use of the same methodology against the colonizing powers. However, an interesting narrative plot twist in this process was that these movements would rather call themselves *freedom fighters*. The well-known expression "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" was coined in this context. In the second half of the 20th century, there was no lack of groups that fit this profile, such as the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (PLO), which fought against Jewish colonialism, frequently resorted to and continues to use techniques classified as terrorists.

In the years following the freedom fighters, we would know the beginning of what would be called Islamic extremism, which is essentially a facet of religiously driven terrorism. A particularity of this phase is that fighting against a process of secularization of Islamic societies due to colonization and western presence, ideologues and ideologies of restoration of "true" Islamic values re-emerged in the Middle East. Bonate (2022:524-525) points out that this ideology has its origins in the Salafist and Wahhabi movements. Salafism, according to the author, focuses on the need for a return to the salaf (ancestral) traditions of the first three generations of Muslims with the aim of combating religious practices considered abominable innovations, ignorant, hypocrisy and idolatry.

In turn, Wahhabism, from the term "Wahhabi", is a label given to the followers of the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Al-Wahhab was an ideologue, originally from Saudi Arabia, who sought to reform Muslims under the banner of the "true"

Islam and get rid of the acts he considered heretical. The ideologies of Salafism and Wahhabism are built on a narrowly defined religious text. Methodologically, they are literalists and puritanical in their approaches to Islamic theology and law, rejecting any belief and practice not commanded by the Quran and the Prophet (Ali & Sudiman, 2016).

In defense of these values or ideologies, groups such as Al-Qaeda and its affiliations, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, ISIS and its affiliations, and others of lesser expression started emerging in different parts. The turning point of Islamic terrorism was the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, for which the USA declared a global war on terror.

In all these contexts, it can be seen that terrorism has been an ancient resource of struggle in the history of humankind. Second, this form of struggle has taken on different facets and has been employed in different circumstances. In all those circumstances, it pursued clear political objectives, namely, restoring a presumed lost cultural or religious identity, conquering independence, or defending a value or way of life. Another salient aspect is that terrorist violence is triggered by groups that observe an asymmetry of forces in relation to their opponent. Both anarchists, freedom fighters and even Islamic extremists have done so and continue to do so because they do not have sufficient military capabilities for direct engagement or confrontation with their opponents.

This kind of violence, which has evolved in different attack methods throughout existence, has been accompanied by a process of claiming the attacks. In other words, every terrorist wants to make himself known, present his cause, and negotiate his interests; failing to do so, by presenting his cause to the public, he wants to gain sympathy and recruit more sympathizers. This feature is called propaganda. In such a way that, with the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), terrorist groups have increasingly sophisticated these means of propaganda by using and creating digital platforms through which they publicize their cause, recruit and radicalize minds, collect support or donations from sympathizers and exhibit their achievements.

The propaganda element,[iii] for these groups, serves not only for the previously mentioned purposes, but also to delegitimize the government or the authority against which the group fights, denouncing some form of oppression, corruption and lack of virtue on the part of the people, who lead the public affairs. In the context of Islamic religiosity, it is often to denounce the worldly and sinful way Islamic societies have been run. Hence, the need for a jihador holy war to purify these societies.

TERRORISM AND OTHER ADJACENT CONCEPTS

Several concepts stand out in the debate on terrorism, and are intertwined with the terrorist phenomenon itself. Such concepts are Islamic extremism and Islamic radicalism, widely used in Western literature, and insurgency, very common in the political discourse of the Mozambican government. Understanding these concepts, individually and collectively, is crucial for effectively framing the phenomenon in Northern Mozambique.

The first concept of interest is the concept of terrorism itself. As Sitoe (2020) points out, defining terrorism is an intricate task as it is a concept that suffers from the vicissitude of politicization, lack of rigid analysis and value judgment, especially when it is associated with specific cases. Thus, its definition varies depending on the context and place where the phenomenon occurs, but also on the parties involved, their position and their power in the conflict. Indeed, the concept of terrorism is polysomic.

After Sitoe (2020:38) considered the definition offered by Lutz and Lutz (2013:275) and other definitions from Blakeley (2009), Chali and Blin (2007), Hoffman (2002) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), he defines terrorism as an act of violence carried out by individuals, groups, or even by states, against certain civilian targets with the intention of reaching a larger audience than the immediate victims, aiming at a determined political objective. To this meaning, we can add that terrorism is a phenomenon accompanied by the need for publicity or propaganda.

In turn, Islamic radicalism or radical Islamism is a term that has grown in Western discourse and has been linked to the idea of terrorism. This term can be conceptualized as:

> Ahistorical, socioeconomic, political and cultural movement that perceives Islam as a comprehensive religion, a revolutionary political ideology, and a state...These terms are therefore intrinsically associated with the radical transformation or destroying and tearing up a system by its roots through Jihad/violence and replacing it with an alternative Islamic system based on Islamic laws (shari'a) and which uses the Quran and Prophetic Traditions (sunnah) as referential frameworks (Hassan, 2013:1).

Hassan's notion of Islamic radicalism is easily confused with extremism, presented below. Some authors refer to this as a rhetorical trap, very present in social and media discourses. As for Bötticher (2017:74), radicalism is a political

doctrine that inspired republican and national movements committed to individual and collective freedom and emancipation, directed against monarchs and aristocrats. The radical was, therefore, anti-clerical, anti-monarchist and pro-democracy. This notion is reinforced by Harper (2018), who explains that radicalism can be understood as the active search for profound social change, which may or may not involve violence. Therefore, although recurrent in the social and even political language about terrorism as inherently linked to extremism, it presents few traits that resemble the latter, constituting, in this case, a more progressive ideology and responsible for important advances in the history of humanity, mainly those that concern universal human rights, meaning that the radicalists' struggle is the conquest of rights and not their suppression.

The concept of insurgency is undoubtedly one of the most important and recurrent in Mozambican political discourse when addressing violence in Northern Mozambique and is also endorsed by academics such as Morier-Genoud (2019). It is probably because it is an intermediate way of naming Cabo Delgado's aggressors without necessarily calling them terrorists, especially in a context of lack of sufficient elements to definitively attribute the denomination of terrorism to the acts of violence practiced in that part of Mozambique.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines insurgency as "a condition of revolt against a government which is less than an organized revolution and which is not recognized as a belligerence".[iv] In turn, Duruji et al., (2018:448) consider insurgency as:

> A rebellion against authority when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents. The nature of insurgencies is an ambiguous concept in the sense that not all rebellions are insurgencies. There have been many cases of non-violent rebellions, using civil resistance. It develops into an insurgency when the group establishes control of territories against a sovereign state.

The difference between the two definitions presented above is that the second considers territorial control as an insurgency ambition. Moreover, the similarity is that both definitions, and others not listed here, consider insurgency violence on a smaller scale than a revolution and a larger scale than a rebellion perpetrated by a certain group against a government. However, O'Neill (1980:1), cited by (Palma, 2016), adds one more element of great value in understanding the phenomenon by explaining that:

> Insurgency represents a struggle between a non-governing group and the governing authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organizational skills, propaganda and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system that it considers illegitimate.

In this case, the author above additionally presents the modus operandi of insurgent groups, which is the usage of demonstrations, propaganda and violence, that may be terrorists to achieve their objectives, as well as the will to establish legitimacy in the disputed territories. When the author brings practical elements, such as the modus operandi of insurgent groups, it facilitates a better framing of this type of phenomenon for practical situations, such as that of Cabo Delgado. Therefore, the insurgent is an individual or group of protestors opposing a government employing combined means of struggle, both violent and non-violent, with the desire to exercise authority over a certain territory or region.

Finally, the concept of interest to address is the concept of Islamic extremism. Prior to that, it is important to first understand what extremism is. The British government defines extremism as a "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and intolerance of different faiths and beliefs" (UK GOV, 2011:107). The British government's position is based on the values defended by its constitution, which are democracy, the rule of law, respect, tolerance, and individual freedom. In this case, any vocal or active opposition to the essential values of its constitution is considered an extremist act. This definition is possibly one of the most contextualized about extremism. However, it is certainly less viable to guide a scientific and theoretical debate on the phenomenon due to the various circumstances not foreseen that can constitute an extremist attitude.

For The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (n.d.), an extremist is one who considers his beliefs, whether religious or political, to be correct and unquestionable and therefore has a responsibility to impose them on the rest of humanity if necessary, using violence. As such, some of the signs of extremism are:

- Seeking to impose one's beliefs, ideologies or values on others through force or indoctrination and being intolerant of other beliefs and perspectives.
- A binary 'them and us' worldview, which seeks to divide communities along communal lines, enforcing this through violence.

- Seeking to limit or curtail the civil liberties or human rights of others on the basis of gender, religion, sexuality and race.
- Excluding other groups, particularly minorities, from public life through discrimination, fomenting hatred, or acts of violence.

Richer elements can be found in this definition to understand the extremist attitude, even beyond Islam. Thus, extremism may be understood as a set of beliefs or worldviews characterized by intolerance of others' beliefs and worldviews. In addition, an extremist is an individual who, in defense of these beliefs, could easily engage in acts of violence.

Bötticher (2017:74) adds that "extremism is, due to its dogmatism, intolerant and unwilling to compromise". Extremists who view politics as a zero-sum game tend – circumstances permitting – to engage in aggressive militancy, including criminal acts and mass violence. Although strictly limited to political issues, this is a perfect example of how the extremist acts in defense of what he believes to be the right thing for a given society or group.

Based on the previous definitions, we can understand extremism as an individual or group ideology, behavior or attitude (possibly more attitude than ideology) that has a certain worldview, intolerant of others because it believes that its own is the best, and that it is willing to, if there are conditions, to impose this vision on others using violence. Extremism can be of two types: non-violent, one whose convictions are limited to the sphere of ideas and thoughts, and violent extremism, which has the desire to impose its beliefs and generate transformations through concrete actions of violence, as with terrorist groups. In this case, the Islamic extremist is the one who applies extremist attitudes in defense of a vision of the Islamic religion and society.

THE CONCEPT OF TERRORISM AND ITS ADJACENCIES IN THE MOZAMBICAN CASE

On 5 and 6 October 2017, there were attacks in Mocímboa da Praia against police stations and civilian targets. Such attacks, carried out by a group of armed men in Islamic clothing, resulted in the death of the National Director of Reconnaissance of the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), police officers and civilians; the destruction of houses; vandalization of churches; and alteration of public order, deserted streets and interruption of traffic to and from Mocímboa da Praia (Beúla, 2017[v] cited by Sitoe, 2019:5).

These attacks, which took place in other districts of Cabo Delgado and some regions of Niassa, such as the District of Marrupa, caused the displacement of more than 784,000 people and 4,000 deaths,[vi] in addition to the destruction of infrastructure and the weakening of the local economy. They continued in the following years and extended to the present day (2022), having reached the need for intervention by Rwandan and Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces since 2021. These interventions managed to significantly reduce the actions of violence perpetrated by the group – having even guaranteed the recovery of regions that were already under the movement's control, such as Mocímboa da Praia, the recovery of mobility within the province of Cabo Delgado that had been limited due to the high frequency of attacks.

Since these attacks began, the first studies were peremptory in assigning the terrorist designation to the group, specifically Islamic extremism. The ease with which the group was conceptualized was due to visual elements expressive of this Islamic religiosity associated with extremist attitudes. As mentioned by Habibe et al., (2019:12):

> They wore their own attire, especially white turbans, tied around their heads; they wore black smocks and short pants, which reached a little below the knees; most of them had shaved hair and had a full beard; they did not take their children to formal schools, simply to the daaras (madrassas) they had built; they always carried bladed weapons (like knives and machetes) to symbolize *jihad*; they incited violence and disrespect for community leaders, particularly the Álimos, whom they called "káfir".

In a field study conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CEEI) (2021) of Joaquim Chissano University, it was possible to corroborate some of these external aspects. Even in the first attempts to install the group in the District of Chiúre, it was through the promotion of Islamic teachings different from local practices, in this case with great appeal to the disobedience, on the part of young people, of the existing Islamic authorities in Chiúre and other regions of Cabo Delgado where the group would later settle, such as Mocímboa da Praia. In more advanced cases, they taught disdain for the state and government. As the District Police Commander of Chiúre stated:[vii]

> Men arrived with groceries in trucks, then they got involved in mosques and during prayers they gave bags of onions and potatoes to young people to start businesses. They also gave 5,000 meticais and after a while they opened their own mosques and forced young people to stop going to local mosques and

> said that they should not respect the authorities or their parents… At night they taught strange ideologies.

An outstanding element that accompanied these attempts to install the group and attract more and more young people to its ranks is the offering of economic advantages to those who would join the group. As mentioned by the District Police Commander, others were offered job opportunities in gas projects in the District of Palma, and others were offered employment in Mocímboa da Praia – although, in practice, some were later forced to join the group after realizing that the job promises were false. In addition, money transfers were made to these recruits, mainly through the M-Pesa digital wallet.

In this case, on many occasions, opportunities for economic and financial integration have become a mobilizing factor for young people in those regions, more than religion itself. This information was corroborated in many individual interviews and focus groups in Cabo Delgado, where, in the words of some interviewees, "they give a lot of money to young people, especially to the unemployed, promising employment in Palma". This was also corroborated by the study conducted by Habibe et al., (2019:23-24) when referring to:

> Our local sources revealed that a significant part of the people who joined the Al-Shabaab group were poor unemployed youth, many of them from poor families, who dropped out of school or simply attended the daaras and carried out their activities as informal vendors in the village headquarters…With no job opportunities, living in poverty and with difficulties in social integration , these young people saw in the Al-Shabaab group the possibility of satisfying their own and their families' basic needs.

In more advanced stages, as it was during the seizure of the District of Quissanga on 25 March 2020, in an image in front of the District Command Police Officer of Quissanga, visual elements that strengthen the idea of violence carried out for Islamic religious motivations, such as the display of a black flag with Arabic inscriptions of Islamic battles in white, turbans and masks, as well as robes, can be seen. Associated with this were the beheadings of civilians in several other districts where the group carried out attacks, which reproduced the modus operandi of groups such as Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. Furthermore, during some videos and audios that accompanied the group's terror actions, oaths were also taken with Islamic religious references.

Thus far, despite having this element of economic and financial enticement to join the ranks of the group, there are still adequate elements to assume that this is

a situation of Islamic extremism, in such a way that there was, still in 2019, an oath of the group to the Islamic State and cluster it in the East Africa branch.

However, we still lack key elements to completely frame this violence into the typical cases of Islamic terrorism. Those elements are the declaration of intentions, or the presentation of demands to the Mozambican government, followed by a denunciation of the way of conducting the affairs of state, and propaganda to the wider national audience, which also allows it to gain sympathizers and supporters to finance its activities because no act of terror is committed as an end in itself. Terrorism is a means of struggle used to achieve a larger political objective.

As far as the claim is concerned, it is not just a matter of presenting an audio record of the attacks and showing the victims of violence. It is, above all, a matter of the group presenting its name, which until now has only been speculated – both by the population and some academics calling them Al-Shabaab, as well as by research groups calling it Ahlu Sunnah Wal-Jamâa, or translated into Arabic, "followers of the prophetic tradition and the congregation" (Morier-Genoud, 2021; Habibe et al., 2019:10-11) and still others by Ansar Al-Sunna[viii](Bonate, 2020; Mutasa& Muchemwa, 2022; Kunaka, n.d.). In other words, everything said about the group's name comes from speculation, especially in interviews with the local community and religious leaders, and not exactly from the mouth of the group itself.

As for the declaration of intent, this goes beyond what studies on Islamic extremism led us to assume – the installation of a state governed by *sharia law.* It is, therefore, above all, what the group in a state as religiously diverse as Mozambique – predominantly Christian and with many traditional religions[ix]– can achieve. Meaning, what is their idea of the ummah, or Islamic community, and what are the territorial limits of their claim?

For the motivational issue, thus far, the group's motivations have been speculated based on the common precepts of political violence – the logic of frustration-aggression or relative deprivation – and on the potential for conflict existing in Cabo Delgado due to the inefficiencies of the government (poverty, corruption, low educational levels and marginality). On the other hand, others appeal to elements of ethnic cleavages between the predominant ethnic groups – Macua, Mwanis and Macondes – in access to resources; and not necessarily for what the group presents as the motive for its violence, which is unusual in any form of insurgency or political violence. Additionally, in elements such as ethnicity, field studies have proven that the group has a great diversity of members, from

national to international. Therefore, it is difficult to faithfully reflect a picture of ethnic conflict in the motives of its actions.

Finally, when speaking of propaganda, it is about how they convey their message to the wider national audience. How do they legitimize their actions of violence and win public support for their cause? Thus far, what has been seen are indiscriminate acts of violence without concern for winning the hearts and minds of the masses, much less justified with some kind of dissatisfaction with the Mozambican government.

The Rational Choice Theory in terrorism phenomenon assumes that terrorist actions derive from a conscious, rational and calculated decision to opt for the strategy as the best way to achieve its objectives. This approach is complemented by the Organizational Theory, which understands terrorist organizations as any other organizations or companies whose objective is survival and prosperity, so they organize and act for these purposes (Sitoe, 2020:69-75). In this case, if the terrorists' objective in publicizing their cause is to gain sympathy and denounce the government or any social structure, which in turn guarantees their survival and prosperity, what is the rationale behind the group never coming out publicly to expose and mobilize people nationally after more than four years?

All this insufficiency strays us away from the concept of Islamic extremism and leads us to the concept of insurgency, preferred by the Mozambican government. In rational and organizational terms, the violence in Cabo Delgado has had little framework for normal and similar terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, which, when they emerged, and during their incubation and maturation process, there was clear information about who they were and what they wanted in their states. Furthermore, these two groups, as well as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, have clear backgrounds in their formation process, unlike the group operating in northern Mozambique, where ethnic differences and views of Islam are called to justify the emergence of the group.

The few antecedents and a weak correlation with the current dynamics of violence in Cabo Delgado are brought by Morier-Genoud (2021:13) when he posits that "a Muslim leader mentioned that a similar movement had arisen in 1989-90 in Nangade District. The adherents of this sect claimed to be followers of Moses, a prophet in the Muslim tradition. They had a dress code similar to the current Al-Shabaab members". Bonate (2020), in turn, traces religious cleavages within Islam as a problem that dates back to the implementation of Islam in Northern Mozambique since the 8thcentury, which lasted until the post-independence years of Mozambique, in 1975, "each time a new conception of Islamic discourses and

practices ventured into Northern Mozambique". Mainly because the local Islamic religious dynamics have never been isolated from the global Islamic religious dynamics.

The concept of insurgency, despite being preferred by the Mozambican government, since it makes it clear that, due to the violence itself and its level of organization, there is a group of dissatisfied people in Mozambique, or with its government, that intends to exercise control over a part of the Mozambican territory. However, from the point of view of political violence analysis in a rational approach framing the violence in Cabo Delgado into this category carries the same problems as with violent extremism because we lack the same elements to generate a clear framework for the concept of terrorism, namely, who are the insurgents? What do they want in Mozambique? Why don't they advertise or make themselves known to receive support from society, especially because no insurgency survives without such support or legitimacy in the society where it is unleashed? Otherwise, it's just banditry.

As we move away from the concepts of Islamic extremism, Islamic radicalism and insurgency (also with an Islamic appearance) and automatically from the more puritanical concept of terrorism, we move closer to the concept of sabotage. Sabotage is the deliberate destruction of property or slowing down work with the intent to harm a business or economic system or weaken a government or nation in times of emergency (Britannica, s/d). Sabotage usually takes place with some form of secrecy and disguise. This means in times of war, sabotage is carried out secretly, usually by spies, and if possible, assigning blame to third parties so that the identity remains covered and the sabotage can continue to take place without being dismantled.

The attacks in Northern Mozambique have all the features to be called sabotage. This is due to its features, namely, covered in the traits of Islam but without popular legitimacy, without faces or hierarchy, no claiming process and without making any effort for propaganda to gain legitimacy in the communities where it is unleashed (many of the victims are practitioners of Islam, the same ones that could be the source of legitimacy for the group); being financed and sometimes counting on mercenaries; focusing on the regions of exploration of natural gas, although there is a much larger Islamic community in the province next door, in Nampula.

Contrary to terrorism, Islamic extremism, radicalism and insurgency, the targets and perpetrators of sabotage must remain hidden. The more elements of disguise it presents, the better it is for achieving its goals and preserving the identity of its perpetrators.

CONCLUSION

Since the outbreak of violence in Mozambique, the phenomenon was automatically called terrorism in its Islamic version, and the denomination quickly expanded in national and international academic circles. However, when we analyze the characteristics of the terrorist phenomenon, especially Islamic extremism, we find that in Mozambique, there is a lack of a claiming process, which underlies the need for propaganda to legitimize the cause and attract more sympathizers and supporters to the cause. This may be added to the persistent difficulty in identifying the perpetrators of violence, their motives, leadership and funding structure.

This lack of claiming and propaganda renders the framing of the phenomenon incomplete. It leads us to debate other concepts also used with some regularity, especially by the government of Mozambique, such as the concept of insurgency. Due to its imprecision to fit into the Mozambican case, the latter also showed inadequacy. This has brought us closer to the concept of sabotage. The occultism in relation to the group, its objectives and leadership, especially after more than four years of violence, make this idea more acceptable.

REFERENCES

- Ali, M.B. & Sudiman, M.S.A.S.B. (2016). Salafis and Wahhabis: Two sides of the same coin? *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)*, 254-11.
- Bonate, L. (2020). *Cabo Delgado como um Catálogo de Falhas.* s.l., s.n.
- Bonate, L.J.K. (2022). O jihadismo transnacional e a insurgência em Cabo Delgado, Moçambique. *Afro-Ásia*, 519-553.
- Bötticher, A. (2017). Towards academic consensus definitions of radicalism and extremism. *Terrorism Research Initiative,* 11(4), 73-77.
- Britannica. (s/d.). *www.britannica.com.* [Online]
  Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/sabotage-subversive-tactic
  [Acedido em 28 Julho 2022].
- CEEI. (2021). *Dinâmicas de Extremismo Violento no Norte de Moçambique: Mecanismos de Prevenção e Resposta,* Maputo: Centro de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais - UJC.
- Duruji, M.M., Idowu, S., Dibia, O. & Duruji-Moses, F.U. (2018). Military budget, war against Boko Haram insurgency, and its impact on Nigerian politics and economy. Em: *Military Expenditure on Economic and Political Resources* (pp. 427-447). IGI Global.
- Habibe, S., Forquilha, S. & Pereira, J. (2019). Radicalização Islâmica no Norte de Moçambique: O Caso de Mocímboa da Praia. *Cadernos IESE, 17*, Setembro.
- Hassan, G.S. (2013). Radical Islam/Islamic radicalism: Towards a theoretical framing. *Institute of Policy Studies*, January.
- Home Office. (2011). *Prevent strategy,* s.l.: s.n.
- Kunaka, K. (s.d.). An analysis of the transnational diffusion of terrorism in Africa: The case of Ansar Al-Sunna armed group in Northern Mozambique. *Africa University*, 11.
- Lutz, B. & Lutz, J. (2013). Terrorism. Em A. Collins (ed.). *Contemporary Security Studies* (pp. 273-288). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morier-Genoud, E. (2019). Tracing the history of Mozambique's mysterious and deadly insurgency. *The Conversation*, 18 February.

- Morier-Genoud, E. (2021). A insurgência Jihadi em Moçambique: Origens, natureza e início. *Cadernos IESE*, Março.
- Mutasa, M.N. & Muchemwa, C. (2022). Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique: Is it the Boko Haram of Southern Africa? *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 17(3).
- Palma, O. (2016). Criminal interests within political insurgencies: The case for development-centered counterinsurgency. In *Handbook of Research on Transitional Justice and Peace Building in Turbulent Regions* (pp. 421- 443). s.l.: IGI Global.
- Polícia, C.D.D. (2020). *Comandante Distrital da Polícia.*Entrevista, 22 Setembro 2020.
- Sitoe, R. (2020). *Terrorismo em África: A presença da ameaça em Moçambique.* 1 ed. Maputo: TPC Editora.
- Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. (s.d.). *What is extremism?* The European Wegerland Cenre.
- Winter, C. (2019). Researching Jihadist propaganda: Access, interpretation and trauma. *RESOLVE Network*, May.
- X. (2020). *Deslocada de Mocimboa da Praia.*Entrevista, 24 Setembro 2020.

[i] https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/ (Accessed 6 July 2022).

[ii] Rapoport (2004) subdivides terrorism into four important waves: the first, of anarchists; the second, the Anti-colonial Wave; the third, the New Left Wave; and the fourth, the Religious Wave. Each of these waves represents a philosophical and operational orientation in the use of terror, that is, a dominant characteristic.

[iii] It should be noted that the way these groups have been advertising has varied over time. Between 2013 and mid-2015, this advertisement was more visible as they used media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. From mid-2015 to the present, these groups have preferred lesser-known platforms and more private spaces to advertise (Winter, 2019:2-3). This change may be due to the level of content censorship that took place on the usual platforms.

[iv] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/insurgency referring to August 1, 2022.

[v] Beula, E. (2017, December 19). Director of the UIR murdered in Mocímboa da Praia. Available at: http://opais.sapo.mz/director-da-uir-assassinado-em-mocimboa-da-praia (Accessed 1 October 2018).

[vi] https://www.dw.com/pt-002/mo%C3%A7ambique-viol%C3%AAncia-faz-79-mil-deslocados-internos-em-2021/a-62148090 (Accessed 11 July 2022).

[vii] Interviewed on September 22, 2020, in the District of Chiúre.

[viii] Ahl al-Sunna or Ansar al-Sunna, is described by Bonate (2020) as a movement created in 1998 by young graduates of Salafi-Wahhabi universities, who were cut off from opportunities by the Islamic Congress after they returned from their studies at the end of the 1990s.

[ix] About 27% Catholic, 19% Islamic, 16% Zion, 15% Evangelical and other unknown and less predominant (INE, 2019) in http://www.ine.gov.mz/iv-rgph-2017/mocambique/03 - religion/frame-11-population-by-religion-by-area-of-residence-age-and-sex-mozambique-2017.xlsx/view.

THE AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA: IMPLICATIONS OF STATE FAILURE AND THE GROWTH OF TERRORISM

***Aakaa Esther Doom**, Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University Makurdi, Nigeria &*
***Michael Aondona Chiangi**, Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

The collapse of Somalia and the growth of terrorism has formed a significant subject of scholarly and expert discourse in the past three decades. This paper examines the emergence and resurgence of the most dangerous Islamist militant group, Al-Shabaab, due to Somalia's government collapse. Al-Shabaab is responsible for the assassinations of international aid workers, civil society figures, journalists and government officials in Somalia, and for blocking the delivery of aid from western relief agencies during the 2011 famine that killed tens of thousands of Somalis. The analysis here identifies critical factors responsible for the growth of terror in Somalia, including the weakness of the government and law enforcement institutions, the proliferation of arms, the porosity of borders, and the steady growth of fundamentalist Islamism. As a result, Somalia has become a haven for terrorists and a recruitment and training ground for Al-Qaeda. The United States and neighboring states of Kenya and Ethiopia have launched counter-terrorism operations to bring lasting peace to Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Unfortunately, none of these operations have been successful as the group has become more resilient. With the election of a new president in Somalia, this paper examines the need to prioritize and intensify military operations against Al-Shabaab, while engaging with leaders of the group to test whether home-grown political engagements might be feasible and explore initial confidence-building steps that could reduce the violence and help bring peace to Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Keywords:
Al-Shabaab; Terrorism; State Failure; Somalia; Al-Qaeda; Counter-Terrorism

INTRODUCTION

The growth of Islamist terrorism in Africa in the post-9/11 era and sundry criminal activities have become a disturbing phenomenon in recent times with dire implications for the security and development of the continent. In Somalia, terrorism, piracy and inter-clan skirmishes have ravaged the economy since the collapse of the government in 1991. Failure of the Somali state to exercise effective sovereign control over all its territory further exacerbates the problem. Somalia has become a fertile ground for recruiting and training Al-Qaeda operatives and a launching space for attacks in neighboring countries, as was the case in the United States (US)embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Al-Qaeda-linked Somali terrorist group, Al-Shabaab, has wreaked havoc in Somalia and neighboring states of Kenya, Djibouti and Tanzania, and the peace-keeping troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which have been working in collaboration with the US intelligence and logistic outfits.

The ravaging consequences of governmental collapse, poverty and hunger have aggravated the predicament of the state of Somalia, as these factors represent the permissive conditions for the recruitment, training and transit of terrorists within and out of Somalia. Other factors include the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, often smuggled across the largely unmanned coastal and land borders. These realities provide an enabling setting for terrorism to take root and flourish, particularly given the steady rise of fundamentalist Islamism and the increase in the number of jihadi elements within Somalia, as well as the established links of these domestic elements with the broader global jihadi network (Tadesse, 2001).

In light of the foregoing, this paper examines the emergence and growth of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the task of the new leadership in bringing peace to Somalia, particularly in the wake of the failed counter-terrorism operations by the US, Ethiopia and Kenya. Consequently, the paper recommends a mixture of military and political engagements to end the violence.

Thus, apart from the preceding introduction, this paper captures the following topics: a conceptual discourse on state failure, state failure and the growth of terror, critical drivers of terrorism in Somalia, Islamic fundamentalism and the birth of Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the resurgence of Al-Shabaab attacks, counter-terrorism operations in Somalia and their assessment, the new leadership of Somalia, and the challenge of combating Al-Shabaab.

A CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE ON STATE FAILURE

The concept of state failure generally lacks an objective definition due to the uncertainties regarding the appropriate indices for measuring the threats they present (Chan, 2013:398). Other nomenclatures employed in the same class include state weakness and state collapse, although the main focus of this paper is not to examine the various usages of the term. Consequently, providing a generally acceptable definition of state failure is bound to be problematic due to the fluidity of the basic characteristics of the phenomenon. The earliest usage of the phrase 'failed state' in academic literature was by Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner, who used it to describe the difficulty of a state to sustain itself as a member of the international community (Helman & Ratner, 1992:3). The learned authors popularized this concept throughout the 1990s. They sought to demonstrate the dire security threats posed by the failed states to international security.

In simple terms, if a government begins to lose the ability to discharge its obligations to its citizens and the international community, then state failure begins to manifest. Giorgetti describes the preceding situation as "a long and multi-shaped process, in which states may go through different stages of 'failure' which can encompass diverse public functions..." (Giorgetti,2010:482). It can therefore be regarded as the "product of a collapse of the power structures providing political support for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence" (Thurer, 1999:73). There is, consequently, a precipitous correlation between security and state failure as seen in some definitions.

For instance, Rotberg (2004:1) maintains that states are considered failed "when they are consumed by internal violence and [cannot deliver] positive political goods to their inhabitants". The foregoing definition implies that the primary good expected of a state is the provision of security within its territorial space. When this is done, it can trigger other public goods, including the maintenance of law and order, education and healthcare, economic growth etc., the absence of which becomes difficult for a state to sustain itself. Other indicators of state failure include lack of good governance, loss of territorial control, criminal or gang violence, the activities of warlords, and lack of medical and educational services, including the decline in Gross Domestic Product per capita (Moritz, 2013:1).

An important issue to note is that although state failure is a product of systemic dysfunctions within a state, it is regarded as an international problem as its consequences can hardly be contained within the borders of a single state. In other words, the security problems of a failed state can spill over into the territories of

neighboring states, as seen in the terrorist activities of Al-Shabaab in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti and the Horn of Africa. However, the group was formed in Somalia.

The collapse of the governmental structures of a state is a necessary but nonsufficient condition of state failure. In other words, there must also be "a requisite breakdown of public institutions and services at the local level and a fundamental *defacto* absence of control over territory" (Chan, 2013:401). Moreover, as Giorgetti (2010:474) notes, to qualify as state failure, the implosion must be "long-lasting … [covering] several to all the functions of a state, not solely their governmental functions". Indeed, not only does failure include an ineffective government, but it also affects the bases and structure of the state, its population, and its territory and capacity to perform national and international obligations.

Consequently, Somalia has been rightly described as "the first significant governmental collapse since the cold war" due toa decades-long orgy of armed conflicts and intractable political violence (Chan 2013:395). According to Rotberg (2005:131), Somalia is "the model of a collapsed state: a geographical expression only, with borders but with no effective way to exert authority within those borders". Moreover, as Jhazbhay (2003:77) notes, Somalia has become only a geographical expression with clearly defined borders but lacks the capacity to exercise sovereign authority within such borders, a situation of statelessness where rules exist without rulers.

STATE FAILURE AND THE GROWTH OF TERROR

After the 11 September 2001 attacks in the US, a clear link was established between terrorism and failed states, as they provide terrorists with havens to operate without fear of apprehension and prosecution. Terrorists operate freely in states where governmental control is weak, failing or virtually non-existent. Such states provide sanctuary to effectively plan and execute attacks on neighboring states and beyond. These entities are thus presented as direct and indirect security threats against which the international community must be on alert.

State failure was hitherto considered a mere phenomenon of "containable humanitarian catastrophe, with little or no global impact beyond the immediate regional threats it represents" (Chan, 2013:396). However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September radically changed the narrative as failed states have become "the bogeyman of the international order, the nightmare that ... [keeps] ... senior officials awake at night" (Stewart, 2011). Terrorists and other non-state actors reside and use the territories of failed states as operational bases from which to plan and

launch attacks (Yoo, 2011:108). Dulap summarized global concerns about the relationship between state failure and terrorism as follows:

> First, their lawlessness allows terrorist organizations to conduct activities without fear of capture or punishment. Failed states are too weak, distracted, and corrupt to find and eliminate terrorist groups within their borders. Second, state failure allows terrorist organizations access to resources they need to conduct their activities, including money and recruits. Failed states are often havens for criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and diamond smuggling, that terrorist groups use to finance their operations. Third, failed states offer terrorists the cover of state sovereignty. While terrorists take refuge behind the borders of a state that is, at least in principle, a sovereign nation, they avoid capture by other states, whose governments may be reluctant to cross international boundaries to catch them. At the same time, those terrorists may believe that other concerned states have little hope of cooperating with the barely functioning governments of failed states on counterterrorism operations (Dulap, 2004:460).

Terrorists exploit the anarchy and disorder inherent in failed states, including weaknesses of the government and all the elements contributing to state collapse, to enhance their operations. Poverty, corruption, the absence of state apparatuses critical to the rule of law, the absence of economic controls and regulations for business activities, and porous state borders provide fertile ground for the growth of terrorist activities (Puccetti, 2021:2). In most cases, individual terrorists can only seek sanctuary in failed states to avoid detection and capture.

In the case of Somalia, the country has become both a hiding place for international terrorists and a transit route for arms to neighboring Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and other parts of Africa (Menkhaus, 2004:70). In March 2003, the US armed commandos snatched one Suleiman Abdallah, a suspected Al-Qaeda member who was hiding in Mogadishu, and took him out for interrogation (Bloomfield, 2013:17). The militant Islamist group, Al-Shabaab's affiliation with Al-Qaeda and its first major attack outside Somalia, when suicide bombers killed an estimated 75 people in Uganda in July 2010, point to a stark link between terrorism and state failure.

CRITICAL DRIVERS OF TERRORISM IN SOMALIA

The collapse of Somalia in 1991 led to the Balkanization of the various alliances, factions and clans that existed in Somalia during Said Barre's regime. This created a bitter struggle between splinter groups for access to the central

government that changed Somalia into a largely ungovernable space, especially following the involvement of foreign jihadists and Al-Qaeda. As a result, state institutions collapsed, and the security of Somalia deteriorated. Different clans and groups became autonomous entities, each with a carefully defined enclave in which they set rules, levy taxes, and exploit the population in what has been termed "the economy of plunder and violence" (Little, 2003:150-151; Vinci, 2006:77).

Amid the chaos, Al-Qaeda were busy recruiting operatives in Somalia and leveraged the discord to operate freely in the region. Al-Qaeda attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 were reported to have been facilitated by Islamists in Somalia. The Somali Islamist group, Al-Itihaad al-Islaamiya (AIAI), was identified as Al-Qaeda's main ally in those attacks and was subsequently listed as a terrorist organization by the US (International Crisis Group, 2005:16).

On 28 November 2002, Al-Qaeda launched another attack on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, and attempted to attack a passenger plane at Mombasa International Airport. It was believed that the attackers took refuge in Somalia and clandestinely crossed the borders where they attacked and then returned secretly (International Crisis Group, 2005:1). The group also planned other attacks on the US embassy in Nairobi with a light aircraft in 2003, but was thwarted by security officers in Kenya (International Crisis Group, 2005:9). While Somalia served as a "transfer and safe haven" to the terrorist agents, Al-Qaeda provided funds and logistics. Al-Qaeda also provided "expertise for [the] attackers, advanced weapons for attacks, and function[ed] as a source of ideological inspiration for [them]" (Dempsey, 2006:15).

Consequently, there is a general consensus that Somalia has become a transit point and a shield for Al-Qaeda terrorists in the Horn of Africa (International Crisis Group, 2005:11). Somalia has been linked to terrorist attacks in the neighboring states of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania as a place of coordination for terrorist attacks (Osondu, 2008:46). This has also been facilitated by the porosity of Somali borders, which has featured prominently in many discussions of conflict and crime in Africa. These porous borders are essential for illegal activities such as drug trafficking, firearms smuggling, and other regional cross-border crimes (Little, 2003:102). In addition, there are reports that foreign Islamic fighters are entering Somalia through its many porous passages to join forces with Islamic militant groups currently fighting to control the central government of Somalia, including numerous young radicals from the Somali diaspora (International Crisis Group, 2007:4).

Furthermore, the proliferation of arms has also been identified as a key driver of terrorism in the region. Somalia has a huge market for the sale and purchase of arms, which terrorist groups have taken advantage of for their operations. The weapon issue has been partly traced back to the Siad Barre regime, especially during the Cold War, when the Soviet Union and the US supplied him with weapons. The accumulation of weapons gave the regime the courage to perpetuate a dictatorship that ultimately plunged Somalia into a calamitous tragedy (Bryden, 1999:136). In addition, Barre's government had a policy of arming clans loyal to his government against opposition clans. These were not part of the Somali armed forces, but clan militiamen recruited to defend the government in the event of an attack, most of which were eventually used against the same government (Elmi & Barise, 2006:35). Thus, even after the fall of the regime, a significant portion of those weapons were still in the hands of warlords and militias. Some ended up in the hands of independent unemployed youths, later becoming tools of theft, piracy and terror (Ahmed &Green, 2007:117). More recently, however, independent actors from countries such as Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, United Kingdom, Australia and Djibouti have been implicated in trafficking arms to Somalia (Osondu, 2008:46).

Other critical drivers of terrorism in Somalia include the high rate of poverty, weakness of institutions of government and law enforcement, the proliferation of Islamist fundamentalist ideologies, the proximity of the state to the Middle East, the incessant conflict between the Islamists and the clan militias, and the booming enterprise of pirates, all of which have characteristically predisposed Somalia to terrorism.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE BIRTH OF AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA

The fall of Somalia led to the resurgence of the AIAI, which was formed in 1983, heavily funded by Osama bin Laden and equipped with foreign militants to train and fight alongside members of Al-Qaeda, to establish an Islamic State (IS) in the Horn of Africa (Hammer, 2007). The decline of the AIAI in the mid to late 1990s was preceded by the emergence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which incorporated former AIAI members and radical jihadists (International Crisis Group, 2006:9). Determined to wrest power from the warlords and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the Courts began to recruit and build a powerful military force through the massive accumulation of weapons and the training of fighters (International Crisis Group, 2006:11).

The ICU exploited the frustration and desperation of ordinary Somalis on the one hand and the elite's disillusionment and loss of confidence in the system on the other. Thus, by early 2006, these sentiments had peaked, and the ICU wasted no time in capitalizing on this to push itself into reckoning (International Crisis Group, 2007:3). The early infiltration of the courts by powerful jihadist elements, mainly the radical elements of the AIAI, who became key figures in the ICU, made it a powerful politically motivated and ideological institution that propelled fundamentalist Islamism to new heights. Islamic courts seized control of Mogadishu and other cities from warlords in a bitter battle in June 2006 that claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians. The military wing of the courts, known as Mu'askar Mahkamat (Islamic Courts Camp), later changed its name to Jamaa'a Al-Shabaab (meaning Youth Group).

Al-Shabaab comprised fighters from the former Islamist militant group (AIAI) and other members who fought for or were trained by Al-Qaeda. The group was led by the late Aden Hashi Farah Ayro; a Somali operative believed to have been trained by Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan (Britannica, 2015). Thus, unlike the ICU, Al-Shabaab took a more extreme and radical stance and espoused a puritanical version of Islam. The group was instrumental to the victory of the ICU in the 2006 Battle of Mogadishu; it fought with warlords sponsored by the US to clear the Somali environment of Al-Qaeda elements and their collaborators in Somalia, and to prevent the spread of militant Islamism (International Crisis Group, 2006:12).

The victory of the ICU in the battle strengthened Al-Shabaab to acquire weapons that previously belonged to warlords. During this time, the ICU became particularly powerful as it brought a semblance of order to Somalia sufficient to win the loyalty of the majority of Somalis. Moreover, the rise of Al-Shabaab as a body responsible for maintaining internal discipline and order transformed the courts into apolitically motivated and highly organized institution (International Crisis Group, 2006:10). The ICU had control of most of the major cities of Somalia, including the capital of Mogadishu, until the last days of December 2006, when the Union of Islamic Courts was defeated by the coalition of warlords in Mogadishu through the collaboration of Ethiopian forces and Western allies.

Despite the defeat of the ICU, the conflict did not end. On the contrary, I was transformed into an insurgency following the declaration of jihad by the Islamic courts and the call for international jihadists to join the struggle, further deteriorating Somalia's security situation and the entire region (Harper, 2007). The insurgency was motivated by Osama bin Laden's 1992 *fatwa,* which called on all Muslims to wage jihad against America and its troops stationed in the Arabian Peninsula and its allies (Roshandel, 2006).

The Al-Shabaab was made up of ruthless, war-hungry young men trained in the arts of asymmetric warfare and insurgency (International Crisis Group, 2006:10). Some international jihadist organizations provided logistical and personnel support to the ICU. In contrast, others voluntarily fought for the ICU. The case of Daniel Maldonado, 28, an American Muslim convert, reported in the New York Times on 20 March 2007, who admitted travelling to Somalia in December 2006 to receive firearms training and explosives to fight on the side of the ICU to bring down the TFG and establish an IS is a good example (New York Times, 2007:16).

On 27 December 2006, the ICU announced its dissolution through the Somali Council of Islamic Courts (International Crisis Group, 2007:1). However, it was firmly believed that the ICU was only disorganized and not dissolved. This is because all the "basic institutions and networks of revolutionary Islam in Somalia, the mosques, schools, charities and private companies" that spawned Shabaab were still intact (International Crisis Group, 2007:1). Al-Shabaab's threat to engage in guerilla warfare with the TFG and Ethiopian forces in Somalia has indeed been carried out, as evidenced by the growing number of hit-and-run attacks (United Nations Security Council, 2007:17).

THE RESURGENCE OF AL-SHABAAB ATTACKS

Despite the death of Aden Hashi Ayro in 2008, Al-Shabaab has persisted in its campaign of terror. In February 2008, Al-Shabaab was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the US government. Until 2009, Al-Shabaab exercised control over certain areas and imposed Sharia law, outlawing behaviors it deemed un-Islamic and imposing barbaric punishments such as beheading, stoning and amputation of offenders. The group has carried out more than 1,700 terrorist attacks and killed more than 4,000 people since it appeared on the terrorist radar (BBC News, 2022). The number of attacks attributed to the group has dramatically increased from less than 10 in 2007 to more than 800 in 2014 (Pate et al., 2015:1). On 3 December 2009, a suicide bomber attacked a doctors' graduation ceremony at the Shamo Hotel, one of Mogadishu's leading hotels, killing 14 medical students, lecturers and doctors from Banadir University and injured others (Hassan, 2019).

In July 2010, Al-Shabaab suicide bombers carried out the group's first attack outside Somalia, killing 75 people gathered in Kampala, Uganda, to watch a football match. According to the group, the attack was in retaliation for the participation of Ugandan troops in the AMISOM in Mogadishu (Rice, 2010). Notwithstanding the attack, AMISOM did not stop its brutal onslaught on Al-Shabaab. By August 2011, the group was exhausted from the fighting and consequently withdrew from Mogadishu even though it still had a stronghold in

Kismayo, the port city of Somalia. Meanwhile, on 14 October 2011, Kenyan forces invaded Somalia in response to a series of attacks and kidnappings by Al-Shabaab in the infamous Operation *Linda Nchi* (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). On 22 February 2012, Kenyan forces formally aligned themselves with AMISOM and thus forced the group to engage in another round of fighting, which, by October, had succeeded in driving Al-Shabaab out of Kismayo, the last urban stronghold of the group.

The group's campaign of terror nevertheless took a new dimension as it turned its attention to neighboring countries in the region after losing its strong position in Somalia. Al-Shabaab has been on the list of the most active terrorist groups in the world since 2014 (Pate et al., 2015:1). In February 2012, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda announced a merger when leaders of the two groups jointly released a video publicly declaring Al-Shabaab's allegiance to Al-Qaeda. This new alliance gave Al-Shabaab the necessary impetus to intensify attacks in and out of Somalia. For example, on 21 September 2013, terrorists armed with automatic weapons and grenades attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 65 people and injuring many more. Ahmed Abdi Godane, leader of the group, later claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was intended to punish Kenya for sending troops into Somalia. In May 2014, the group attacked Djibouti in a double suicide bombing at a restaurant frequented by Westerners, killing three people (Maruf, 2021).

On 2 April 2015, the group attacked Garissa University College in Kenya, killing 147 students, mostly Christians, and injuring 79 others (Pate et al., 2015:1). In October 2015, some Al-Shabaab clerics pledged allegiance to the IS terrorist group. In 2016, the group's pro-ISIS factions managed to take control of the town of Qandala on the coast of the Gulf of Aden in Puntland (International Crisis Group, 2017:3). In the same year, Al-Shabaab killed more than 100 Kenyan soldiers at their base in El Added, near Somalia's southern border (Burke, 2018).

Furthermore, on 14 June 2017, the group attacked the Posh Hotel, a popular nightclub in Mogadishu, killing women and hotel workers and taking 20 others hostage. A group member drove a suicide car heavily laden with explosives and crashed into the hotel entrance before gunmen broke into the restaurant and started shooting sporadically (Sheikh, 2017). In October of the same year, the city of Mogadishu was hit by its worst terrorist attack when two truck bombs killed more than 500 people and injured more than 300 people (Klobucista et al., 2021).

On 1 April 2018, a series of coordinated attacks were carried out by Al-Shabaab in the Somali city of Bulamaer and at two other places in the Lower Shabelle

region. The targets of the attack were the African Union (AU) and Somali troops. In the Bulamaer attack, two suicide car bombs hit an AU military vehicle and another Somali military vehicle, killing Ugandan peacekeepers and Somali soldiers. The attacks occurred near the AMISOM base, followed by violent ground guerrilla attacks throughout the day. The attacks reportedly killed 14 Al-Shabaab fighters and 59 AMISOM soldiers (L'osservatorio, 2018). The attacks were intended to hasten the withdrawal of AMISOM troops, who have been fighting Al-Shabaab for over a decade (Burke, 2018).

In the same month, the group's leader, Ahmed Umar, released an audio calling for lone-wolf attacks on the US and French interests in Djibouti. The leader accused the authorities of turning the country into a military base from which any war against Muslims in East Africa was planned (Maruf, 2021). The group has remained resilient to this day, and its strategies and sophistication have become so powerful that Somalia's weak security architecture can hardly bear it.

It is imperative to note that Al-Shabaab's modus operandi suggests an organization with a local focus and that its attacks since 2007 have been directly linked to local warfare, including outside Somalia. The group cannot be understood without understanding the politics of the Somali clan and the local historical context (Hansen, 2013:2). However, it cannot be understood in a local context alone; rather, it is an organization shaped by global jihadist ideologies, the local must provide some form of rudimentary justice and tactical considerations on behalf of its various members.

Counter-terrorism operations in Somalia

The September 11 attacks forced the US to take decisive action against terrorism. The US government defined the attack as an act of war which marked the beginning of a more robust action on terrorists who wage "war against the United States, the peaceful peoples of the world, and the very principles of freedom and human dignity" (Rice, 2003:2). This marked the official commencement of the US Global War on Terror (GWOT) by which many counter-terrorism programs were initiated and existing ones resuscitated. The GWOT ranged, among other things, from protecting the US citizens and interests at home and abroad to defeating terrorists and their organizations and denying terrorist sponsorship, support, and haven. Consequently, Somalia became a counter-terrorism operation in Africa, with the US and other countries in the region launching various counter-terrorism programs in Somalia. This section looks briefly at some of the programs.

The US Counter-terrorism and Humanitarian Interventions in Somalia

As part of the UN, the US took part in UNISOM I and II, a humanitarian operation in Somalia, in 1992. The operation was humiliating for the US after 18 US marines lost their lives in a street fight in Mogadishu on 3-4 October 1993 while attempting to capture warlord Farah Aideed. This became known as the "Black Hawk Down" incident for which Osama bin Laden claimed responsibility. After the US withdrew from the program, the incident's demoralizing effects caused the UN to leave in 1995 (International Crisis Group, 2002:1). According to the US intelligence authorities, bin Laden sent "training, organizational, and logistical assistance to AIAI fighters in order to resist the American presence in Somalia" (International Crisis Group, 2002:5).

Since the US withdrawal from Somalia in 1995, AIAI's steadily expanding influence and activities have raised serious security concerns. The group was alleged to be involved in the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and an earlier attempt on the life of an Ethiopian minister. The AIAI was immediately designated a terrorist organization after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US (International Crisis Group, 2002:12). The US counter-terrorism program deployed a lot of intelligence to disentangle the affiliation between AIAI and Al-Qaeda. It was argued that AIAI, acting as an Al-Qaeda cell inside of Somalia, served as the protective cover for terrorists before, during and immediately after the embassy bombings. The US counter-terrorism interest in Somalia continues to be concentrated on capturing wanted Al-Qaeda terrorists thought to be hiding there, including local Somali Jihadists who are thought to not only have ties to Al-Qaeda, but also to be protecting some of these terrorists.

Consequently, the US counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia followed a three-pronged strategy: direct intervention, engagement of regional Somali proxies, and exploitation of ally frontline states. After 11 September 2001, the US contemplated using military force against Somalia but decided against it after realizing it lacked sufficient information on the topography of the area (Menkhaus, 2004:68). Instead, it chose to confine its military activities to patrolling the Somali coast and performing reconnaissance overflights. Twelve days after the September 11 attacks, the US placed AIAI in "Executive Order 13224", which specified the identities of terrorist groups and ordered the freezing of their assets (Quaranto, 2008:36). Al-Barakaat, the most well-known Somali company, also had its assets frozen by the Department of Treasury on 7 November because it was suspected of helping Al-Qaeda with fund-raising, distribution and management of its finances, the shipment of illegal weapons, and the provision of "secure telephone" and internet facilities to terrorists and their supporters (Quaranto, 2008:37).

The US recognized that its operational options were constrained to airstrikes due to the peculiarities of Somalia and that airstrikes alone were not particularly successful in carrying out the sort of operation the Somali environment required. As a result, the US founded and equipped the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism (ARPCT), using Ethiopian officials as intermediaries. The partnership was tasked with keeping tabs on potential terrorists and carrying out "snatch and grab operations" on them (Quaranto, 2008:41). However, despite raising the stakes in the Somali conflict by pitting the Alliance against the ICU and other militias opposed to the involvement of the US and Ethiopia in Somalia, the ARPCT's targeting of suspected local Jihadists in Somalia with terrorist ties had very little success. This intense conflict culminated in the Mogadishu war of May–June 2006, which saw the defeat of the Alliance.

In addition, the US military launched a two-day attack on some facilities in Afmadow, a southern Somali town near the Kenyan border, on 7 and 8 January 2007, in pursuit of three Al-Qaeda suspects believed to be hiding inside Somalia and protected by Islamists and some of the leadership core of the retreating ICU. According to the US authorities, the two-day aircraft assault targeted structures and locations thought to be housing foreign militants and local jihadists trying to flee the Ethiopian military firepower in their conflict with the Islamic Courts (Quaranto, 2008:43).

Ethiopia's Counter-terrorism Operations in Somalia

Of all the nations in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia's experience with counter-terrorism has been exceptional. Ethiopia has worked hard to externalize its activities by taking overt action against suspected terrorists outside of its borders, when necessary, while most other states focus on pursuing domestic counter-terrorism measures and engagements, and bilateral and regional collaborative involvement. During its counter-terrorism operations, it has frequently sent troops into Somalia in search of alleged Islamist militants. Since the middle of the 1990s, Ethiopia has seen several terrorist strikes. For example, it prevented an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995 by some members of the Islamic Brotherhood of Egypt.

At the peak of its popularity, the Somali radical Islamist group, AIAI, was not only involved in preparing fighters for Ethiopian rebel groups, but had also personally carried out several direct attacks inside Ethiopia. As a result, Ethiopia launched cross-border retaliation attacks on known AIAI training camps near its border inside Somalia (International Crisis Group, 2007:6). Ethiopia, thus, became a crucial US partner in the Horn of Africa during the Global War on Terror, and Somalia's growing radical Islamism received significant attention. Moreover, the

Somali Islamists were already suspected of providing safe passage and protection to terrorists, and the country's environment was used as a staging area for the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. As a result, Ethiopia stood out in the US counter-terrorism initiatives in Somalia as a regional power and received much assistance to enable it to perform its role effectively. Thus, Ethiopia has been ruthless to Al-Shabaab due to its robust intelligence and military might.

Kenya's Counter-terrorism Operation in Somalia

Kenya initiated Operation *Linda Nchi* (Protect the Country), in 2011, in response to the terrorist threats that the Islamic militant organization Al-Shabaab presented to its national security and the Horn of Africa. Kenya alleged that repeated Al-Shabaab's abductions and murders of tourists in its coastal and northeastern districts endangered its trade and tourism sectors, both of which are essential to Kenya's economy.

From 2006 to 2009, Al-Shabaab rose to prominence by constantly fighting Ethiopia's occupation of Somalia (Wise, 2011). As a result, Al-Shabaab captured the majority of southern and central Somalia when Ethiopian soldiers left the country, and they remained in charge of those regions until 2011. Although the size of the operation launched by Kenya suggests that preparations for such an attack had started long before the actual invasion, it is, however, unclear how well-prepared Kenya was for this onslaught, given the counterattacks that Al-Shabaab launched against Kenyan civilians, which amply illustrated the country's significant domestic security flaws.

Kenya asserted its right to self-defense at the outset of its entry into Somalia, citing Article 51 of the UN Charter, which expressly recognizes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in the event of an armed attack against a UN member. A day before the intervention began in 2011, Kenya's late minister for internal security stated that the country was intervening "to protect its territorial integrity from foreign aggression" (Akolo, 2012). He implied that in order to catch up with Al-Shabaab militia, the Kenya Defense Force would invade Somalia and advance as far as possible (Throup, 2012).

ASSESSMENT OF THE US, ETHIOPIA AND KENYAN COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS IN SOMALIA

Since the Islamic Courts were expelled from Mogadishu in late December 2006, counter-terrorism operations by the US, Ethiopia, and Kenya have increased the Courts' activities and, more recently, Al-Shabaab, and gradually ushered in the deadly insurgency. This has greatly favored Al-Qaeda's strategy to keep infiltrating, gathering supporters, organizing, and building a strong Islamist resistance to the US-led counter-terrorism operations.

The US airstrikes were unsuccessful as there was no proof that the airstrikes struck the targets, despite the assumption that they were primarily targeting three Al-Qaeda members linked to the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, a hotel and airport in Mombasa, Kenya, in 2002. Reports of civilian deaths during those airstrikes fueled anti-American sentiment. They benefited the Islamists, who utilized the attacks to galvanize support for their cause by opposing the presence and acts of Ethiopian forces while criticizing their American sponsors (Prendergast &Thomas-Jensen, 2007:69). Al-Qaeda swiftly capitalized on this by presenting Somalia as yet another battleground in the American-led campaign to conquer Islam and the Muslim world, which must be opposed by waging a worldwide jihad.

The role of the US in financing the ARPCT is still one of the biggest mistakes of the US in Somalia. The task of the Alliance was to mount surveillance, round up suspected terrorists in "snatch and grab" operations, and act as a wedge against the spread of radical Islamism. However, the ARPCT ended up exacerbating the security situation in Somalia (Quaranto, 2008:41). The difficulties of the US in entering Somalia for the operation may have informed the formation of the ARPCT because operations of that nature by outside agents carry a significant security risk. However, since its formation, the most important achievement of the ARPCT was the capture of Suleiman Ahmed Hemed (Issa Tanzania) in Mogadishu in April 2003 (International Crisis Group, 2005:10). Also worth mentioning are instances where members of the ARPCT and the US shared intelligence, which often thwarted some planned attacks (International Crisis Group, 2005:10).

Furthermore, the overt Ethiopian military presence in Somalia since December 2006 (at the behest of the troubled TFG) increased tension in the region as a whole and Somalia in particular. It also allowed Eritrea to intervene in Somalia by increasing its military, resource, and logistical support for the Islamic Courts to spite Ethiopia (Ray, 2007). This setback for counter-terrorism efforts was intended to stop the spread of radical Islamist groups and those who support

terrorism in Somalia. However, ordinary Somalis still nurtured resentment towards Ethiopia for its involvement and continuous presence due to the enemy image that had solidified in their minds over the years (Osondu, 2008).

In the same vein, Kenya's intervention in Somalia was not perfect. There were reported cases of civilian casualties, both in Somalia and Kenya, during the operation. Women and children were said to have been killed and seriously injured as the Kenya Defense Force launched its attacks on the Somali areas controlled by Al-Shabaab (Shabelle Media Network, 2012). Grenade attacks in Kenya not only resulted in casualties but also fired up resentment among the ordinary Kenyans over the government's alleged neglect of the nation's internal security in favor of the invasion of Somalia.

By getting involved in Somalia, Kenya gave Al-Shabaab plenty of justification to carry out its threats to attack the country. Consequently, the group declared it would launch retaliatory attacks on Kenyan soil (Pflanz, 2011). The group made it abundantly clear that they oppose any foreign intervention in Somalia, including that of Kenya. Since the beginning of the intervention, small-scale attacks and violence, mainly through grenade attacks in Kenya's capital, the coastal region and the northeastern border regions, escalated, indicating that threats of Al-Shabaab's counterattacks were real.

Generally, the counter-terrorism initiatives in Somalia have not been a success. Rather, they have tended to escalate the security threats and increase the rate of attacks in and out of Somalia. As a result, the insurgency has become a protracted security problem with no end in sight. However, there have been expectations since the election of a new president in Somalia. As demonstrated in the next section of this paper, he is expected to focus more on dealing with the threat of Al-Shabaab using a mixture of hard and soft approaches.

THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF SOMALIA AND THE TASK OF COMBATING AL-SHABAAB

In May 2022, Somali lawmakers elected a new president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, marking the end of a two-year bitter election period characterized by corruption, heavy fighting in the streets and terrorist attacks from the Al-Shabaab militant group, which had greatly undermined the government's ability to deliver key services to the people of Somalia. On the same day of the election, loud explosions were heard near the fortified compound supposedly orchestrated by Al-Shabaab suicide bombers where the voting was held. Although it did not disrupt the process, 48 people were killed and 100 others wounded (Hasan, 2022). This

was a signal for the new government that the strength of Al-Shabaab was going to be a formidable challenge to confront.

For more than a decade, Al-Shabaab has been fighting the UN-backed Somali government using different strategies, including intimidation, violence and, recently, individual suicide bombers. In the weeks following the election, the group was reported to have murdered six civilians at a beachside restaurant in Mogadishu's Lido beach area. Further, it mounted a major offensive sign on an AU base where they killed at least 10 peacekeepers from Burundi (BBC News, 2022). They also sent suicide bombers to jump onto the cars of government officials (Stigant, 2022). The group used this strategy in November 2021, when a prominent Somali journalist Abdulaziz Mohamud Guled was killed by a suicide bomber who had jumped onto his car window and exploded just as Abdulaziz had gotten into the car and was about to drive off (Africanews, 2021).

On 21 August 2022, the group stormed the Hayat Hotel in Mogadishu, frequented by government officials, after causing an explosion and shooting. The explosions sent plumes of smoke over Mogadishu, the gunfire reverberated through the city, and much of the hotel was destroyed in the fighting. The attack, for which the group claimed responsibility, killed 10 people and injured another 40. The siege lasted about 30 hours before authorities took over the hotel (Aljazeera, 2022). On 3 September 2022, another Al-Shabaab attack killed at least 19 people in central Somalia. Again, the group intercepted at least eight vehicles driving between the towns of Beledweyne and Maxaa overnight, and set the vehicles on fire, killing innocent occupants. In a statement released by Al-Shabaab, the group said it had targeted militants who had recently aided government forces in killing 20 militia officers and those transporting equipment for them (Agence France-Presse, 2022).

Al-Shabaab is now becoming particularly brazen in its suicide terrorism, with suicide bombers now carrying homemade explosives. Hassan (2022) quotes the former head of the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency, Abdullah Mohamed, as saying:

> Before, the militants used mainly gunmen storming on military bases, government offices, hotels, and restaurants, roadside IEDs, drive-by shootings, guerrilla style ambushes and among others. But now as security at government key installations and military bases beefed up, they use more bombers wearing suicide vests with huge magnitude and impact.

Al-Qaeda-affiliated militant Islamist group had taken advantage of the political unrest to expand and consolidate its presence in Somalia. After more than 16 years,

the group has become powerful enough to collect taxes, resolve disputes in their mobile sharia courts, and have become notorious for suicide bombings against the UN-backed government, western interests and any person or entity deemed to be opposed to the ideology of the group. Traders are also compelled to pay taxes to the group for fear of threats to their businesses. The group behaves like a mafia; either the traders obey and pay them, or they close their businesses (Dahir, 2022).

Therefore, Hassan Sheikh's election marks an opportunity for Somalia to partner with neighboring states to improve the region's security. The new administration must re-focus its attention on addressing the threat Al-Shabaab poses. While maintaining pressure on the group, the new government should engage with its leaders to test whether home-grown political engagement might be feasible and explore initial confidence-building steps to reduce the violence and help bring peace to Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Furthermore, countering Al-Shabaab's threats would require a security architecture that is effective and sustainable. This can be achieved by a continuing partnership with the US special forces, whose presence is already significant in the region, and by expanding the strategic partnership with key players in the international community. This partnership would help build Somalia's official armed and law enforcement agencies and civil administration institutions, and a functional police force to meet Somalia's wider security needs (Felbab-Brown, 2020).

The security sector should be nested within consistent political leadership by Hassan Sheikh's government. Political dialogue at local levels is also required to expand the number of Somalis living under effective inclusive administrations of recognized political units and sub-units rather than Al-Shabaab. Hassan Sheikh must demonstrate that the federal government can deliver services, govern and respond to citizens' priorities.

It is also critically important for international partners to double-up support for Somalia's federal government to enable it to stand on its feet and assume full responsibility for Somalia's security and general administration. This will require timely financial support from international partners and engagement with Somalia's entrepreneurial private sector.

CONCLUSION

Somalia has been rightly described as a collapsed state where terrorists can operate beyond the law. Over the past decade, Somalia developed a growing reputation as providing a congenial environment for terrorism. The Somali-Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group, Al-Shabaab, launched an insurgency which has prompted a series of counter-terrorism operations by the US, Ethiopia and Kenya, all of which have failed to end the insurgency.

However, Somalia's involvement in terrorism may be more, but not entirely, limited to serving as a place of recruitment, training and safe haven for terrorists. Therefore, as recommended above, the new leadership of Somalia should seek to engage Al-Shabaab using a mixture of hard and soft approaches. The government should intensify its military operations against the group and, at the same time, attempt political engagement with its leaders to ascertain if such engagements can bring peace to Somalia.

Consequently, future research on this subject should examine the workability of this mixed approach to countering the threats of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. If it is found to be successful, other states may also consider adopting it to combat similar threats in their territories.

REFERENCES

- Africanews. (2021). *Somalia: Prominent journalist killed in Mogadishu suicide bombing*. Available at: https://www.africanews.com/amp/2021/11/21/somalia-prominent-journalist-killed-in-mogadishu-suicide-bombing (Accessed 24 August 2022).
- Agence France-Presse. (2022). *At least 19 killed in Somalia in attacks by Al-Shabaab insurgents.* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/03at-least-19-killed-in-somalia-in-attack-by-al-shabaab-insurgents (Accessed 5 September 2022).
- Ahmed, I.&Green, R. (1999). The heritage of war and state collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-level effect, external interventions and reconstruction. *Third World Quarterly,* 20(1).
- Akolo, J. (2012). Kenya vows to defend its territory. *KBC News*, *15 October.* Available at: http://www.kbc.co.ke/news.asp?nid=72938 (Accessed 13 July 2022).
- Aljazeera. (2022). *Somali forces battle to end deadly hotel siege in Mogadishu.* Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/19/unidentified-attackers-seize-control-of-hotel-in-mogadishu (Accessed 29 August 2022).
- BBC News. (2022). *Somalia: At least six killed in Mogadishu attack near beach.* Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61196325.amp (Accessed 24 May 2022).
- Blomfield, A. (2003). U.S. snatches terror suspect in Somalia. *Daily Telegraph* (London), Mar. 20, 2003.
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia (2015, April 3). *Al Shabaab. Encyclopedia Britannica.* Available at: https://www.britanica.com/topic/alshabaab (Accessed 12 August 2022).
- Bryden, M. (1999). New hope for Somalia? The building block approach. *Review of African Political Economy,* 26(79).
- Burke, J. (2018). Al-Shabaab attack kills dozens of Ugandan Soldiers in Somalia. *The Guardian.* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/01/al-shabaab-attack-kills-ugandan-soldiers-in-somalia (Accessed 25 August 2022).
- Chan, K. (2013). State failure and the changing face of *Jus ad Bellum*. *Journal of Conflict & Security Law,* 18(2).
- Council on Foreign Relations. (2022). *Al-Shabaab 2004-2020.* Available at: https://www.cfr.org/media/59151/modal?anchor=5951 (Accessed 16 June 2022).
- Dahir, A.L. (2022). Somalia elects new president, but terrorists hold power. *The New York Times*, May 15, 2022.
- Dempsey, T. (2006). Counterterrorism in African failed states: Challenges and potential solutions. *US Strategic Studies Institute Monograph*.

- Dulap, B.N. (2004). State failure and the use of force in the age of global terror. *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review,* 27(2).
- Elmi, A.&Braise, A. (2006). The Somali conflict: Root causes, obstacles, and peace building strategies. *African Security Review*, 15(1).
- Felbab-Brown, V. (2020). *The problem with militias in Somalia: Almost everyone wants them despite their dangers.* Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-problem-with-militias-in-somalia-almost-everyone-wants-them-despite-their-dangers/%3famp (Accessed 24 June 2022).
- Giorgetti, C. (2010). Why should international law be concerned with state failure? *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law,*16(2).
- Hammer, J. (2007). The African front. *The New York Times.* December 28, 2007.
- Hansen, S.J. (2013). *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The history and ideology of a militant Islamist group, 2005–2012.* Oxford, OUP.
- Hassan, M.O. (2019). *Reporter's notebook: Journalist remembers horror of Somalia Hotel attack.* Available at: https://www.voanews.com/amp/africa_repoters-notebook-journalist-rembers-horror-somalia-hotel-attack/6180400.html (Accessed 5 September 2022).
- Hassan, M.O. (2022). *Al-Shabaab surge in Somalia's suicide attacks 'Change of Tactics' experts say.* Available at: https://www.voanews.com/amp/al-shabaab-surge-in-somalia-s-suicide-attacks-change-of-tactics-eperts-say/6503450.html (Accessed 17 June 2022).
- Helman, G. & Ratner, S. (1992). Saving failed states. *Foreign Policy,* 89.
- International Crisis Group. (2005). Counter-terrorism in Somalia: Losing hearts and minds? *Africa Report,* 95.
- International Crisis Group. (2002). Salvaging Somalia's chance for peace. *Africa Briefing,* 11.
- International Crisis Group. (2004). Biting the Somali bullet. *Africa Report,* 79.
- International Crisis Group. (2005). Somalia's Islamists. *Africa Report,* 100.
- International Crisis Group. (2006). Can the Somali crisis be contained? *Africa Report,* 116.
- Jhazbhay,I. (2003). Somaliland Africa's best kept secret: A challenge to international community? *African Security Review,*12(4).
- Klobucista, C., Masters, J.& Sergie M.A. (2021).*Al-Shabaab.* Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgorunder/al-shabaab (Accessed 12 May 2022).
- L'osservatorio. (2018).*Al-Shabaab attacks AMISOM base in Somalia.* Available at: https://www.losservatorio.org/en/civilians-in-conflict/iweb-review/item/1164-al-shabaab-attacks-amisom-base-in-somalia (Accessed 26 May 2022).
- Little, P.D. 2003. *Somalia: Economy without state*. London: James Currey.

- Marchal, R. (2010). A tentative assessment of the Harakat Al-Shabaab. *Journal of Eastern Africa Studies*, 3(3).
- Maruf, H. (2021).*Al-Shabaab issues threats ahead of elections in Djibouti.* Available at: https://www.voanews.com (Accessed 25 July 2022).
- Menkhaus, K. (2004). Somalia: State collapse and the threat of terrorism. *Adelphi Paper, 364.*Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moritz, J. (2013). *The concept of "State Failure" and contemporary security and development challenges.* Available at: https://www.e-ir.info/2013/10/10/state-failure-and-its-use-for-understanding-contemporary-security-development-challenges (Accessed 23 June 2022).
- Osondu, C.C. (2008) *The Horn of Africa and international terrorism: The predisposing operational environment of Somalia.* A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science in the School of Politics, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg South Africa.
- Otenyo, E. (2004). New terrorism: Towards an explanation of cases in Kenya. *African Security Review*, 13(3).
- Pate, A., Jensen, M. & Miller, E. (2015). Background report: Al-Shabaab attack on Garissa University in Kenya. *College Park, MD.* Available at: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_alShabaabGarissaU-April2015.pdf (Accessed 12 June 2022).
- Pflanz, M. (2011).*Al-Shabaab warns Kenya of reprisals if Somalia deployment continues.* Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/8831849/Al-Shabaab-warns-Kenya-of-reprisals-if-Somalia-deployment-ontinues.html (Accessed 11 July 2022).
- Prendergast, J. &Thomas-Jensen, C. (2007). Blowing the horn. *Foreign Affairs*, 86(2).
- Puccetti, L.P. (2021). *Failed states and terrorism: Engaging the conventional wisdom.* Available at: https://www.e-ir.info/2021/05/22/failed-states-and-terrorism-engaging-the-conventional-wisdom/ (Accessed 5 August 2022).
- Quaranto, P. (2008). Building states while fighting terror: Contradictions in United States strategy in Somalia from 2001 to 2007.*ISS Monograph Series,* 143.
- Ray, B. (2007). US aid to Somali warlords. *Defense analysis Bulletin,7(3).* Available at: http://www.comw.org/pda/dab/dab3.html (Accessed 26 July 2022).

- Rice, S. (2003). The new national security strategy: Focus on failed states. *Brookings Institution Policy Briefing,*116.
- Rice, X. (2010). *Somali Islamist militants claim responsibility for worst attack in east Africa since US embassy bombings in 1998.* Available at: https://theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/12/uganda-kampala-bombs-explosions-attacks (Accessed 12 August 2022).
- Rotberg, R. (2004). *When states fail: Causes and consequences.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rotberg, R. (2005). The Horn of Africa and Yemen: Diminishing the threat of terrorism. In R. Rotberg (ed.).*Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. Washington DC: Brooking Institution Press.
- Shabelle Media Network. (2012). *Somalia: Kenyan jets kill 2, wound 3 civilians in south Somalia.* Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/201203240307.html (Accessed 12 July 2022).
- Sheikh, A. (2017). *At least 20 people being held hostage in Somalia's capital after suicide bomb attack.* Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-somalia-blast-idCAKBN1952MP-CATP (Accessed 30 August 2022).
- Stewart, P. (2011). *Why failed states shouldn't be our biggest national security fear*. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinion/why-failed-states-shouldnt-be-our-biggest-national-security-fear/2011/04/11/AFqWmjkD_story.html (Accessed 14 May 2020).
- Stigant S. (2022). *Somalia's critical transition comes amid Al-Shabaab and hunger challenge. Available* at: https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/somalias-critical-tarnsition-comes-amid-al-shabab-and-hunger-challenges (Accessed 23 August 2022).
- Tadesse, M. (2001). Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia: It's nature and implications. *Somalia Watch, 19 May.* Available at: http://www.somaliswatch.org/archivesep01 /011128401.htm (Accessed 27 April 2022).
- Throup, D. (2012). Commentary on Kenya's intervention in Somalia. *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*. Available at: http://csis.org/publication/kenyas-intervention-somalia (Accessed 11 July 2022).
- Thurer, D. (1999). The 'failed state' and international law. *International Review of the Red Cross,* 81.
- UN Security Council. (2007). *Report of the monitoring group on Somalia pursuant to security council resolution, 1676.*
- United States Institute of Peace. (2004).*Terrorism in the Horn of Africa.* Washington, D.C., USA.

- US Department of State. (2006). *Country report on terrorism: Somalia.* Available at: http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64335.htm (Accessed 3 September 2022).
- Vinci, A. (2006). An analysis and comparison of armed groups in Somalia. *African Security Review*, 15(1).
- Wise, R. (2011),*Al-Shabaab – Case study number 2, July 2011.* Available at: http://csis.org/files/publication/110715_wise_AlShabaab_AQAM%20Futures%20Case%20Study_WEB.pdf (Accessed 30 July 2022).
- Yoo, J. (2011). Fixing failed states. *California Law Review,* 99.

NARCOTIC DRUG TRADE FUELLING TERRORISM ACROSS UGANDA/DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO BORDER

Dr Francis Okello, PhD,
Counter Terrorism Police, Uganda

ABSTRACT

This article probed the involvement of the Allied Democratic Forces in the narcotic drug trade to fuel terrorism across the Uganda/Democratic Republic of Congo border. The aim was to unravel ADF's use of drug money in aiding terrorist efforts. Data were collected qualitatively using document review, interviews and observations along the Uganda/Democratic Republic of Congo border. The article found Allied Democratic Forces terrorists engaged in the drug trade to fund their activities. Arms and ammunition were acquired using proceeds from the drug trade. Bomb attacks, assassinations and murders were carried out against security and judicial officers in Uganda, and innocent people were killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The article concludes that the Allied Democratic Forces is involved in the narcotic drug trade to finance terrorism. The article recommends that Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo sustain the current joint operation to eliminate the terrorist groups from their bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, both governments should encourage intelligence cooperation in order to block access to narcotic drugs by terrorists. Additionally, countries in the region and the whole of Africa should cooperate to deny access to drugs by terrorists.

Keywords:
Narcotic Drugs; Trade; Terrorism; Uganda; Democratic Republic of Congo; Border

INTRODUCTION

The link between narcotic drug trade/trafficking and terrorism is a long history. In the 1980s, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were already engaged in drug trafficking to finance their rebellion. FARC taxed producers and smugglers by levying a 10% per kilogram tax on coca base, a raw material for cocaine growers. The rebels also collected fees for every drug flight leaving rebel-controlled areas.

[i] In India, the Kashmir insurgency is thought to be fueled by the drug trade as India is caught between the three largest heroin and opium producers; Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar. The Sri Lankan militants have equally penetrated deep into the drug world to augment their armed struggle against the Sri Lanka Army. In Africa, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), especially in Mali, has been heavily implicated in the drug trade in the Sahel region. In East Africa, the Al-Shabab is known to be heavily involved in the khat trade to finance its terrorist activities.[ii]

While several terrorist groups engaged in the drug trade have been documented, little is known about the Allied Democratic Forces' (ADF) involvement in the drug trade to finance their terrorist activities. This article aims to show the involvement of ADF in the narcotic drug trade to fuel their terrorist activities across the Uganda/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border.

Data were collected through content review, observation and interview. Key informants included some border community members. Observations were made on activities at the border, and photographs were taken. The article begins with brief literature on drug links with terrorism, the history of ADF, ADF's terrorist attacks on Uganda in 2021 and Operation Shujja, ADF's involvement in the drug trade, and use of the drug money. The article then draws a conclusion and recommendations.

BRIEF LITERATURE ON NARCOTIC DRUG LINKS WITH TERRORISM

In recent years, it has become evident that terrorism and drug trade/trafficking are intertwined. The terms "narco-terrorism" and "narco-terrorists" are now used to describe this interface between terrorist organizations and narcotic drug trade/trafficking.[iii] Narcotic drug trade/trafficking in source countries, transit countries and consumer countries contribute to terrorism in several ways; supplying cash for terrorist operations, creating chaos in countries where drugs are

produced, where they pass, and where they are sold at retail price and consumed. Drug traffickers deliberately cause chaos to provide an environment conducive to terrorist activities.[iv] It is also intended to generate corruption in law enforcement, military and other government/civil-society institutions to build public support for terrorist-linked groups. Terrorist groups also engage in the drug trade to provide services useful for terrorist actions and the movement of terrorist personnel and materials. It also supports common infrastructure such as smuggling capabilities, illicit arms acquisition, money laundering, and production of false identification to serve drug trafficking and terrorist interests.

From Latin America to the Middle East, funding for armed violence has long been linked to the illicit drug trade. Insurgent networks and terrorist groups have increasingly turned to drug trafficking as a source of revenue. Not only does it provide funds, but it also furthers the strategic objectives of the terrorists. Some terrorist groups believe they can weaken their enemies by flooding their societies with addictive drugs.[v]

The decrease in state sponsorship of terrorism in the 1990s led to a concomitant increase in efforts by terrorist groups to become self-financed through drug trafficking. For example, a former United States (US) official of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) noted that terrorists use the Black-Market Peso Exchange's (BMPE) $5 billion in annual funds transfers as a cover for hiding the movement of terrorist funds. The official added:

> What is more, the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers were financed partially with funds moved through the BMPE market. That money is ready for those who need a discreet source of funds that is difficult to trace…. The links to terrorist funding through the BMPE are even stronger today since the placement of drug dollars into U.S. financial institutions now begins in any country of the world.[vi]

The BMPE is active in Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela. In these countries, the system is known to be linked to terrorist groups in Lebanon and Palestine.

Further, several terrorist groups have been designated by the US Government as having links to drug trafficking. In Latin America, these groups include the left-wing National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional [ELN]), FARC, the right-wing United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (Auto defensas Unidas de Colombia [AUC]) and Peru's Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso [SL]).[vii] The Colombian and Peruvian terrorist groups exert control over regions containing coca

fields, laboratories and airstrips, and impose taxes ranging from $100 to $500 per kilogram to protect the area. Beers argues that FARC and ELN terrorist groups receive pure cocaine in payment for services provided to the drug trafficking and resell it to Brazilian criminal organizations in return for armaments.[viii] The FARC played a direct role in the drug trade in the 1980s and gained importance in the 1990s. They provided security for cocoa crops and taxed the introduction of precursor chemicals. In addition, the FARC played a prominent role in taxing different aspects of the production chain and selling cocoa paste.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) holds that proceeds from lucrative Asian hashish shipments smuggled into Canada end up in the hands of terrorist elements in Afghanistan. Most hashish drugs reaching the Canadian market originate in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The RCMP reports that most Asian terrorist groups have been in this business for over 10 years. Terrorist elements in Afghanistan tax producers and receive a portion of the proceeds. In East India, Afghan, Pakistani, Tamil, Turkish and Middle Eastern terrorist and extremist groups are suspected of fund-raising in Canada through various means.[ix]

In the Syrian Arab Republic, seizure data on "captagon" pills (amphetamine mixed with caffeine) suggest that a manufacturing hub exists in the area of operations of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida offshoot Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly Al-Nusrah Front). ISIL fighters and other groups involved in the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic have been reported to consume "captagon".[x]

Bodansky explains that Iranian intelligence agencies first encouraged Islamic radical groups to participate in the drug trade. Since then, the Islamic terrorist and extremist groups have expanded into myriad criminal activities, in addition to drug trafficking, operating prostitution rings involving mainly Bosnian Muslim and North African women, laundering money and disseminating high-quality Iranian-printed $100 bills.[xi] Moreover, he points out that Hizballah's original fatwa issued in the mid-1980s on the distribution of drugs has provided a rationale for drug trafficking, "We are making these drugs for Satan, America and the Jews. If we cannot kill them with guns, so we will kill them with drugs".

Similarly, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) activities have also been linked to laundering money and drug trafficking. The PKK is alleged to be taking protection money from drug traffickers and supporting their own operations with the revenue gained. The PKK was also involved in the taxation of drug shipments and the protection of drug traffickers throughout the southeastern region of Turkey.[xii] The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is a militant Islamic

organization that funds itself from drug trafficking and controls the main drug trafficking routes through the Central Asian region. IMU is known to store 1,500 tons of narcotics in the Tavildara district of northern Tajikistan.[xiii]

The Kashmiri militant groups are known to participate in the drug trade to finance their activities, given their proximity to major production, refining sites and trafficking routes. Throughout the South Asian and former Soviet Union regions, proximity to cultivation and production, combined with the infrastructure provided by the traffickers, has encouraged mutually beneficial relationships between terrorist groups and drug-trafficking organizations.[xiv]

The United Wa State Army (UWSA) controlled major drug-producing areas in Burma. It used the proceeds to carry out an insurgency against the government of Burma until a ceasefire agreement granted the UWSA autonomy to continue drug trafficking for profit. They have also engaged in the large-scale production and trafficking of synthetic drugs. There are also links between narcotics trafficking in the region's Golden Triangle and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines.[xv]

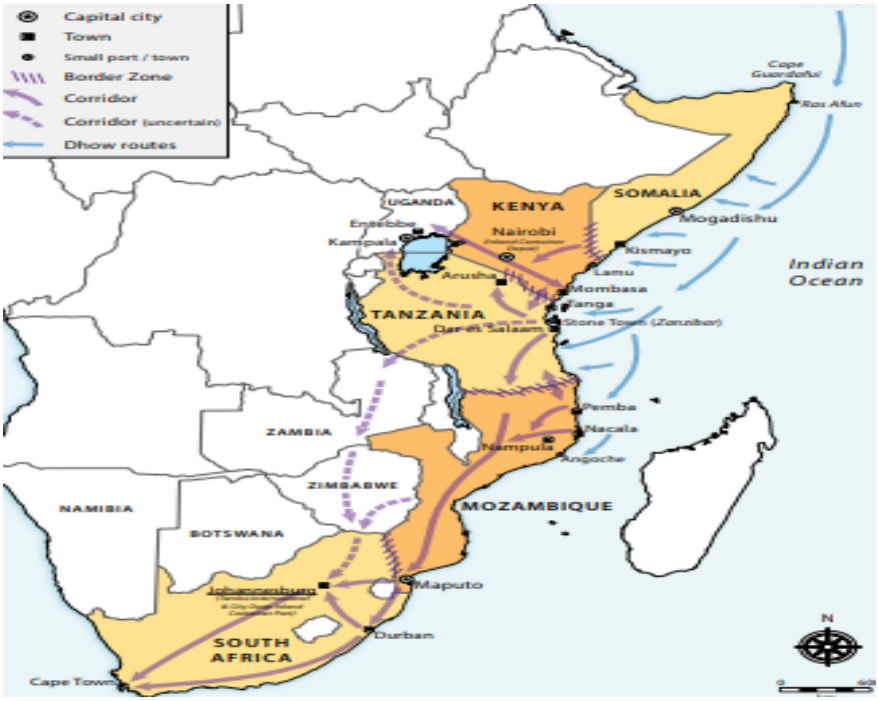
In Europe, terrorist groups include Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna [ETA]) from Spain's Basque region. There is also some linkage between the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Middle Eastern narcotics industry, and the former guerrillas of the Albanian Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA spin-off groups are well positioned to exploit the Balkan route, which links the Golden Crescent of Afghanistan and Pakistan to European drug markets.[xvi]

In Africa, some evidence suggests that Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which operates primarily in North and West Africa, is involved in cannabis and cocaine trafficking and protecting traffickers who move through their area of control at a fee. Events in the region since the 2012 coup in Mali and the ensuing military intervention by France have revealed a growing control of the drug trade by the Islamist group. It was suggested that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Hezbollah had earned millions of dollars through illicit dealings and used the funds to finance terrorist operations in Africa and elsewhere.[xvii] In Mali, local collaborators include a complex and dynamic mix of legitimate business people, Islamist extremists, terrorists, kidnappers, police and army officers, militia groups and local politicians. This toxic mix in the region prompted the UN Secretary-General to organize a discussion on the problem in Togo in 2012, leading to a Presidential statement that recognized the serious threats to international peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel region posed by terrorism and its increasing links with drug trafficking groups. Drugs are moved into Mali by road from Guinea and transported via small convoys through the desert to destinations further north

towards Europe.[xviii] This toxic mix of drug trafficking was highlighted in the infamous crash landing of a Boeing 727 in Tarkint (northeast Mali) in 2009, which had originally come from Venezuela and carrying an estimated nine tons of cocaine. The jet first landed on a makeshift airstrip about nine miles from Gao, in an area controlled by Tuareg and Islamist insurgents, and after offloading cocaine and other drugs, it took off in the skies once more and crashed in the desert.

Further, a concept note prepared by France for the 2013 United Nations (UN) Security Council debate on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime noted that violence in Mali by criminal networks attempting to control the drug trade was promoting radicalization. Based on the belief that those radicalized then participated in the drug trade, the concept note stated that cocaine and cannabis trafficking enable extremists to generate income, which in turn finances rebellions.[xix]

In East Africa, the Al-Etihad al-Islami (AIAI), Somalia's largest militant Islamic organization, is suspected of smuggling an illegal narcotic leaf, Khat, into the US for money. Arrests and shipment seizures indicate a sharp increase in demand for the drug. East African Khat sales proceeds are remitted to Middle Eastern banks via the Hawala network and wire services to support terrorist efforts. In addition, there is concern that violent extremists operating along the transit routes in East Africa, including Mozambique, notably Al-Shabaab, are using drug trafficking proceeds to fund their terrorism.[xx]



Source: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017)
Figure 1: Heroin drug routes from the Middle East to the East African coast

The above map depicts narcotic drug trafficking through eastern Africa en route to ADF-held territories in the eastern DRC. From the map, the heroin drug is transported on land through Somalia, Tanzania and Kenya. Through the porous land borders between Tanzania and Kenya, heroin is transported from the coast to the interior of the countries en route to Uganda. On Uganda/Kenya border, the heroin drug enters through Busia, Malaba and other porous border posts. The drugs enter Uganda/Tanzania through the Mutukula border and other porous border areas. As the drugs enter East Africa's inter-land, some are trafficked to South Africa along the Mozambican border. Press reports reveal that the Al-Shabaab terrorist groups operating in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique are involved in the narcotic drug trade.[xxi] Before the capture by the Uganda Government in Tanzania, the ADF terrorist leader, Jamil Mukulu, was known to be in contact with the Al-Shabaab in northern Mozambique. Given the involvement of Al-Shabaab in the drug trade, the contact with the ADF leader and the ramification of the heroin drug route through the inter-land of East Africa, it confirms the ADF is involved in the drug trade to finance their terrorist activities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCES

Uganda has experienced acute terrorism perpetuated by different terrorist groups since 1986 hitherto. These groups include the Lord Resistance Army (LRA), ADF and Al-Shabaab. Starting their terrorist activities in 1996, the ADF killed several people in Uganda and was responsible for 48 bomb blasts in Kampala, towns, and along highways between 1997-2001. This claimed 84 innocent lives and 262 injuries.[xxii] Efforts to control the activities of the ADF led to a confrontation in 1991, which led to the arrest and imprisonment of 400 Tabliq Muslims, including their leader Jamil Mukulu.[xxiii] Released in 1993 from prison, Mukulu established the Salaf Foundation (SF), which had an armed wing, the Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters (UMFF). The UMFF established links with the Government of Sudan in 1995. In the same year, the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) clashed with UMFF's members in a training camp and killed many UMFF fighters. Some remnants of the fighters fled to the DRC and renamed themselves Allied Democratic Forces. The ADF then launched their first attack in 1996 at the Mpondwe border with the DRC. From that time, several battles were fought with the UPDF, culminating in an attack by ADF terrorists in 1998 where 70 students of Kicwamba Technical School were burnt in dormitories.[xxiv] From 2001 to 2007, there was a lull in ADF activities. However, from 2008 to 2020, there was a spate of assassinations in Kampala City targeting Muslim clerics and judicial and security officers, all blamed on ADF terrorism. In 2015, the ADF leader Jamil Mukulu was arrested in Tanzania and is currently imprisoned in Uganda. Upon Mukulu's arrest, the command of ADF was assumed by Musa Baluku, a former Imam of a Kampala Mosque. After assuming command of ADF, Baluku linked it to Al-Shabaab, and in 2016 he made a similar linkage with the Islamic State group in the Levant. Prior to taking command of ADF, Baluku was Chief Political Commissar and Head of Doctrine/Ideology. In 2019, the US Government designated Baluku, a global terrorist, and placed him on the wanted list of terrorists, and in 2020 the UN placed sanctions on him.

THE ADF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON UGANDA IN 2021 AND OPERATION SHUJJA

The close of the year 2021 saw heightened terrorist activities of the ADF. In October 2021, there was a planned attack by the ADF operatives on the mourners of the late Deputy Inspector General of Police in the north of the country.[xxv]However, the attack was foiled, and attackers were arrested before they could detonate a bomb. Thereafter, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detonated at a police post in the suburbs of Kampala City. The Islamic State

promptly claimed responsibility. After this incident, an attack on revelers in a bar in Komamboga, a suburb of Kampala, using an IED was launched. One person was killed and three injured. In November 2021, a suicide bomber detonated a bomb in a bus heading to western Uganda. The bomber died in the incident, and four people were injured. In the same month, there were twin bombings in Kampala, near a central police station and on a busy city street. While Kampala City was rocking with bombs, the terrorists also launched an attack in Beni City, DRC, killing five people.

These attacks prompted the Uganda Government and the Government of DRC to sign a memorandum of understanding to conduct a joint operation with the aim of eradicating ADF and other foreign armed groups in eastern DRC. The operation was code-named "Operation Shujja" with a specific objective to annihilate the ADF and rebel groups from the jungles of Ituri and Kivu provinces, DRC. The Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces (UPDF) and the Forces Amees de la Republique Democratique du Congo (FARDC) combined and bombarded the ADF hideouts in Yayuwa, Ttondoli, Bel 1 and Bel 2 camps.[xxvi] Other ADF strongholds, namely, Nobili, Kamango and Watalinga, were also destroyed in the air strikes and artillery attacks by the combined forces. In addition, the combined attacks destroyed the terrorist bases of CODECO, an association of the Lendu militia and armed rebel groups which operated in the towns of Dhera, Djungu, Budhu, Llobu, Likpa, Masikini and Libi. In December 2021, the combined forces entered Virunga National Park pursuing ADF terrorists and 130 other armed groups who were believed to be camping in the park. As a result, the biggest terrorist camp, CambiYaYuwa, occupying eight square miles of land, was captured, and 600 terrorists dispersed.

Operation Shujja was largely successful, as 91 terrorists and 36 CODECO militia men surrendered to the combined forces, 49 were killed (including Somalis and Chadians), 25 were injured, 42 were captured, 31 Congolese civilians were rescued, three PK machine guns, two rocket-propelled grenades, 150 AK-47 and 300 ammunitions captured.[xxvii] Islamic radicalization materials, bomb-making machines and three solar panels were also seized from CambiYaYuwa.

ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCES'INVOLVEMENT IN THE NARCOTIC DRUG TRADE

From the literature review, the narcotic drug trade has become a hallmark of terrorism. Most terrorist groups are engaged in narcotic drug trafficking to raise funds for the recruitment and training of their combatants, mobilize logistics, and acquire arms and ammunition. As for the ADF terrorist group, the porous borders

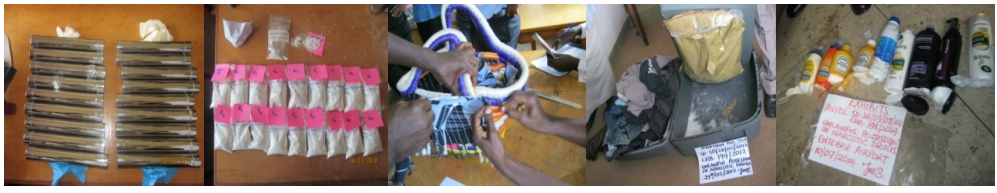
and corruption among law enforcement officials have facilitated the movement of drugs in and out of their bases in the DRC.

Table 1: Narcotic drugs seized across Uganda/DRC border, 2016-2019

Year	Drug category	Quantity (kg)	Value (USD)
2016	Cocaine	128.0	44,288,000
2017	Heroin	256.7	82,653,000
2018	Methamphetamine	63.1	21,845,000
2019	Cannabis	4,753.8	20,335,000
		Total	169,121,000

Source: TOC (drug trafficking) (2021)

Four categories of drugs, namely, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis, were intercepted at the Uganda/DRC border from 2016-2019 to/from terrorist-held areas in the DRC territory. The drugs are trafficked in different concealment forms, in pellets to appear as pharmaceutical drugs and in tubes disguised as a body lotion. The drugs are also concealed in the linings of handcrafts, packets and bottom lining of bags.



Source: Uganda police records
Figure 2: Drugs in various concealment methods

Some drugs pass through Entebbe Airport and land in Goma or Beni, DRC cities close to Uganda. In effect, Entebbe Airport acts as a conduit for drugs. This is attributed to some security loopholes at the airport as security deployment has adopted a multi-agency workforce comprising revenue officials, police, internal security, immigration, army, counter-terrorism task force and clearing agents. In

this approach, cargo is inspected jointly. If any problem of concern is discovered, for instance, narcotic drugs, it is assigned immediately to the security agency concerned for further investigations. However, this approach has some flaws in narcotic drug interception:

> I have always argued that there is no effective narcotic drug law enforcement at Entebbe Airport. There are three layers of checks. The inner layer is occupied by the customs officers, the next layer by civil aviation authority, and the third layer by all the mainstream law enforcement agencies (police, immigration, internal security, army and joint anti-terrorism personnel). The personnel don't have the same objectives. Visitors arriving in the country are first handled by the customs officers, whose main objective is revenue collection and evasion of taxes or custom laws. The second layer focuses on aviation security, that is, the security of the planes on air and land, and general airline routes. They ensure that the runways are clear of any obstacles in case of landing and take-off by the aircrafts. The third layer is general law enforcement, which enforces narcotic drug issues. Checks are done by the first and second layers, and by the time the third layer checks luggage, a lot of collusive, connivance and outright corruption would have taken place, to the extent that any narcotic drugs in transit may not be discovered. This layered deployment with disjointed objectives creates loopholes for narcotic drug traffickers to exploit to their advantage since the first two layers do not have narcotic drug issues as their core function during the inspection of the cargo or luggage. Coupled with corruption, it is therefore not surprising that Entebbe Airport is a transit or conduit for narcotic drugs, save for the marijuana drug, which is grown locally. Bonafide employees of the Airport have also been implicated in narcotic drug smuggling into the Airport terminals. When reporting on duty, they are rarely checked at the checkpoint because they are considered "usual faces". They take this opportunity to smuggle narcotic drugs into the planes. Sometimes air hostesses are used to traffic drugs since they are rarely suspected. This laxity and "usual faces" have exacerbated narcotic drug trafficking through the Airport.[xxviii]

The heroin drug flow from the Middle East to the East African coast and the flow in the inter-land illustrates that the heroin market is best understood as forming an integrated regional criminal economy based on the transit of the drug from the Middle East to the Western world. As the drug is trafficked, there is a spin-off trade along the way in the East Africa region. Besides coming from the Middle East, cocaine also comes from the Andean region via West Africa to the Western coast of DRC in the Atlantic Ocean. With spin-off trade again, some drug money gets into the terrorist-controlled areas. Some terrorist collaborators

masquerade as traders commuting between Kinshasa and the eastern DRC towns of Goma, Beni, Bunia and Kisangani, bringing arms for terrorist efforts. In the process, some money is also brought into the areas, which is used to buy drugs and resold elsewhere. A truck driver recounts the drug trafficking across the Ugandan land border:

> Hussein (pseudo name) got involved in narcotic drug trafficking as a driver of a truck transporting cement from Mombasa (Kenya) to Kampala (Uganda). He was to drive a truck loaded with cement to Kampala via the Busia land border. Hussein made three monthly trips to Kampala, with a salary of $500 per trip. In every trip of 1000 bags of cement, 50 bags of the heroin drug would be loaded in the truck disguised as cement. This load would be delivered to a warehouse in Banda, a suburb of Kampala, where some people with vehicles on standby would receive and deliver the 50 bags of heroin to an unknown destination in Kampala. One day, Hussein ran out of luck, and his truck was impounded at the checkpoint in Busia border post upon suspicion, and a thorough check discovered 50 bags of heroin marked as cement. When Hussein made a phone call to the Pakistani owner of the business, the phone call was not answered. However, unknown to Hussein, a man sent by the Pakistani appeared and started negotiating with customs officials and the police, with money exchanging hands. The truck was released, and the driver proceeded to Kampala with his load intact. After realizing that the Busia route was risky, Hussein's employer changed the Tanzanian route through Mutukula to Kampala where he continued with his job.[xxix]

This narrative demonstrates that Uganda is a conduit for narcotic drugs. The Uganda/DRC/South Sudan borders are all porous, save for Mpondwe and Elegu border points with customs checks, but without drug detection equipment. Thus, drugs move easily to the terrorist-controlled areas of eastern DRC en route to foreign markets.

As for cannabis, the drug is native to Uganda and DRC. The mixture of equatorial and tropical climates with fertile alluvial soil in the two countries makes it conducive to growing the drug. In Uganda, cannabis is grown all over the country, with the greatest concentration in the western parts of the country bordering DRC. This concentration along the border allows easy movement of the drug across the border. The porous borders between Uganda and her neighbors have exacerbated the narcotic drug trade. It is worsened by the perception of borders by border communities that borders are lifelines for transnational existence. Many interactions and livelihood activities occur across borders to the

extent that border communities do not see their relevance as demarcations between countries. With border interactions characterized by informal trade, cannabis is trafficked across the border into terrorist areas. The thick forest jungles also cushion vast cannabis gardens that feed terrorist drug needs.

Source: Field data (2019)
Figure 3: Porous border at Uganda/DRC

In DRC, the growing of cannabis takes place in the deep forests of Batalinga and the forested areas bordering Uganda right from Lubingha, Isango, Bwera, Kasaka and Kamango near river Semiliki where they cross easily using small boats. In Batalinga, they have chased away people to pave the way for an airfield. The insurgent group at Isango participates in hunting in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park to raise some revenue from wildlife trafficking. This group chased away many Ugandans who used to cultivate at a game reserve called Domeni and now use the area to cultivate their foodstuff and cannabis. The drug is transported across the border disguised as merchandise, crossing to a market in the DRC and vice-versa. The perception of borders by the local population as links and zones of contact with the neighboring communities has exacerbated the drug trade:

> We just cross. Just yesterday, I was relaxing with friends in Mpondwe, DRC. Borders exist only as a myth. It is in the mind of the government, but the local people do not see it as something that divides people. People do not understand it. For example, a Congolese family has lived in this area for a long time and grows their foodstuff along the border. For this family, some of the gardens extend into Uganda across what is supposed to be a border. The family believes that the border issue does not make sense to them since their parents grew there, cultivated the land, left it for them, and they have since continued cultivating it. The creation of this border was partly an attempt by both governments of Uganda and DRC to mark their territory. The

> border cannot be identified and understood. The no man's land was formerly homes, so you wouldn't know whether you were in DRC or Uganda. The government said we need this thing cleared. We need to know where Uganda ends and DRC starts.[xxx]

At Uganda/DRC border at Busunga, other than the physical mark of river Lamia separating the two countries, which even has no meaning to them, there is total free movement of people and goods:

> We are from Busunga in Uganda. We lost our cousin brother in Lwanda on the DRC side, and we went for the burial. Here we just cross on either side of the river; we are one. Our relatives from DRC also come and cultivate in Uganda; we don't know what the border is. It is like we are going from this village to the next village across the river.[xxxi]

At the Busunga border checkpoint, there seems to be an understanding that people do not always have to show documentation to officials if the intention is to cross over to purchase small items or visit family members. Border officials did not bother with documentation; people merely walked through the zone. "We just pass; we never stop, many people here have family on both sides, or they go buy things from the other side. We cannot stop visiting our people".[xxxii]

Indeed, interacting with the local people along the border shows the extent to which residents' everyday economic lives depended on the ability to cross the border relatively quickly and frequently without any hassle. For instance, many household activities involve items purchased elsewhere, in Uganda or DRC. The boda-boda men (motorcycle riders) transporting small sacks of goods such as maize flour, beans, and cooking oil go back and forth frequently across the border.

In these cross-border interactions, marijuana drug is trafficked concealed among luggage of food products such as maize seeds, rice, millet, beans, charcoal and other local commodities. Three to five kilograms of marijuana drug is concealed in every 50-kilogram bag of maize or beans. If many bags of maize or other agricultural products are transported to DRC daily, a good amount of marijuana drug is also transported. Therefore, the free movement of people facilitated by the porous border, the perception of the border as a lifeline by the border communities, cross-border kinship relationships and informal cross-border trade have greatly facilitated the marijuana drug trade. Terrorist collaborators disguised as businessmen/women convey the drugs or proceeds of the drugs in the form of money or arms.

The involvement of the ADF terrorist groups in the drug trade business to further their terrorist activities fits into the understanding of narco-terrorism as defined by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA):

> A subset of terrorism, in which terrorist groups or associated individuals participate directly or indirectly in the cultivation, manufacture, transportation or distribution of controlled substances and the monies derived from these activities used in violence and destabilization, qualifies as narco-terrorism. The Drug Enforcement Agency uses the term to characterize the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further or fund terrorist activities.[xxxiii]

ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCE USE OF DRUG MONEY

As shown in the table of drugs seized, the amount of money fetched from the drug trade by the ADF terrorists is substantial. This amount of drugs is what law enforcement intercepted, but it is probable that a lot of drugs have filtered through the porous borders and made a significant amount of money for the terrorist group. The money is employed in the acquisition of arms, ammunition and other logistics for insurgent efforts. In addition, the money is used to lure youth from rural Uganda/DRC to join terrorist ranks. These are usually youth from poverty-stricken or broken families where the children are left to fend for themselves. The food, pharmaceutical drugs, arms and specialized terrorist training in Al-Shabaab camps in Somalia are funded from this fund. Ugandan law enforcement officials have seized several categories of arms from the ADF camps. These include grenades, ammunition, suicide vests, AK-47 assault rifles and light machine guns.

Source: Uganda police records
Figure 4: Arms and ammunition seized from ADF terrorist groups

These war materials obtained through proceeds of the drug trade had been used to unleash violence on the population both in DRC and Uganda. The ADF has committed many atrocities in DRC, including killing nine coca farmers and seven pigmies, and the disappearance of three priests in Mpaho. In addition, the displacement and killing of people took place in the areas of Losilosi, Mwenda, Kilya, Bolongo, Kanindo and Lume:

One day in May 2021, a suicide bomber entered Buchiri Catholic Church near Beni City with the intention of exploding a bomb during a baptism ceremony on Sunday. Luckily enough, the bomb exploded before the prayers started. Only the suicide bomber died in the incident. In the same week, a bomb exploded in Letrot near Beni, where three women were killed. In Paida Rwengoma, another bomb exploded, killing 11 people. Here the situation is terrible; you cannot go to the garden to dig. You will die.[xxxiv]

CONCLUSION

This article concludes from the empirical data that the narcotic drug trade is fueling terrorism across the Uganda/DRC border. The ADF has engaged in the drug trade to sustain their terrorism in Uganda and DRC with many atrocities. Until access to drugs by this group is curtailed, terrorism will likely continue at this border. Therefore, the article recommends that Uganda and DRC sustain the current joint operation to eliminate the terrorist groups from the border area. In addition, both governments should encourage intelligence to cooperate in order to block access to narcotic drugs by terrorists. Burundi, Rwanda and Central African Republic with insurgents should cooperate in fighting the narcotic drug trade as a source of funds for conflicts. Similarly, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Libya, Niger and Mozambique, which are experiencing conflicts now, should forge cooperation to fight the drug trade in their regions to eliminate drugs from insurgents.

---

[i] Okello, F. (2021). The challenges of curbing transnational organized crime across Uganda/Kenya border. PhD thesis.
[ii] Ibid
[iii]Financial flows linked to the production and trafficking of Afghan opiates. FAFT Report 2014.
[iv]CRS Report for Congress. (2004). Illicit drugs and the terrorist threat: Causal links and implications for domestic drug control policy.
[v]A global overview of narcotics-funded terrorist and other extremist groups. A report prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Défense; 2002.
[vi] Ibid
[vii] Rand, B. (2002). Narco-terror: The worldwide connection between drugs and terror. Hearing held by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.
[viii] Beers, R. (2002). Narco-terror: The worldwide connection between drugs and terror.
[ix] RCMP: Hashish Cash Aids Terror Cells. Montreal Gazette, February 16, 2002,
[x]Jossef, B. (2002). Bin Laden: The man who declared war on America. Roseville, California: Prima
Publishing/Random House, 2001.
[xi] Ibid
[xii]Mircea, G. (1999). Terrorism and organized crime: The Romanian perspective. Low intensity conflict & law enforcement.
[xiii] Narco-terror: The worldwide connection between drugs and terror.
[xiv]Tamara, M. (2000). Terrorism and drug trafficking threaten stability in Central Asia. Jane's Intelligence
Review, 12(11).
[xv] Ibid

[xvi]Frank, C. (2000). The threat posed from the convergence of organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Statement before the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime.
[xvii] Lansana, G. (2016). Crime, violence, and politics: Drug trafficking and counternarcotics policies in Mali and Guinea. United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia

[xviii]Abdelkader, A. (2012). Drug trafficking and the crisis in Mali. ISS Today, August 6, 2012.
[xix]United Nations Security Council letter Dated ref. S/2013/728 (December 10, 2013).
[xx] Gastrow, P. (2011).Termites at work: Transnational organized crime and state erosion in Kenya. New York, NY: International Peace Institute.
[xxi] British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) news; 25.2.2021.
[xxii] The Uganda Police Annual Crime Report, 2007.
[xxiii] Kristof, T. &Daniel, F. (2016). The many faces of a rebel group: The Allied Democratic Forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
[xxiv] Ibid
[xxv] Monitor newspaper, 7.10.2021.
[xxvi] Ibid
[xxvii] New Vision newspaper, 20.12.2021.
[xxviii] Interview with an informant at the airport.
[xxix] Interview with an informant at the Uganda/Kenya border.
[xxx] Interview with a resident at Mpondwe, Uganda/DRC border.
[xxxi] Interview with a resident at Busunga border.
[xxxii] Interview with a resident at Busunga border.
[xxxiii]Drug Enforcement Administration. Congressional Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism and Government Information about Narco-Terror (2002).
[xxxiv] Interview with an informant in Bundibugyo at Uganda/DRC border.

ANALYSIS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' RESPONSES AND VARIATIONS IN FARMER-FULANI HERDSMEN CONFLICTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN NEOLIBERAL AFRICA: THE CASE STUDY OF GHANA

Dominic Degraft Arthur
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

ABSTRACT

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts have remained the most dangerous threats to the economic and human security of most African states; nonetheless, few studies exist on this critical subject. Using the qualitative approach, which involved a semi-structured interview guide and documentary analysis, the paper submits that four principal factors such as the destruction of livelihoods and properties, incidence of social vices of the Fulani herdsmen, pollution of river bodies by livestock, and lapses in the legal system of the state are responsible for these violent conflicts in Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Following the conclusion, the paper recommends that the government explore partnerships with the international community and private sector organizations to drill more boreholes (solar-powered) in strategic locations for the Fulani herdsmen in the area to keep the cattle from moving haphazardly to destroy food crops. In addition, the paper entreats the government to put in place mechanisms to help design human rights-based policies in a preventive and responsive manner, such as the systematic settlement of conflicts by the parties per national and international human rights principles.

Keywords:
Communities; Conflicts; Resource; Savannah; Transhumance

INTRODUCTION

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts, while an old phenomenon, has re-entered the lexicon of African political and conflict studies over the past few decades (Benjaminsen & Boubacar, 2021) because this evolving phenomenon is endangering human lives, properties, peace, and security (Krätli & Toulmin, 2020; Akov & Asua, 2021; Alao, Ayinde, Ogunjimi &Adebiyi, 2021). Case studies across Africa established that these conflicts have contributed to the loss of several lives, scores of injuries, and the destruction of many properties. For example, empirical research conducted by Homer-Dixon (1999) documented that conflicts between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen in 1989 at the borders of Senegal and Mauritania resulted in several fatalities, numerous injuries, and the destruction of properties. In addition, a study carried out in Udeni-Gida, Nigeria, found that 32 people were reported dead in December 2009, whereas 300 people perished in Nigeria due to Farmer-Fulani herdsmen clashes in 2013 (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Additionally, in June 2018, an attack on certain communities in Plateau, a state in the central belt of Nigeria, was said to have left about 200 people dead (Hamman & Haruna, 2018). Similarly, in Mali, the cycles of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts and reprisals have become progressively fatal since 2015, leading to approximately 700 deaths (Benjaminsen & Boubacar, 2021).

Historically, the influx of Fulani herdsmen in Ghana began before the dawn of colonial rule. These herdsmen originally dwelled in the Northern territories in the early 1920s and 1930s, migrating from Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and other areas (Bukari, Bukari, Sow & Scheffran, 2020). Nonetheless, in the early 1990s, the herdsmen began drifting to all agro-ecological communities in the southern territories of Ghana to access the lush vegetation for their cattle, whilst others also settled with indigenous cattle owners to manage their herds (Bukari, Bukari, Sow & Scheffran, 2020).In Ghana, while Farmer-Fulani herdsmen have coexisted for past decades in a harmonious relationship, they occasionally experience conflicts due to a struggle for grazing fields and water for the cattle(Armah, Luginaah, Yengoh, Taabazuing & Yawson, 2014). For example, in 2015, a violent conflict erupted between farmers in the Gushegu District of Ghana and the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in 30 people dying and others getting injured (Bukari & Schareika, 2015). Besides, from 2009 to 2012, Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Agogo in the Asante Akim North District of the Ashanti Region resulted in the death of 12 people and the destruction of properties in the host communities (Baidoo, 2014). Additionally, three soldiers from the joint Military and Police task force were injured during the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts at Agogo in January 2018 (Kyei-Poakwah, 2018). Given the repetitive manner and dynamic nature of the conflicts between the host farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in the

area, the conflict has been labelled as possibly the most infamous in Ghana (Paalo, 2020).

Following the threats and tensions that the Fulani herdsmen's activities pose to the host communities in Ghana, both governments and local authorities sanctioned a series of laws and decrees attempting to evict the Fulani herdsmen. Such laws and decrees included the Aliens Compliance Order in 1969, the expulsions of 1988/89 and 1999/2000, and the recent expulsions of Fulani herdsmen from the host communities by 'Operation Cowleg' forces under the supervision of REGSEC (Kyei-Poakwah, 2018). Though a step in the right direction, these policies and measures help find a permanent panacea to this problem. However, they did not result in the anticipated outcomes because these new destinations offer enabling conditions for their cattle to thrive (Soeters, Weesie & Zoomers, 2021).

Importantly, although the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflict is frequently presumed to be a fundamental issue due to longstanding hostility and struggle for scarce resources, there is less research on this subtle area in Ghana. Sadly, much of the seminal work on this subject matter overtly focused on farmer and herder conflicts, tenure insecurity and farmer's investment decisions (Kugbega & Aboagye, 2021), climate change, migration (Issifu, Darko & Paalo, 2022), stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana (Bukari & Schareika, 2015), and cattle ranching and Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa (Ahmed & Kuusaana, 2021). Consequently, this paper attempts to unravel the drivers of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana and their economic and security implications to propose policy recommendations.

This study makes a two-fold contribution to the literature. First, the findings would enable the citizens to appreciate the dynamics of natural resource appropriation by government and local authorities and their impacts on the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in host communities in Ghana. Second, the findings would inform the various stakeholders, such as the government and allied institutions, to design practical and realistic policies for resolving this phenomenon so that the interest of principal local actors, especially the farmers and herdsmen, are protected in the host communities.

The ensuing sections of this paper include a literature review, research methodology, results and discussions, and finally, the conclusion and policy implications.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Interrogating the Drivers of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts in Neoliberal Africa

Interest in Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts has gained currency in political science and conflict studies in neoliberal Africa (Mbah, Iwuamadi, Udeoji, Eze & Ezeibe, 2021). According to Tonah (2006), the Fulani herdsmen who settled in Africa before the onset of colonialism had good relations with the host communities. This is because, in the past, some farmers in host communities allowed these herdsmen to access harvested crop fields to feed these animals on a free-range basis while the animals' droppings fertilize their farmlands for the next planting season. Conversely, the rising numbers of herders' livestock and farm expansion based on mechanized cultivation techniques in Africa have largely generated increased competition over natural resources between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen. This practice, in part, results in frequent Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in African host communities.

Resource scarcity also accounts for the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Africa (Homer-Dixon, 1999). In his view, most developing countries rely on four basic environmental resources for survival, namely, fresh-water, cropland, forests, and fish. However, these resources are rapidly depleting due to misuse, over-use, rising population growth, and climate change (Homer-Dixon, 1999). This emerging trend certainly puts some groups (farmers and Fulani herdsmen) in a state of stiff competition over marginal resources. The struggle over access to natural resources recurrently leads to conflicts between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in semi-arid sub-Saharan Africa (Tonah, 2006).

Similarly, Yembilah and Grant (2014) posit that the demand by the Fulani herdsmen for equal rights and access to resources is a cause of rising conflicts because the herdsmen are deemed strangers. Thus, the host communities generally launch unwarranted human rights violations on them, especially whenever the herders begin to demand equal rights in terms of access to social facilities, resources, and legal rights bestowed on the native citizens in the host communities. Additionally, Tonah (2006) espouses the growing incidence of the proliferation of the use of small arms and light weapons in many parts of Africa, such as Burkina Faso, Central and Northern Mali, Central and Northern Nigeria, and Northern Niger and Chad, contributing factor to the rising levels of conflicts. In his opinion, this kind of business is done illegally by criminal gangs and professional smugglers, creating the opportunity for local farmers and Fulani herdsmen to easily access these small arms and weapons and misuse them to fuel conflicts.

Furthermore, some scholars (Moritz, 2012; Mwamfupe, 2015) argue that government policies to improve agricultural activities favor farmers and restrict grazing movement and access to land and water resources for herders. Consequently, there is always competition between farmers and Fulani herdsmen over access to the grazing field and water resources, resulting in conflicts as a way of resolving disagreements.

Supporting the preceding standpoints, Tonah (2006) also claimed that the Fulani herdsmen caused several atrocities such as murder, assault, robbery and rape in the local communities, posing threats and dangers to the native people. Meanwhile, there are no efficient policies to fight these social vices in the host communities. The failure of the government and allied institutions to design and implement stiff policies to ameliorate these vices often leads to reprisal responses from both parties, leading to conflicts.

Anatomy of the Implications of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts in Neoliberal Africa

Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts affect the lives and livelihood of the players and pose a threat to national food security since they distort the sustainability of agriculture and pastoral production (Moritz, 2012). During conflicts, farmers lose a part or the whole of their farms and crops through cattle grazing and indiscriminate bush burning, leaving the land bare and susceptible to erosion and degradation, rendering it unsuitable for agricultural purposes. Conversely, the herdsmen also lose their cows to indiscriminate killing by the farmers. This regular practice affects the yield of the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in low-income levels (Moritz, 2012). For example, in 2015, Nigeria lost US$13.7 billion in revenue due to Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and the Plateau States. Moreover, in March 2017, attacks by herders from northern states and other neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger cost the state approximately US$634 million (Nwangwu & Enyiazu, 2019).

Okoli and Atelhe's (2014) studies on conflicts between Farmer-Fulani herdsmen claim that apart from the killings by nomads and reprisal attacks by the indigenes, some people become widows, widowers and orphans, while others are maimed, injured and internally displaced, resulting in poor human security in Nigeria. Furthermore, an empirical study that attempted to analyze the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in Africa posited that these conflicts had caused civil wars. For example, civil wars in Chad and Niger started due to competition between the Tubu, Arab and Fulani herdsmen, while the tension between the Tuaregs and the state of Mali, Chad and Niger has been linked to resource conflicts

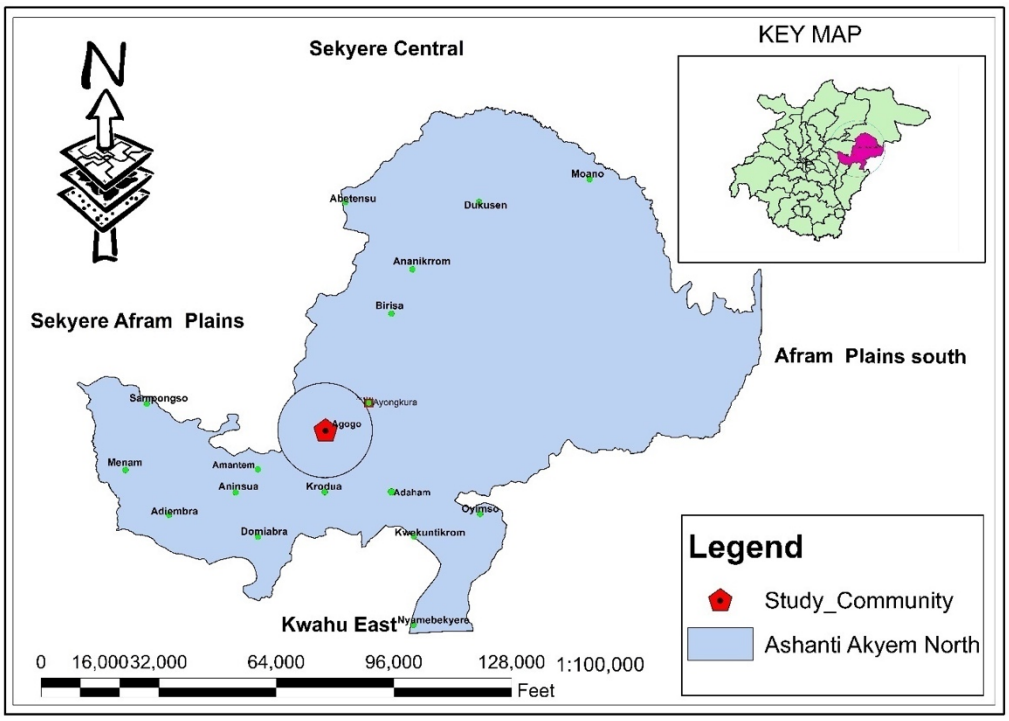
(Shettima & Tar, 2008). In addition, in Rwanda, the struggle for land between groups played a key role in the Rwandan genocide (Homer-Dixon, 1999).

METHODOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES

Research Approach, Study Context, Sampling Technique, Data and Analysis

This study was anchored in the interpretative paradigm and a qualitative approach. This approach was selected because the researcher attempted to gain in-depth data on the responses and variations of the stakeholders on the drivers and implications of the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Typically, the district is one of the 43 districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Initially, it was part of the former Asante Akim North District, with Konongo as the capital town. In 2007, the district attained municipal status to become Asante Akim North Municipal. In July 2012, the northern part of the district was carved off to create a new Asante Akim North District, with its capital town being Agogo (Office of the Ashanti Region, 2020).

The district is situated in the eastern segment of the Ashanti Region and lies between latitudes 60 30’ and 70 30’ worth and longitudes 00 15’ and 10 20’ west (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The vegetation of the district is primarily tropical rainforest, and the people in the district are predominantly farmers. Crops cultivated in the area include maize, watermelon, cocoyam, groundnut, yam, plantain, cassava and tomatoes. Lumbering and charcoal production is also rife in the area. In terms of occupation, approximately 72.7% of households in the district engage in agriculture (Office of the Ashanti Region, 2020). According to Tonah (2006), the Fulani herdsmen were first spotted in the district around 1996. However, these pastoralists had already been dwelling in the Afram Plains (see Figure 1: Map of Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana).



Source: Geography and Rural Development, KNUST-Ghana
Figure 1: Map of Ashanti Akyem North District

The choice of the Ashanti Akyem North District as a test case is appropriate because the district had experienced scores of recurring violent conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Ghana.

The purposive sampling technique was used to choose the participants because the data sought could only be obtained by the identified categories of participants. In total, 25 participants were chosen from the study setting (see Table 1: Sampled participants selected for the study).

Table 1: Sampled participants selected for the study

Participants	Number
Member of Parliament	1
District Chief Executive	1
Traditional Rulers	3
Police Officers	4
Security Official	2
Local Farmers	4
Assembly Members	3
Unit Committee Members	3
Fulani Herdsmen	4
Total	25

Source: Researcher's own conceptualization

Data were obtained from the participants through the use of semi-structured interviews. All interviews were informal and conversational; thus, it made it feasible for the researcher to explore further when participants' responses to a question demanded follow-up questioning. The interview focused on the relationship, drivers, and economic and security implications of the violent conflicts between farmers and herders on the inhabitants of host communities. Interviews were conducted in the quiet outdoors on the compounds of participants during the evening. Each interview lasted between 15 to 20 minutes. The choice of evenings for the interview was suitable because it was challenging to meet participants in the morning because they leave as early as 05:30 am for their farms and cattle grazing fields. The interviews were audio recorded for evidence, descriptions and direct quotes of the participants' responses and variations of the recurring violent conflicts. Further, the internal validity of the approach was established through the checking method, in which the content prepared during the interview was given back to the respondents to authenticate the accuracy. In parallel to the interviews, secondary documents such as government reports, books, manuscripts, a collection of media reports, and news that focused on the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts were also generated from the websites, archives, and the office of the Ashanti Akyem North District to augment the primary data for the analysis.

Data were processed and analyzed manually using several steps. The first step centered on systematically evaluating the raw information to ascertain the initial themes and concepts that emerged. After classifying general outlines at the first stage, the second step focused on building a thematic framework encompassing

themes and sub-themes. In the third step, the themes were defined and indexed by allocating some numbers to themes that had related interpretations. This fostered a categorization of thematic charts to blend the information for the analysis. The final step focused on discussing the findings in the context of the existing literature. Although the findings cannot be generalized, they give us an explorative in-depth insight into the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Rivers of Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

Destruction of livelihoods and properties

Data gathered from participants revealed that farming activities in the district are generally done on a large scale; thus, the farmers use large tracts of land for farms which, sometimes, stretch into the areas that herdsmen use as grazing routes for their cattle. However, farmers also resort to reprisal attacks such as cattle-killing to protect their farm crops. This practice generally destroys the livelihoods and properties of native farmers and Fulani herdsmen. Confirming these findings, one of the traditional rulers remarked:

> The activities of the Fulani herdsmen are always damaging farms. For instance, last year, these Fulani herdsmen deliberately allowed their herds to graze on farmlands as feed and destroyed my 10 acres of farmlands. This practice has made farming precarious, imperiling food production (Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was probed further during an interview with a Fulani cattle owner in Agogo. He aptly stated:

> Generally, we are aware that sometimes the activities of the herdsmen, such as cattle grazing, cause damage to the plantations. However, the indiscriminate killing of cattle by the farmers through poisoning and shooting with guns largely causes pain and loss to the herdsmen causing them to stage reprisal attacks, which, in turn, result in farmer-herdsmen conflicts (Fieldwork, 2022).

Although the Fulani herdsmen are aware that some of their activities destroy the farmlands, it can be established based on the evidence uncovered from the findings that these farmers also purposefully take advantage of the situation to kill their cattle and cause them financial loss. Therefore, conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the district are likely caused by a rising trend of behavior that

damages both parties' means of subsistence. These findings are consistent with earlier studies, which hold that expanding farming activities into grazing fields and livestock trails creates enough room for grazing livestock to access crop farms, resulting in livestock-induced crop damage in host communities and the frequently occurring farmer and herdsmen conflicts (Tonah, 2006).

Incidence of social vices of the Fulani herdsmen

The findings further documented that the Fulani herdsmen caused several atrocities in the communities, such as murder, assault, robbery, and rape. Such incidences of social vices are also responsible for violent conflicts in the Ashanti Akyem North District. In an interview with one of the Assembly Members, he aptly stated:

> In the past twenty-five years, the inhabitants of the communities used to walk from Kwekuntikrom to their farms in Nyamebekyere. Sometimes, these people returned home as late as 09:00 pm. Many of these farmers have stopped because these Fulani herdsmen repeatedly assault, rape and murder native farmers, especially women, when they meet them alone walking on that road. These acts and practices pose dangers to the communities; as a result, sometimes, some communities stage reprisal attacks on them, which in turn result in farmer-herdsmen conflicts (Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was probed further during an interview with the police officers in the area. One of them remarked:

> The Fulani herdsmen in the district are engaging in armed robbery and banditry activities such as food destruction, cattle rusting, animal and food crops theft, and impounding motorbikes. They generally commit these criminalities because they are armed with sophisticated arms; thus, they can easily gun you down when you confront them during their robbery activities. In protecting themselves against these acts of criminalities, the locals generally engage in reprisal responses, resulting in conflict between the herdsmen and smallholder farmers (Fieldwork, 2022).

The issue was further probed in an interview with the Fulani cattle owners. One of them, who was initially reluctant to speak, joined the conversation and remarked:

> Sadly, every criminal activity such as murder, assault, robbery and rape case that is recorded in Agogo and the adjoining communities is attributed to Fulani herdsmen. Honestly, these robbers mask themselves and purportedly

speak and dress as Fulani because they are aware of the public stereotype of Fulani herdsmen as armed robbers. This practice forces the local people to stage reprisal attacks, which lead to the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these findings, Fulani herdsmen are accused of theft, rape, assault, and murder of farmers. Yet, the institutions to deal with these complaints emanating from Farmer-Fulani herdsmen interactions are lacking and inefficient. Thus, many communities have created community-based armed groups to supposedly guard against Fulani herdsmen's nefarious activities, such as the destruction of farms, theft, and rape, that caused threats to the lives of the inhabitants. Conversely, these groups that are supposed to guard the communities against the destruction of farms and other social vices caused by Fulani herdsmen end up engaging in reprisal actions, leading to conflict. These findings confirm Tonah's (2006) observation that the absence of effective policies to ameliorate crimes such as murder, assault, robbery and rape in the communities often leads to reprisal responses against the herdsmen, resulting in conflicts.

Pollution of river bodies by livestock

The pollution of river bodies by livestock was also identified as a key driver responsible for the conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen. The data indicated that these herdsmen usually drive their herds to contaminate the Bontre and Asuofu rivers, serving as the main drinking water source for inhabitants in the Mpesempese, Mantukwa and Aberewapong communities. Meanwhile, these Fulani herdsmen are less adamant about using the regulatory systems for such rivers. This issue was further explored during the interview with the participants to validate the findings. One of the local farmers from Mantukwa remarked:

> Farmers in the Mantukwa and the surrounding communities are suffering because whenever we come to our farms, we drink from the same river that is being polluted by the livestock with their hoofs and droppings. Seemingly, this kind of activity largely triggers indiscriminate reprisal attacks on the Fulani herdsmen, contributing to the escalation of the conflict (Fieldwork, 2022).

Additionally, the issue was explored in an interview with Fulani herdsmen, and one of the discussants recalled:

> We (Fulani herdsmen) use this river as the main source of drinking water for our cattle, but we regulate the process of accessing the water to ensure that

> the river is not polluted through the activities of our cattle because we know that the same river is used by the local farmers whenever they come to their farms. Yet, sometimes, these watchdog groups in the communities launch reprisal attacks on our cattle because the main source of drinking water for inhabitants is being contaminated by our livestock whenever these herdsmen go there to access water from the rivers for their cattle (Fieldwork, 2022).

Confirming these findings, the District Chief Executive said in an interview:

> Truly, in Ashanti Akyem North District, one of the conditions stated between the traditional council and the Fulani herdsmen in the agreement was that the Fulani herders were required to construct boreholes to provide a source of drinking water for their livestock. However, this agreement was not fulfilled by the Fulani herdsmen, resulting in the cancellation of the agreement by the Kumasi High Court in 2012. Now, these herdsmen routinely take their animals to water sources used by the inhabitants as sources of drinking water for their animals, which, in part, leads to the pollution of these rivers. This growing practice is one of the drivers accounting for the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflict in Agogo and the surrounding communities (Fieldwork, 2022).

From the narratives, it can be established that the non-existence of sufficient sources of drinking water for the livestock of the herdsmen in Agogo and the surrounding communities generally causes these herdsmen to access water from rivers used by the inhabitants of the farming communities such as Mpesempese, Mantukwa and Aberewapong as the main sources of drinking water for their cattle. Meanwhile, this practice is not part of the agreement signed between the traditional council and the herdsmen when lands were released to them. These findings show that this practice carried out by the herdsmen ends up creating tension between the herdsmen and the locals. These findings align with Homer-Dixon's (1999) submission that the struggle for access to scarce resources for survival due to growth and climate change often results in conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the host communities.

Lapses in the legal system of the state

Information gathered also reveals that the legal system, which has the dictate to resolve and avert conflicts by delivering fairness to all people without fear and favor, has not been efficient in carrying out that task. These lapses have caused people to lose trust in the legal system; hence, people resort to conflicts as a useful strategy to pursue fairness in society. During an interview with the assembly members, one of them remarked:

> The court system does not respond swiftly in punishing murderers since the country's law enforcement and criminal justice systems are inefficient. Therefore, people have become irritated that both the native farmers and Fulani herdsmen generally prefer to use violence as a strategy to address their problems (Fieldwork, 2022).

Moreover, the issue of lapses in the legal system of the state was further explored in an interview with the Fulani herdsmen. One of them remarked:

> Both local farmers and the Fulani herdsmen do not trust the legal system. They are aware that the system is prejudiced and relaxed; in that, the court typically prefers to soothe tensions rather than to pursue justice, when cases of farmers and Fulani herdsmen are sent to court. Consequently, both the native farmers and the Fulani herdsmen prefer to use conflicts as a way of addressing their disagreements (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these excerpts, it can be established that the court systems are not proactive in pursuing justice when cases of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts are sent before the court. Thus, the farmers and Fulani herdsmen prefer to use arms instead of the legal system for justice, resulting in increased conflicts in the district. These findings conform to the previous works of Moritz (2012) and Mwamfupe (2015), who argue that government policies and the court system are unfair in addressing land tenure use and land conflict. Hence, the farmers and herdsmen lack confidence in them and thus resort to conflicts to resolve disagreements.

Implications of the Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts on Economic and Human Security

Economic implication

Data from the field indicate that farming is the main occupation of many of the inhabitants of the district; thus, the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts duly affect the daily livelihoods of families. Confirming these findings, one of the assembly members recounts:

> Many of the inhabitants in this district are farmers; we mainly engage in farming activities. Therefore, the destruction of our farmlands, bush burning, and 'threats' by the Fulani herdsmen in our communities affect our farm proceeds, and, thus, pose a huge danger to the daily livelihoods of families in the district (Fieldwork, 2022).

Similarly, one of the Fulani herdsmen stated:

> The indiscriminate killing of our livestock is very worrisome because we do not go to school, and cattle rearing is our main occupation; that is what we do to provide for our families (Fieldwork, 2022).

From these findings, it is evident that the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts impact agricultural yield as farmers find it challenging to secure the services of cattle needed for ploughing, weeding of fields and transporting harvested crops. These findings agree with Moritz's (2012) submission that farmer-herdsmen conflicts in host communities affect the lives and livelihood of those players and also threaten national food security primarily because it distorts the sustainability of agriculture and pastoral production.

Human security

The data revealed that the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts adversely impacted human security in Agogo and other communities in the district. Confirming this, one of the police officers stated:

> The conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen has resulted in the loss of several lives, population displacements, livelihood crises, and emotional and physical injuries to many people (Fieldwork, 2022).

The narratives show that social relations built over the years between these livelihood groups within Agogo and neighboring communities are destroyed. The data indicate that the Fulani herdsmen consider the farmers as potential enemies that threaten their survival and destiny. In contrast, the farmers also see the herdsmen as intruders in their communities who are bent on damaging their farms' products. This creates an atmosphere of mutual distrust and animosity that gives rise to conflict, resulting in hunger, unemployment, health hazards, and loss of property. These findings confirm Okoli and Atelhe's (2014) previous conclusions that apart from the killings by nomads and reprisal attacks by the indigenes, some people become widows, widowers and orphans, while others are maimed or injured, and others are internally displaced due to farmers and Fulani herdsmen's conflicts in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article investigated the drivers of Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts and their implications for economic and human security in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. The findings revealed that these conflicts are mainly caused by a web of factors, such as the destruction of livelihoods and properties, the incidence of social vices by the Fulani herdsmen, pollution of river bodies by livestock, and lapses in the legal system of the state. However, government policies have failed to resolve the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen conflicts in the past decades. This phenomenon has persistently resulted in regular threats due to the mistrust, tension and use of small arms and light weapons by the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the host farming communities in the Ashanti Akyem North District of Ghana. Following the above, the paper recommends the following steps to resolve these recurrent conflicts:

- The Government of Ghana must explore partnerships with the international community and the private sector to drill more boreholes (solar-powered) in strategic locations in the Ashanti Akyem North District to enhance the dry season resilience of the Fulani herdsmen, as a way of coordinating and minimizing the movements in the farming season to prevent the destruction of livelihoods and properties.
- Further, the government should evaluate and legally determine transhumance routes and ensure that security personnel are deployed to protect the routes of the Fulani herdsmen. They should also facilitate the coordination of herdsmen's operations with farmers to alleviate conflicts by forming local community committees on conflict prevention and resolution as defined in the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance.
- The government must formulate human rights-based policies in all preventive and response efforts, including systematic settlement following national and international human rights principles to resolve the abuses and violations experienced by the Farmer-Fulani herdsmen during conflicts.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A. & Kuusaana, E.D. (2021). Cattle ranching and farmer-herder conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the conditions for successes and failures in northern Ghana. *African Security*, *14*(2), 132-155.
- Akov, E.T. & Asua, S. (2021). Farmers–pastoralist conflicts in the Sahel region of West Africa: The scarcity-migration perspective. In R.A. Olaniyan, O.A. Faleye, & I. Moyo (eds.).*Transborder Pastoral Nomadism and Human Security in Africa* (pp. 28-40). Routledge India.
- Alao, O.T., Ayinde, J.O., Ogunjimi, S.I. & Adebiyi, A.A. (2021). Perception of arable crop farmers on the causes and effects of farmers and herdsmen conflicts in Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. *Uniosun Journal of Agriculture and Renewable Resources*, *3*(1).
- Armah, F.A., Luginaah, I., Yengoh, G.T., Taabazuing, J. & Yawson, D.O. (2014). Management of natural resources in a conflicting environment in Ghana: Unmasking a messy policy problem. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *57*(11), 1724-1745.
- Baidoo, I. (2014). *Farmer-herder conflicts: a case study of Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the Agogo traditional area of the Ashanti region.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana.
- Benjaminsen, T.A. & Boubacar, B. (2021). Fulani-dog on killings in Mali: Farmer-herder conflicts as insurgency and counterinsurgency. *African Security*, *14*(1), 4-26.
- Bukari, K.N. &Schareika, N. (2015). Stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion of Fulani pastoralists in Ghana. *Pastoralism*, *5*(1), 1-12.
- Bukari, K.N., Bukari, S., Sow, P. & Scheffran, J. (2020). Diversity and multiple drivers of pastoral Fulani migration to Ghana. *Nomadic Peoples*, *24*(1), 4-31.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2010). *Report on the current population figures of the Ashanti Akyem North District of the Ashanti Region.* Ghana.
- Hamman, J.A. & Haruna, A. (2018). The role of group solidarity in a conflict between farmers and Fulani pastoralists: A case study of Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *12*(3), 33-41.

- Homer-Dixon, T. (1999). *Environment, scarcity, and violence*. Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ.
- Issifu, A.K., Darko, F.D. & Paalo, S.A. (2022). Climate change, migration and farmer-herder conflict in Ghana. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*.
- Krätli, S. & Toulmin, C. 2020. *Farmer-herder conflict in sub-Saharan Africa.* London, UK: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).
- Kugbega, S.K. & Aboagye, P.Y. 2021. Farmer-herder conflicts, tenure insecurity and farmer's investment decisions in Agogo, Ghana. *Agricultural and Food Economics*, *9*(1), 1-38.
- Kyei-Poakwah, K.W.A.D.W.O. (2018). *Understanding farmers and herdsmen conflict, the case of crop farmers and Fulani herders in the Asante Akim North District.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana.
- Mbah, P.O., Iwuamadi, K.C., Udeoji, E., Eze, M. & Ezeibe, C.C. (2021). Exiles in their region: Pastoralist-farmer conflict and population displacements in North Central, Nigeria. *African Population Studies*, *35*(1).
- Moritz, M. (2012). Farmer-herder conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. *The Encyclopedia of Earth*.
- Mwamfupe, D. (2015). Persistence of farmer-herder conflicts in Tanzania. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, *5*(2), 1-8.
- Nwangwu, C. & Enyiazu, C. 2019. Nomadic pastoralism and human security: Towards a collective action against herders-farmers' crisis in Nigeria. *JCTN,* 2(1 & 2).
- Office of the Ashanti Region. (2020). *Report on the status of the local economy of the Ashanti Akyem North District of the Ashanti Region, Ghana.*
- Okoli, A.C. & Atelhe, G.A. (2014). Nomads against natives: A political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, *4*(2), 76-88.
- Paalo, S.A. (2021). The politics of addressing farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana. *Peacebuilding*, *9*(1), 79-99.
- Shettima, A.G. & Tar, U.A. (2008). Farmer-pastoralist conflict in West Africa: Exploring the causes and consequences. *Information, Society and Justice Journal*, *1*(2), 163-184.

- Soeters, S., Weesie, R. & Zoomers, A. (2021). Land-based investments and the inevitability of increased Farmer-Fulani pastoralist conflicts in Northern Ghana. In M. Zoomer, Leung, K. Otsuki & G. Van Westen (eds.). *Handbook of Translocal Development and Global Mobilities* (pp. 129-144). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Tonah, S. (2006). Migration and farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des études africaines*, *40*(1), 152-178.
- Yembilah, R. & Grant, M. (2014). The political ecology of territoriality: Territorialities in farmer-herder relationships in Northern Ghana. *Geo Journal*, *79*(3), 385-400.

BEYOND VIOLENT EXTREMISM: AN EXAMINATION OF YOUNG MUSLIMS NARRATIVES ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORM IN GHANA

Yunus Dumbe, PhD
Department of Religious Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana

ABSTRACT

Contemporary studies on radicalization and violent extremism are riddled with panic and pessimism. The scholarly analyses have always portrayed gloomy outcomes on violent extremism suggesting that extremists are adversaries to civilizations and have no value for human life. This is one side of the story although it overlooks the voices and grievances articulated by extremists on social and political issues. A critical analysis of these articulations can be useful resources for scholarly interest having regard to the fact that extremists are product of our social settings whose grievances are worthy of highlighting. This study analyses the thoughts and contentions articulated by young Muslim extremists in Ghana as reflections of their aspirations for social and political reforms in modern time. Ghana offers a fascinating case of how young university students were fascinated with extremists' thoughts and thus became radicalized on account of diverse factors. Despite the fact that extremists in Ghana have become parts of global Jihadi trend with networks in North Africa and the Middle East, there has not been any scholarly work examining their narratives and motivations on social and political issues. Depended on ethnographic methods, internet sources and social media, the study argues that university students became fascinated with extremist narratives and consequently were radicalized.

Keywords:
Violent Extremism; Grievances; Young Students; Ghana; Social; Political And Economic

INTRODUCTION

When Nazir Alema Nortey, a graduate from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, first announced to his family that he has safely and joined the Islamic State in Libya in August 2015, it generated national debates about the conditions in university campuses radicalizing students into extremist networks in far distant countries.[i]

Nazir's migration to ISIS was followed with another graduate, Muhammad Abubakar, who it is believed that can manufacture bombs.[ii] Yet, violent extremism is not immune and exclusive to one gender but cut across. A local media further reported that a Ghanaian female, Shakira Mohammed, is reported to have joined the militant organization, ISIS.[iii] In all, there were a significant number of students and university graduates who were either radicalized or undertook migration to Islamic State in North Africa and Middle East. The rising numbers of young people joining the ISIS has compelled the Ministry of National Security to develop keen interest. It was reported that Ghanaian ISIS recruits represent the second largest from sub-Saharan Africa with over 100 people and followed by Senegal, Gambia, Chat, Niger, Eritrea, Mali among others.[iv]

The question that many analysts kept asking is what motivates young students who hold promising future to embrace violent extremism? In response to this question, our preliminary analysis from the data demonstrates that the pull and push factors largely inform young students becoming fascinated with extremists' course. This article draws on the narratives of young students to outline their reactions to contemporary issues which have been implicated in their radicalization.

Contemporary studies on violent extremism are by nature alarmists. The narrative is that violent Islamic extremism is causing insecurity, which is also leading to loss of lives. In fact, Islamic extremism has been literally equated with terrorism, and this may be inaccurate assumption. Yet, there have been many Islamists who have not become terrorists. In short, many terrorists were not originally known as extremists.[v] However, these narratives gained credence and became widely accepted in view of the devastating impact of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in the United States. The attacks and subsequent ones have considerably changed the scholarly study on security and these studies are generating unending debates. While the implications of the attacks have been the focus of several scholarly works, some regimes including international organizations have proposed radical measures and policy changes on their understanding of security issues across wide range facets.

Kundnani (2012) has succinctly observed that the study of violent extremism has been circumscribed by the demands of counter-terrorist policy-makers rather than an attempt to objectively study it.[vi] Not surprisingly, extremism has been one of such terms that have been subjected to diverse redefinitions in recent times. The term became not only a convenient instrument to run away from legal liability of act of terrorism but has been deployed ideologically for racial and religious profiling.[vii] Some Western governments have deployed it synonymously to mean terrorism.[viii] Equally, this simplistic and security-laden understanding has permeated the analyses of some academics in recent times.[ix] This has undoubtedly blurred the academic boundaries but equally made nonsense of the distinction between these terms. In this sense, security experts have become culprits in the manner that these terms have been overstretched and abused.

This notwithstanding, debate on the extent to which extremism has come to denote risky act of terrorism is unfolding and generating unending debates. Examining the literal meaning of the word extremism suggest that it is a neutral term which can either be positive or negative. To borrow Prinsloo (2018) definition, extremists are people who are extremely dissatisfied with the society as it is and therefore impatient with less extreme proposals to changing it.[x] However, the qualification of the word extremism with violence has generated more controversies than ever whether it can be equated with terrorism or not.

This study adopts the definition proposed by Nasser-Edineet al (2011) which suggests that extremism is to 'provoke the target into a disproportionate response, radicalize moderates and build support for its objectives in the long term'.[xi] Also, the working definition proposed by the Expert Group and quoted by Schmidon extremism and violent extremism(2013), defines it as 'socialization to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism'.[xii] While Nasser-Edine definition offers a useful beginning, it does not give enough clarity on the distinction between religious extremism and terrorism. The diverse contestations that religious extremism and terrorism have been subjected to and shape the contour of scholarly literatures have overlooked other relevant issues worthy of academic analysis. As these contestations cannot be resolved easily, focusing on the narratives of young extremists can provide a useful basis to add nuance to our understanding on what violent extremism is.

The surge in religious extremism in Africa has dominated the scholarly debates on how to counter it. This became necessary in view of the fact that the brute military approach was viewed not to be effective in providing solution to the surge of extremism. Consequently, scholars have introduced different approaches which aimed at countering religious extremism through disruptive approaches. These

measures were fundamentally pre-emptive and focus on addressing all conditions which serve as the driving force for ideologically based maneuvers to mobilize gullible followers.[xiii] As these approaches have not curbed the surge in religious extremism, there has been re-thinking whether voices articulated by extremists could provide a good basis to addressing conditions leading to extremism and thus acts of terrorism. This study builds on previous works studying religious extremism by focusing on the narratives of extremists as an analytical tool to understanding the conditions radicalizing young people.

In what follows, I analyze the narratives of young extremists in Ghana in the context of their critiques and aspiration for both political and social reforms in Ghana. Ghana offers an interesting case study of religious extremism in Africa. Since 2015, students in university campuses were becoming fascinated with extremist networks in North Africa and Middle East. The circumstances under which they became affiliated with extremist networks remains a puzzle and have been a subject of public discourse. The study further illuminates new insights into how extremists are adopting new modes of recruitment into violent extremism through intellectual discourse as peer exchanges of ideas and deliberations on global political issues is becoming so common.

Religious extremism emerged in Ghana as a result of both young students' and graduates' dependence on internet for religious resources. Undoubtedly, the exposure was exploited by transnational extremists to mobilize students into their network of extremism in their quest to build a viable Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria. The outcome of the mobilization drive generated interesting reaction among Muslim student unions in Ghana. While these external elements succeeded to recruit Muslim students and radicalized them locally, there were others who undertook the risky adventure to migrate to Islamic State of Levante and Syria (ISIL).

The background of these extremists has generated scholarly debates especially how to classify them in respect of the boundaries between extremism and terrorism. Central to the debates is how can we conceptualize those students who have been radicalized but have not undertaken violent attack on the Ghanaian soil? Are the backgrounds of those who have joined the extremist networks in North Africa and Middle East the same as those who have been radicalized locally? The above scenarios, offer two useful distinctions for scholarly analysis. This notwithstanding, the aim of this study is to examine the narratives of young students who have been locally radicalized to add to our understanding on their ideology and worldview. Yet, these extremists have not undertaken any attack on

the Ghanaian soil, they have been articulating one form of grievance or the other on social and political issues which has received marginal interest in recent times.

This study takes inspiration from Alexander Thurston analysis of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. Thurston (2020) argues that the Boko Haram represents the outcome of dynamic interactions between religion and local politics.[xiv]He emphasizes that the emergence of Boko Haram in Maiduguri and not in Sokoto and Kano is significant because the level of poverty, corruption as well as the preponderance of radical preachers play a catalyst role in the birth of Boko Haram. He sees Jihadist movements as political movements which stimulate political development in different ways. Thurstorn's perspective provides useful basis to analyze young students' fascination with extremist networks and the voices they articulate on contemporary social and political issues in Ghana. Equally, Lapidus (1997) sees the activities of contemporary fundamentalist movements in Muslim world as reactions to the conditions of modernity and more specifically to the development of capitalist economies as well as a rejection of sub-cultures of modernity. Heargues that the emphasis upon religious values is not necessarily intended to advocate for a return to some past era but represents an effort to cope with contemporary problems.[xv] This study is inspired by previous scholarly works which argue that radicalization is a product of social and political crisis in modern time.[xvi] My argument is that as young extremists are products of our societies, their narratives and critiques represent useful means to assess their reactions to our contemporary political and social systems.

This study is structured in three parts. The first part outlines the general background of the study which is followed by empirical studies on extremist narratives. The second section outlines the impetus of religious extremism in Ghana by analyzing how global politics acquired local political relevance. In the third section of this paper, I analyze the contemporary narratives of young students radicalized to illustrate what extremism is, using Ghana as an example. The last section sums up the conclusion of this paper highlighting the implications of young extremists' narratives on social and political issues. How do extremists undertake mobilization in public has been raging subject that is generating unending debates? The next section addresses this question.

CONTEMPORARY RADICALISATION AND EXTREMIST MOBILISATION

Contemporary scholarships have been grappling with the question on how extremists attract people into their networks. This question is attracting diverse commentaries though have not been exhaustive. It is becoming clear that

extremism does not emerge out of vacuum but depends on cause-and-effect binary in people's social life. This question has become necessary in parts as a result of recent findings which suggest that terrorism does not thrive on coercion but rather arising from people conviction with extremists course.[xvii] Also, recent studies have equally discounted the previous analyses which portrayed extremists as mentally challenged or under psychopathological distress.[xviii] The analysis which depended on the neurological and biological disposition between males and females and their potential role in violent extremism, emphasize that males are more aggressive and violent than females.[xix] However, recent studies rather see extremists as normal people who hold strong conviction about political and social issues around them.[xx] Interestingly, since these previous analyses were not scientifically and empirically grounded, these perspectives were thus discarded.

While the debate about people attraction to extremist course is unending, it, however, illustrates how multiple factors are contributing to the discourse. This notwithstanding, it is increasingly becoming clear that people fascination with extremist thoughts is not borne out of irrational sensationalism and fanaticism but rather they are reacting to social and political grievances around them.

Thus, recent scholarly works from diverse disciplines have been pondering on the question of how extremists undertake mobilization in public. Central to the argument is that extremists' success in mobilization is a result of the clarity of their thoughts and narratives. While they may be obsessed in highlighting the contemporary ills of the society, in the end, their discourse is not only intellectually stimulating but logical and verifiable on everyday life and events. In the perspective of Amghar Samir, 2009, radicalization in Europe and France is an outcome of everyday experiences that young people encounter and emanated from injustices, exclusion as well as political repression from their home countries.[xxi] For Olivier Roy, the radicalization of Western Muslim youth while it may often be considered a spill-over of the crisis in the Middle East, it is stimulated by youth revolt as a result of frustration and alienation.[xxii]

Nevertheless, recent scholarships have gone beyond viewing the radicalization of young people as outcomes of social exclusion, injustices and alienation but exploring how people become attracted to extremist networks. Alexander Schmidt is the leading scholar in this discipline. He argues that the strength of extremist mobilization rests with the power of their narratives. However, the term narrative is ill-defined which makes it difficult to situate it for a precise analysis. According to Corman, 'there is little consensus about what the term narrative is and how it is used'.[xxiii]

Consequently, Patterson (2022) delves into what the term could mean. She argues that narratives do not exist in vacuum; they involve pool of resources (cultural tradition, heroic events and previous stories) through which actors depend on to produce meaning for the audience.[xxiv] In extending this discourse into Islamic tradition, it highlights how religious scriptures and historical events provides useful resources in shaping Islamic narratives.

Schmid also offers an alternative way of understanding the term narratives and its power in mobilization. He emphasizes that narrative is embedded in communication and propaganda which are indisputable resources for mobilization. This underscores the relevance of charismatic figures in stimulating the narrative discourse. He further explains that narrative is the cornerstone upon which extremists justify their violent tactics, propagates their ideology and to win gullible masses and new recruits.[xxv] Thus, the resilient of extremist mobilization strategy is depended on the effectiveness of their narrative which target the masses with convincing arguments.

Equally, scholars like Harvelson and Corman argue that narratives are powerful resources for defining cultures and framing action to influence audience into a certain direction.[xxvi] Thus, they outline the significance of the course and set the agenda for the audience to emulate. The uniqueness of extremist narratives is underscored by the fact that they offer alternative forms of rationality deeply rooted in culture by interpreting local frame, events and strategically encourage some kinds of personal action'.[xxvii] Narratives are not only significant in religious and social spheres but they are equally relevant in political mobilization. Dimitriu argues that 'narratives are relevant resources deploy by political actors to construct a shared meaning to shape perceptions, beliefs and behavior of the public'.[xxviii]

As there has been renewed interest in the multiple meanings that the term narrative is, scholars have offered alternative ways of understanding it, which simplifies its meaning by equating it with propaganda and communication. In their masterpiece work, *what is Propaganda and does it differ with persuasion,* Jowett et al (2012) argue that propaganda is the 'deliberate, systemic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist'.[xxix] Thus, ethical consideration plays a lesser factor in propaganda as it highlights its primary focus is to shape people mind for a desirable goal and direction of the propagators.

The far-reaching outcome of propaganda which aims to incite the public into a particular course has been the subject of analysis by some experts. The analyses demonstrate that propaganda has the power to reduce complex issues to simple

cliches by creating the dichotomies of black and white, us and them and good and evil.[xxx] However, the term propaganda is considered obsolete in modern communication strategies and its instead new terms like public affairs, public diplomacy, strategic communication and psychological operations are used. This notwithstanding the varied designations that the term has assumed, the overall agenda in its deployment is to effect and disseminate certain information to change attitude and behaviors of audience.

Yet, narrative finds its meaning in propaganda, its effectiveness in mobilization is derived from master narrative which has been explained as transhistorical that is deeply embedded in a particular culture.[xxxi] By transhistorical, Halverson explains that it means what people are indoctrinated into through repetition while by culture he meant shared characteristics by an ethnic, social or religious group.

As religious narratives are embedded in master narratives they contribute to political and social mobilization in diverse ways.[xxxii] Beyond shaping group identity, narrative can motivate and incite an individual into risky action/ behavior for political and social change. Importantly, religious narratives often retell histories of heroic action and momentous historical encounters encouraging contemporary hearers to repeat the deeds of past heroes. It is in this light that Halverson et al argue that Islamic master narratives assist Muslims to make sense of past events, connecting new to existing information, justifying actions and orienting action towards future goals (Halverson et al., 2011). Like Halverson, Scheifebein (2006) and Sane (2011), identify goals of Islamic extremist narratives which include legitimation, propagation and intimidation.[xxxiii]This highlight how narratives are just the means to an end than being an end in themselves.

Some of the master narratives in Islam include, the pharaoh; an arrogant tyrant who refuses to submit to God. Jahiliyya which means the state of ignorance before the advent of Islam. The battle of Badr; a small army of Muslims defeating the large army of unbelievers of Makkans. Hypocrites: those who outwardly manifest to be Muslims but secretly undermines the religion. Crusaders; infidel invaders who occupy Muslim lands and must be repelled. Nakba: catastrophe for Palestinians and Muslim world as the state of Israel was imposed over the land of Palestine. Seventy-two virgins; the reward for those who sacrifice themselves through militant Jihad. While narratives shape extremists' mobilization strategies in recent times, the extent to which this has contributed to radicalization of students in Ghana is analyzed below. It demonstrates that the role of narratives in mobilization have no geographical limitation.

GLOBAL PROBLEMS; LOCAL CONCERNS AND RADICALISATION IN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

In this section, I examine how extremist narratives play catalyst role in students' mobilization in Ghana. As a prelude, however, I analyze the demography of these students and how their backgrounds partly play roles in their radicalization. I begin the analysis with ethnographic, social media content as well as exploring the modes that external extremists deployed to radicalize young students. I argue that young students were vulnerable to radicalization due to the intellectually fascinating thoughts propagated by the extremists on social and political issues in university campuses in Ghana. This has further been augmented by the fact that the young students radicalized were inexperience to comprehend complex social issues pertaining to religion which will have required expert mediation. Also, the low level of and the lack of Islamic education among the students partly predisposed them to manipulation by external extremists leading to their radicalization.

Ghana offers a fascinating example of how young students and graduates from university campuses were becoming radicalized for diverse reasons. While this remains a puzzle to many observers, the ensuing analysis underscores how global events affecting Muslims elsewhere can become catalyst of mobilization at the local level. As a phenomenon of globalization, religious issues are becoming more homogenized as the internet is providing instant access to information and mutual communication across distances made easier than before.[xxxiv]

The uniqueness of the Ghanaian context is related to the agency and space involve in the radicalization. Many observers could not come to terms with the fact that students and university campuses were becoming agency and sites of radicalization. This may, however, overlook how contemporary radicalization thrives on ideas that and benefits from dispassionate intellectual debates and the motives interpreted in diverse ways depending on the individual backgrounds.

To start with, radicalization emerged in Ghana as a lone-wolf phenomenon in one of the public university campuses. However, as the phenomenon largely thrives on ideas, it subsequently attracted students from other universities. The extent to which extremist thoughts became widespread among the students was an outcome of poor governance of Muslim students' union religious activities where the lack of both religious infrastructure and resource persons plays central role. The void created in the leadership and management of Muslim students' religious activities in university campuses provided the incipient means of their radicalization. In the ensuing milieu, the lack of religious resources compelled them to depend on

internet sources for religious guidance which exposed them to extremist networks and groups.

The peak of this crisis saw discussion in students' religious platforms dominated by global political issues than deliberation on religious matters. The spate of political instability in Muslim parts of the world in North Africa and Middle East became the subject of discourse among the students during their daily or weekly discussions. In the view of a student leader, the pattern of weekly religious discussion rather shifted to discussing about geo-political issues. This aroused considerable passion among the students who felt that Muslims elsewhere were at the receiving end of Western superpowers.[xxxv]It was difficult to conclude whether the students' sentiment were real or perceived. As in other contexts, the solidarity developed by these students degenerated into radicalization where they conceived to mobilize peers to join forces to fight the perceived infidel crusaders invading Muslim lands.[xxxvi]The extent to which the demography of these students stands unique and contributed to their radicalization is analyzed below.

The fact that students in public universities were the target of the radicalization menace highlights a unique and contemporary demographic trend. The findings from the analysis departs from previous empirical studies elsewhere which argue that people become radicalized on account of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and among others.[xxxvii] On the contrary, the analysis from the fieldnotes suggests how students and graduates from universities are rather becoming radicalized. A question has been asked why are students and graduates from secular institutions of higher learning are becoming the target of extremist mobilization drive? The answer to this question highlights the fact that the target of students for mobilization into extremist networks is not a means to an end. It rather emanates from the special skills that these university graduates possess which ISIS intends to harness to build a viable Islamic state and Caliphate. This, thus, refocused their agenda of mobilizing students and graduates from secular universities to meet the need for human resource to establish viable political institutions. In specific terms, the ISIS mobilization largely focuses on graduates in the sciences and engineering, with the exception of few graduates in the social sciences in Ghana.[xxxviii]

In terms of religious education, majority of young students radicalized in Ghana do not have the benefit of the traditional Islamic education, the Madrasah education. The ethnographic analysis demonstrates that those who had a level of Islamic education did not exceed the middle education and represented less than 10%.[xxxix] These students are ignorant to religious teachings which thus predisposed them to radicalization. The age dynamics of the demography also demonstrates the fact that people within the ages 18-38 years were those radicalized. While this may

highlight the age bracket of people transitioning in education, it also raises question about their vulnerability to radicalization due to inexperience to comprehend complex issues.

The socio-economic background of the extremists further underscores the fact that they come from underprivilege background whose families are unemployed or underemployed. While some families who are employed in the formal sector earn less than the minimum wage, others undertake menial jobs for living. Thus, it is difficult to partly rule out the economic motive behind the radicalization as some of the youths were attracted by the potential opportunities for employment in the Arab world.

In terms of gender, a few numbers of Muslim women became victims of extremist mobilization drive. There were those females who were having marital challenges but for unknown reasons joined the extremist networks and had embarked on journey to ISIS controlled areas. Similarly, young women whose partners initially settled in the ISIS areas lured them to join with a view to consummate their marriage. This demonstrates how one gender may influence the other into radicalization due to love or family crisis.

While the demographic characteristics of the young extremists may portray the extent of their vulnerability to radicalization, I outline how the process of radicalization among students was propagated in the university campuses. Considerable evidence points to the fact that a majority of the students who were radicalized were victims of peer influence and bad socialization which was aided by modern technology.[xl]

In simple terms, young extremists created cells in the university campuses which enable them to take leadership positions in mosques and satellite religious centers as Imams. Consequently, recognized as an Imam, this exudes a sense of respect for the extremists in the eyes of the students and set the tone to moderate religious discourse in the mosques along their agenda. University campuses were turned since 2015 into arenas of contestation of religious ideas by the extremists, though framed with the lens of global political issues.

The close-knit nature of students' life in university campuses which facilitated interpersonal interactions among peers was exploited by the extremists to invite credulous for religious camping. In KNUST young extremists initiated various forms of religious camping since 2015 with their peers where considerable times were spent outside campus to deliberate on issues of global politics and their impact on Muslims. The outcome of these camping led to exchange of ideas on political,

social as well as dissemination of audio-visual speeches of prominent extremists such as Anwar Awlaki, Jibril Musa, Osama bn Laden among others. Consequently, some of the students who became fascinated with extremist narratives joined the network through migration to ISIL.

Young extremists further exploited the use of modern technologies beyond the dissemination of audio-visual clips to creating virtual leadership through social media.[xli] This became the most enduring in students power politics as it led to the fragmentation of the student leadership. These platforms became the most insidious means that sensitive materials were circulated to members through which others were guided to emigrate to Islamic State of Syria and Levante. The next section analyses the narratives articulated by young on social and political issues.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ILLS IN THE EYES OF EXTREMISTS

This section highlights the views articulated by radicalized young people on social and political issues in their bid to recruit gullible followers into their network. The views articulated by these extremists not only offer useful means to discern what constitute extremism but provides useful basis to analyze their assessment of contemporary social and political issues in Ghana. The sense that one gets from their narratives is that they see the larger society drifting away from the ideal values in politics and social norms. As outlined earlier, religious extremism did not emerge in Ghana out of vacuum; it was a result of interactions of local conditions with global political events which birthed young extremists. Thus, the issues articulated by young extremists were largely reflections of both global political and local conditions.

This section largely depends on the outcome of ethnographic fieldnotes with young extremists in addition to the materials they circulated in the social media, internet sources.[xlii] The study relies on data from interaction with those students who participated in extremist religious activities but were not radicalized. It highlights how peers' deliberation on social and political ills of modern society without moderation from experienced mentors may drive them into violent extremism. The lack of expert mediation on students' activities may lead to oversimplification of complex religious issues which are beyond the understanding of untrained person.

Central to the narrative articulated by young extremists on political issues is the nature of contemporary politics. Their narratives on politics revolve around what I

may term politicized Islam which is seeing Islam as more of political instrument than religious. This is partly understandable because the context in which these young students were radicalized in Ghana was inspired by ISIS political agenda than religious ideation. As ISIS proposed to establish an Islamic State and a Caliphate spanning from Middle East to North, these young students were attracted to the political agenda of ISIS which thus accounted for the politicization of Islam. The discourse articulated by these young extremists largely exploited contemporary political upheavals in Muslim parts of the world such as events in Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Libya to win the solidarity of their audience.

In their intellectual prognosis of political issues, young extremists attribute political challenges in Muslim world to Western imperial agenda to dominate. Their ability to make references to Muslim countries where political upheavals are ubiquitous and share audio-visuals of political events elsewhere makes it easier for the credulous to believe in their discourse. The audio-visual clips most often highlight the level of the perceived mass killings which have taken places in some countries. Undoubtedly, viewing these materials on political events elsewhere, one is tempted to believe in their narratives since the audio-visuals provide incontestable evidence.

Like their critique of global politics, young extremists are critical of local political issues in Ghana. They see the trend of politics in Ghana as enmeshed in corruption and economic mismanagement. Their appraisal of both local and global politics in negative terms are largely aim at discrediting the system as a whole in order to legitimize their agenda. They do not see how Ghana has benefited from multi-party democracy rather than partisan politics and cronyism that the system perpetrates.

Indeed, young extremists have become disillusioned with democratic governance. They see the system rather benefiting few partisan loyalists at the expense of providing welfare for the ordinary masses. In an interview, an extremist outlines his reservation about democracy arguing that "*what is rather clear is that a community support for a particular political party will drive them development than those which voted against the regime*" (Interview, anonymous #1, Accra, 2016). This in his view is not only against the state protocol on distribution of national resources but Islamic ethics. One gets a sense that by being overly critical against democratic governance system, it justifies their reception to ISIS's political course.

An extremist raised a rhetoric question on the legitimacy of contemporary political leadership on the perceived high level of corruption in Ghana "*why will I*

endorse this facade electoral process which produces corrupt leaders when my action will be questioned by Allah on Yaumul Qiyama [judgement day]" (Interview, anonymous #5, Accra 2018). While this post may suggest that this extremist and his cohorts shun on democratic politics, beneath this critique, however, is their agenda to offer an alternative political system. The overall import on highlighting on the social and political ills of Ghanaian societies is to suggest that the system is not worth dying for. The sense is that a Muslim should always embark on a course that pleases Allah to earn him a reward in the hereafter.

This negative perception by young extremists on the democratic system in Ghana is equally affecting their ability to participate in electoral and political process. The peak of my ethnographic fieldwork occasioned the 2016 general elections for both presidential and parliamentary in Ghana. An extremist argues that he refused to participate in the election because he did not want to endorse any corrupt party to win the election. When I asked whether he knows that exercising a political franchise is an obligation as enshrined in the constitution? His response was that he will not want to be tied to a system that undermines Islamic values.

In the view of this extremist, democracy is "*the system that has the notion that laws are for the people, are made by the people and is for the people"* (Anonymous #1, Interview, Accra, 2016). He thus concluded that it is the people that manipulate the laws, in contrast with the nature of Islamic law which derive their basis from Allah.

While the above analyses demonstrate that the political system is becoming less attractive to these young extremists, they are equally not oblivious about proposing an alternative political system which may work for Ghanaians. The alternative political system that these young extremists proposed rather is an Islamic political system which has never been experimented anywhere in modern times.

Young extremists advocate that Muslims should embrace the Khilafa system which is viewed as a universal Islamic system of governance. In their view, the Khilafa system was the system of governance practiced by the successive four rightly guided caliphs and was subsequently adopted by some Muslim dynasties.

The religious theology shaping the Khilafa system is*tawhid hakmiyya* which means that matters of laws and judgment must emanate solely from the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet. However, it is difficult how an ordinary Muslim may understand what they meant by the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet since these texts have been interpreted by different Muslims of diverse shades. The answer to this question has been given simplistically in a focus group discussion, arguing that

the interpretations of religious texts must be decided by the leadership to Muslim community. The community ought to properly constitute the religious elites or council called, Ahlul-Hall Wa'l-Aqd. This means those religious elites who not only qualify to elect or depose a caliph but can take crucial decision on behalf of Muslim Ummah. A question was asked whether Muslims in a minority state like can Ghana can strictly implement this form of Islamic law in contrast with the democratic system that we practice. These extremists regardless of their gender argue that Muslims must strive as individuals to live by Allah's command and forsake the worldly things as the starting point. It illustrates the fact that young extremists' have become is content with the Ghanaian democratic governance system which thus is give them the impetus to believe in utopian theocratic political Islam.

Analyzing the economic issues from the perspectives of young extremists reveals that these are intertwined with their appraisal of political economy. Thus, they see African backwardness in development resulting from the mismanagement of the economy. Part of the reasons why these young extremists have outlawed civic participation in democratic process is because they believe that most elites involve in politics for personal gains than to contribute to nation building. Thus, these young extremists see Islam as providing the solution. An extremist declared that "*Ghana can only regain its glory days if the political leaders have incorporated the fundamental Islamic principles in the management of the economy*" (Interview, anonymous #2, Kumasi, August 28, 2017).The critical posture that these young extremists have demonstrated in their narratives underscores the sheer dislike of the political system that they live.

Consequently, young extremists encounter a dilemma on how to overcome the unfriendly political system that they find themselves. The answer to this question has been simplified in an advice that members should migrate to Islamic State in Syria and Levante. Hijra (migration) carries a significant spiritual undercurrent in the worldview of extremists in general. In the perspective of extremists, migration from Daru al-Harb (abode of war) to Daru al-Islam (abode of Islam) is done to please Allah. Strictly, abode of war is a generalized worldview in their narrative to imply that where the political system is not favorable for the proselytization and growth of the Islamic faith. Migrating signifies the quest for spiritual certainty of a believer. Thus, it was not strange to realize that a significant number of students and university graduates in Ghana undertook migration to extremist organizations in North Africa and Middle East, a trend which has been ongoing since 2015.[xliii]

Part of the motive for the migration to North Africa and Middle East is not purely borne on religious and political reasons. Economic consideration partly

plays a role. A student ever asked an extremist who have joined the Islamic State in Libya about the latest development in the battle field, the latter responded that "We are conquering the lands… the rate at which we are taking lands is a blessing an indication of expansion of Islamic State… we are establishing an Islamic police force, hospitals and financial centers…it is blessing from Allah" (a text message from Mohammed Abubakar to an anonymous friend) (Interview, anonymous #3, KNUST in 2016). Arguably, the average gullible young man who encounters this narrative may be swayed to embrace the group.

The social life of young extremists is underpinned not only by personal isolation and loneliness from the larger society but they are equally critical about the pattern of the Ghanaian social setup. They are more fascinated discussing about morality and virtues. On the other hand, they are disenchanted with youth sub-cultures of boy-girl friend relationship and the perceived fornication among others. A post by young extremist on his social media page reads "I prefer to die in an Islamic State than living in a land of infidels where my eyes commit zina (fornication)".[xliv] Another extremist lamented that whenever he sees young ladies who expose their breast in public, he feels like whipping them with a cane. He concluded that "if stripping naked is a symbol of civilization then animals are more civilized than humans" (interview, anonymous #6, Accra 2019).

Some of the extremists who are avid critics about the social settings in which they live have not only become lonely individuals but have stopped watching and monitoring both local and international news. During my visit to the residence of an extremist, I have observed that he/she is not using television and sofa chairs. I asked why he/she does not watch television. The response is that it is full of misleading information by western media to undermine Muslims.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze young Muslim narratives on social and political reforms in the context of Ghana experience with violent extremism. Ghana encountered a unique dimension of violent extremism in university campuses as young students and graduates became fascinated with extremist networks in far distant countries and thus were radicalized. The circumstances behind their radicalization are still unfolding. The question that this article sought to answer is why were students in university campuses radicalized and became vocal critics about political and social issues in Ghana. The data analysis demonstrates that young students were radicalized on account of leadership void in the management of Muslim students' religious activities. Consequently, these students encountered desperation in their quest for religious resources which compelled them to depend

on internet sources for religious guidance. The void in religious leadership intersected with global political events affecting Muslims elsewhere and provided the catalyst of mobilization of these students to sympathies with fellow.

Because these students were fascinated with ISIS's political agenda, the discourse that they stimulated was largely shaped by politicized Islam where Islam was viewed as a political instrument. The study demonstrates that these students were delusion with modern democratic system of governance and the pattern of contemporary politics in Ghana. They view the political space as characterized by cronyism and partisan interest than national interest. Thus, people and communities are rewarded with benefits and development because of their loyalty with a particular political party's agenda, whereas those who did not support are denied.

The narratives of young extremists on economic issues highlight how they see the Ghanaian economy is riddled with corruption and mismanagement in diverse ways and thus undermining national development. They believe that people engage in politics not because they want to contribute to national development but to amass wealth. Interestingly, analyzing the social narratives of the young extremists brings to focus their aversion to moral permissiveness which they claim is characterized the Ghanaian social milieu.

Young extremists' critical assessment of the political and social life in Ghana are not without agenda setting. While their assessments of local politics were negative, they proposed the Khilafa system as an alternative political system to address myriad of social and political issues. Islam is viewed by these extremists as offering a comprehensive political and system that must embrace. In spite of the fact that the Khilafa system of governance has never been experimented and tested anywhere, young extremists are fascinated with this utopian Islamic worldview. This article concludes that to address the challenge of students becoming radicalized in university campuses the management of the education system in Ghana ought to factor the religious needs and interest of minority religious group. The sheer neglect of Muslim students in the provision of religious infrastructures and resource persons not only generate national tension but is being exploited by external extremists to radicalize students.

REFERENCES

- Doosje Bertjan. "Determinants of Radicalization of Islamic Youth in the Netherlands: Personal Uncertainty, Perceived Injustice, and Perceived Group Threat" *Journal of Social Issues*, (2013) 69, No 1. Pp586-604
- Dimitriu, G "Strategic Narratives, Counternarratives and Public Support for War: The Dutch government's explanation of the Uruzgan mission and its influence on the Dutch Public*"* (Leiden University: Master Thesis, Campus the Hague, 2 February 2013), p. 13.
- Fuller, Graham E. "The Youth Crisis in the Middle Eastern Society". 2004. Brief Paper.
- The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Pp 11.
- Frey Bruno "Terrorism: Deterrence May Backfire". Working Paper Series No. 136.
- Institute for Empirical Research in Economics. (2002). University of Zurich. Pp 1-25.
- Ghanaians' 2nd Highest in ISIS Recruits- OkudjatoAblakwa. https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghanaians-2nd-highest-_ISIS-recruits-Okudzeto-589502\
- "Ghana Investigates Islamic States Recruitment in universities". BBC. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34084468 (Accessed 15 May 2019).
- "Ghana ranked in ISIS recruits" https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghanaians-2nd-highest-ISIS-recruits-Okudzeto-589502 . Retrieve 9th June 2018.
- Halverson JR et al 2011. *Master Narratives in Islamist Discourse.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), 81-93.
- "Ghanaian Female ISIS recruit" https://www.facebook.com/JoyNewsOnTV/photos/a-ghanaian-female-shakira-mohammed-is-reported-to-have-joined-the-militant-organ/949312335140673/
- Jowett, Garth and Victoria O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion* (1994 New York: *Sage Publications*)Pp 19-25.
- Kundnani, Arun. "Radicalization: The Journey of a concept". *Race and Class*38, no 2.
- 2012). Institute of Race Relations Pp 15.
- "KNUST ISIS Recruit is a bomb maker":https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/KNUST-ISIS-recruit-is-bomb-maker-378801 (Accessed 11 June 2017).
- Lapidus, Ira. "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and Historical Paradigm". *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* Vol. 40, No. 4 (1997), Pp. 446.
- Mazrui, Ali 2011. "Globalization, Islam, and the West: between homogenization and hegemonization".
- The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 15:3
- Mirchandani Maya. "Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons from India". 2017. Pp 24

- *ORC Special Report*.
- Olivier Roy Islamic, "Terrorist Radicalization in Europe in the *European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society*", (2007) Eds Amghar Samir et al. Centre for
- European Policy Studies Brussels. Pp 31
- Patterson Katie. "Dualisms in Jihad: The role of metaphor in creating ideological
- Dichotomies". *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, (2022). 2. No 2. Pp18-32.
- Sane, Halim. "Narratives and Counter Narratives of Islamist Extremism". 2016 *New Perspectives on Terrorism* 3 no 2. Pp 168-184
- Samir, Amghar "Ideological and Theological Foundations of Muslim Radicalism in France".(2009) *MICROCON Policy Working Paper* 4.
- Shereef Nii Mensah, https://web.facebook.com/search/top?q=shereef%20nii%20mensah. 2014. Date accessed 2016.
- Schmid Alex. Radicalization, de-radicalization and counter-radicalization: A conceptual Discussion and Literature Review. March (2013)*International Centre for Counter Terrorism* (ICCT).
- Research Paper.
- Steven R. Corman, "Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communication", in Laurie Fenstermacher and Todd Leventhal(eds.)*Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific*
- *Methods and Strategies* (Washington, DC: NSI Inc., September 2011), p. 36.
- Steven R. Corman Jill S. Schiefelbein 2006. "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas" in *Consortium for Strategic Communication. Arizona State University*. Report #0601
- Thurston, Alexander. *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2020). Pp 12-15.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP) "The Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment". Available at: http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/en/reports (Accessed 12 June 2018).

Personal Interviews:

- Interview, Ibrahim Muhammad Anyas, Sawaba, Kumasi. 2016
- Interview, anonymous #1, Accra, 2016
- Interview, anonymous #1, Accra, 2016
- Interview, anonymous #2, Kumasi, August 28, 2017
- Interview, anonymous #3 KNUST, Kumasi 2016
- Interview, anonymous #4, Facebook post in 2018
- Interview, anonymous #5, Accra 2018
- Interview, anonymous #6, Accra 2019

[i] Ghana investigates Islamic states recruitment in universities. BBC. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34084468 (Accessed 15 May 2019).
[ii] KNUST ISIS recruit is a bomb maker. Available at: https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/KNUST-ISIS-recruit-is-bomb-maker-378801 (Accessed 11 June 2017).
[iii]https://www.facebook.com/JoyNewsOnTV/photos/a-ghanaian-female-shakira-mohammed-is-reported-to-have-joined-the-militant-organ/949312335140673/
[iv] Ghanaian 2nd Highest in ISIS Recruits-OkudjatoAblakwa. Available at: https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghanaians-2nd-highest-ISIS-recruits-Okudzeto-589502 (Accessed 9 June 2018).
[v]Horgan, J et all 2018. Towards a Typology of Terrorism Involvement: A Behavioural Differentiation of Violent Extremist Offenders. *American Psychological Association*. Vol 5, No 2, 84-102. And Bartellet J & Miller C 2011. The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization. Terrorism and Political Violence.
[vi] Arun Kundnani, "Radicalisation: The Journey of a concept". *Race and Class*. 38, no 2. (2012). Institute of Race Relations Pp 15.
[vii]Donatella Della Porta, "Processes of Radicalisation and De-radicalisation". *International Journal of Conflict and violence.* (2011) 6, no 1. pp. 4 – 10
[viii]Attorney-General's Department. What is Violent Extremism? (2011). Available at: http://www.resilientcommunities.gov.au/aboutus/Pages/what-is-violent-extremism.aspx (Accessed 10 May 2022).
[ix]Kruglanski A. et al. The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism. Advances in Political Psychology, Vol. 35, No 1(2014). Pp 69-93
[x] Prinsloo, Barend Louwrens. (2018). The Etymology of "Islamic Extremism": A Misunderstood Term? *Cogent Social Sciences, 1.*
[xi]Nasser-Eddine, M et al 2011. "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review" Published byCounter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre, Defence Science and Technology Organisation DSTO-TR-2522
[xii]Schmid Alex. Radicalisation, de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation: A conceptual Discussion and Literature Review. March (2013) International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT). Research Paper.
[xiii]Mirchandani Maya. Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons from India. 2017. ORC Special Report.
[xiv] Alexander Thurston. Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement. (Princeton: Princeton University Press2020). Pp 12-15
[xv] Lapidus, Ira. "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and Historical Paradigm" Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1997), pp. 444-460
[xvi]Iannaccone, Laurence Rand Berman Eli. 2006. Religious extremism: The good, the bad, and the deadly. Public Choice. Springer. 128: 109-129 and Joseph R. Gusfield1962. "Mass Society and Extremist Politics" American Sociological Review,Vol. 27, No. 1 pp. 19-30
[xvii] Frey Bruno "Terrorism: Deterrence May Backfire". Working Paper Series no. 136. Institute for Empirical Research in Economics. (2002). University of Zurich. Pp 1-25.

[xviii]Doosje Bertjan. Determinants of Radicalization of Islamic Youth in the Netherlands: Personal Uncertainty, Perceived Injustice, and Perceived Group Threat. Journal of Social Issues, (2013) 69, No 1. Pp586-604
[xix]Doosje Bertjan. 2013. Determinants of Radicalization of Islamic.
[xx]Kundnani Arun.Radicalisation: the journey of a concept. Race & Class (2012).
[xxi]Amghar Samir, "Ideological and Theological Foundations of Muslim Radicalism in France". (2009) Micron Policy Working Paper 4.
[xxii] Olivier Roy Islamic,"Terrorist Radicalisation in Europe inEuropean Islam: Challenges For Public Policy And Society". In the European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy, (2007) Eds Amghar Samir et al.Centre for European Policy Studies Brussels.
[xxiii]Steven R. Corman, "Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communication", in Laurie Fenstermacher and Todd Leventhal (eds.), Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies (Washington, DC: NSI Inc., September 2011), p. 36.
[xxiv]Patterson Katie. Dualisms in Jihad: The role of metaphor in creating ideological dichotomies. Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict,(2022). 2. No 2. Pp18-32
[xxv]Alex P. Schmid. Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation. (2013)
[xxvi] Halverson JR et al 2011. Master Narratives in Islamist Discourse. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), 81-93.
[xxvii] Halverson. Master Narratives in Islamist Discourse. 2011
[xxviii] G. Dimitriu, Strategic Narratives, Counternarratives and Public Support for War: The Dutch government's explanation of the Uruzgan mission and its influence on the Dutch Public (Leiden University: Master Thesis, Campus. The Hague, 2 February 2013), p. 13. http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/storage/Forging%20the%20World%20Working%20Paper%202012.pdf.
[xxix]Jowett, Garth and Victoria O'Donnell. Propaganda and Persuasion.(1994New York: Sage Publications), Pp 19-25.
[xxx]Alexander P. Schmidt. Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review. 2013
[xxxi]Havelsorn Master Narratives in Islamist Discourse. 2011
[xxxii]Steven R. Corman Jill S. Schiefelbein 2006. "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas" in Consortium for Strategic Communication. Arizona State University. Report #0601
[xxxiii]Halim Sane. "Narratives and Counter Narratives of Islamist Extremism". 2016New Perspectives on Terrorism 3 no 2. Pp 168-184
[xxxiv]Ali Mazrui 2011. "Globalization, Islam, and the West: between homogenization and hegemonization". The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 15:3
[xxxv] Interview, Ibrahim Muhammad Anyas, Sawaba, Kumasi. 2016
[xxxvi] Graham E. Fuller. "The Youth Crisis in the Middle Eastern Society". 2004. Brief Paper. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Pp 11.
[xxxvii]UNDP. 2017. "The Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment". Available at: http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/en/reports (Retrieved 12 June 2022).
[xxxviii] This is an outcome of data analysis I undertook among those students who embraced ISIS political agenda.
[xxxix] Focus Group Discussion with young extremists. KNUST 2017.

[xl] Reading their posts in social media highlight this point. Most of the students radicalized largely express grievances over political events in North Africa and Middle East, than issues within their immediate environment.

[xli] Students' leaders were alarmed on the extent to which some members have created parallel leadership through the social media which shifted the efforts of GMSA leadership to mobilise students under one umbrella. This was evident in Kwame Nkrumah University and University of Ghana. Some of the groupings include al-Nurr, Sadaqa Train and Ghana for Syria Refugees among others.

[xlii] My analysis of the activities of young students radicalized through their social media posts and oral interviews summarises this perspective. While most of the social media links have been pulled down for security reasons, few of such links illustrate. https://web.facebook.com/nii.alema, https://web.facebook.com/search/top?q=shereef%20nii%20mensah, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004464168417. This notwithstanding, most of the data source were generated through interviews with those young extremists

[xliii] Over 50 Ghanaians fighting for ISIS – Libyan government, Wednesday, 11 October 2017. Citifmonline.com, Gov't investigating report of Ghanaian ISIS fighters – Majority Leader. Wednesday, 11 October 2017. Citifmonline.com

[xliv] https://web.facebook.com/search/top?q=shereef%20nii%20mensah. Shereef Nii Mensah, 2014. Date accessed 2016.

TAKFIRISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF NEGOTIATING WITH THE "NEW" TERRORISTS

Michael Aondona Chiangi
Terrorism expert and researcher at Talking About Terrorism, Washington DC, USA; Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The wave of Takfiri terrorist groups calling for jihad against the whole world and seeking to establish a global Islamic caliphate has dramatically increased in recent times. These groups operate on open and decentralized cells of fragmented structures, yet ideologically connected. Consequently, due to the transcendental foundations of their ideology, which does not accommodate dialogue, it has become difficult for states to negotiate peace with them. This paper examines some of the challenges of Takfiri ideology as states continue to attempt to negotiate peace deals with terrorists. The paper maintains that although it is difficult to negotiate with jihadists, it is not entirely impossible, as negotiations could still be conducted. However, such negotiations are often restricted to achieving such temporal goals as the release of hostages and not to the substance of their ideology. The paper also argues, inter alia, that even if the terrorists agree to a ceasefire, the longevity of the results cannot be guaranteed insofar as the liturgical sources of their fundamentalist ideology are still in existence. Moreover, nothing stops them or other groups whose ideologies of violence are equally derived from the same sources from springing up and taking arms in the future. However, whenever a state has the opportunity to negotiate with terrorists, it should not hesitate to utilize it for the safety of its citizens.

Keywords:
Jihadists; Negotiation; Terrorism; Takfirism; Fundamentalism

INTRODUCTION

Negotiation is the means by which terrorists gain an advantage over state actors to obtain money and publicity, and secure the freedom of their members, who are prisoners of the state. However, traditionally, most states have firm policies against negotiating with terrorists because the concessions in the negotiation process may be interpreted as legitimizing terrorist violence and the emasculation of democracy. They also maintain that negotiations with terrorists tend to create precedents that encourage terrorist violence and normalize unlawful coercion as a tool of political interaction. Consequently, most governments in the West believe that the best way to stop terrorist activities, especially hostage-taking, is to refrain from negotiating with them.

While the no-negotiation policy may seem realistic in theory, the practical reality shows that democratic governments negotiate with terrorists in order to choose a lesser evil from available options. Therefore, when it has to do with negotiating with terrorists, there is a clear distinction between what the states profess in public and what they do behind closed doors. For instance, despite the British government's seemingly uncompromising stance on negotiating with terrorists, it still maintained a secret channel with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) following the 1991 attack on 10 Downing Street, which nearly exterminated the British Parliament (Neumann, 2007:128). Other Western governments, including Spain and France, are also reported to have paid millions of euros in ransom in 2014 to bring back journalists and aid workers captured by the Islamic State in Syria (Briggs & Wallace, 2022). Even the US, despite her avowed public stance of not negotiating with terrorists, in 1985, Ronald Reagan delivered weapons and spare parts to Iran in order to rescue seven Americans kidnapped in Lebanon by Hezbollah. However, only three hostages were freed; one was killed, and three more Americans were kidnapped in Lebanon.

In the past, although decisions of governments to capitulate to terrorist demands were often heavily criticized, the negotiation was not as difficult as it has become in recent times with the advent of *Takfiri* terrorist groups – the so-called "New terrorists". Consequently, even where negotiations appear to be the solution, it is often limited in scope to the attainment of such temporal goals as the release of hostages and not the substance of their ideology and agitation. This is because their demands are often assumed to be characteristically "irrational and irreconcilable" (Pruitt, 2006). As Harris (2002) notes, there is a "psychological chasm" between the terrorist [objectives] and [that of] Western governments in the sense that their demands appear to be opposed to Western values and the ethos of modern civilization. Moreover, their agitations are not the result of rational or instrumentalist considerations but are assumed to be in pursuit of "personal or

collective fantasies". Thus, engaging with the groups on the substance of their ideology and agitations or even negotiating a ceasefire becomes challenging.

In his speech on the US-led "Global War on Terror", President George Bush, speaking on the ideology of the Al-Qaida, observed as follows:

> [T]he group has no "[…] set of grievances that can be soothed and addressed. [Rather], we're facing a radical ideology with unalterable objectives: to enslave whole nations and intimidate the world […] and no act of ours invited the rage of the killers, and no concession, bribe or appeasement would change or limit their plans for murder" (Miller, 2011:145).

Thus, as difficult as it may appear to try negotiating with Jihadists or the "new" terrorists, this paper examines the possibility of exploring negotiations with the terrorist to achieve some temporal goals. The decentralized structures of the "new" terrorist groups present greater opportunities to exploit individuals or factions to negotiate such matters as the release of hostages, as it may not be possible to negotiate with the new terrorists on the substance of their agitations and the foundations of their ideology. Therefore, if a state with a firm policy against negotiating with terrorists chooses to maintain its position even when it has to do with negotiating the release of captives, it might endanger its citizens' lives.

Apart from the preceding introduction, this paper captures the following topics: conceptual deconstruction and reconstruction of terminologies, the new terrorism discourse, critical features of *Takfiri* or "new" terrorism and why the difficulties of negotiation. It also questions whether it is ideal to negotiate with terrorists, the feasibility of negotiation with *Takfiri* terrorists, and concludes that when it has to do with dialogue, jihadists cannot be options since the rigidity of their ideology does not accommodate dialogue that would touch on the substance of their agitation.

CONCEPTUAL DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

The Concept of "Negotiation"

Negotiation means a consensual bargaining process by which the parties attempt to reach an agreement on a disputed or potentially disputed matter. Negotiations usually involve absolute autonomy for the parties and are often devoid of any intervention from a third party (Garner, 2009:1138). However, in the context of this paper, negotiation is understood to be much deeper than the literal meaning. Here, negotiation refers to exerting influence over someone else's thinking,

behavior or decisions. While the foregoing definition may appear straightforward, difficulties are bound to arise in trying to make sense of this subject.

Consequently, it is imperative to navigate beyond the simplistic "process of exerting influence over someone's thinking, behavior and decisions". The point sought to be canvased here is that when state actors declare that they do not negotiate with terrorists, they do not mean they will not "negotiate". What they mean is that they cannot "make *deals* with terrorists, make *concessions* to terrorists, *compromise* with terrorists or *reward* terrorists' behavior" (Dolnik & Fitzgerald, 2008:1). The quick declaration by most states particularly in the west is that "we do not negotiate with terrorists" is predicated in almost all cases on a restrictive understanding of negotiation as a process of "bargaining, compromise and deal-making".

Although the negotiation process involves bargaining, i.e., making offers and counter-offers, which are expected to result in compromises on each side, bargaining should not be understood as synonymous with negotiation. Therefore, if negotiation is understood to be solely "about bargaining, making deals or concessions, then of course one should not negotiate with terrorists as this action is likely to lead to some rewards for undesirable behavior" (Dolnik & Fitzgerald, 2011:268).

Contrariwise, if negotiation with terrorists is understood as expressed in this paper to mean "the use of communication to exert influence in order to change someone's thinking, behavior and decision making", then negotiating with terrorists may not necessarily require states to make foolish concessions, neither would it reward rebellious or dissident behavior. Therefore, reconstructing the concept of negotiation in the context of counter-terrorism requires decimating the restrictive and incapacitating assumption that negotiation means capitulation or making concessions, compromises or deals. It is also imperative to dismiss the idea that negotiation is a demonstration of weakness on the part of the state to combat terrorism. This is particularly important with the advent of "new terrorists", who have increasingly become less discriminate and more lethal than the old terrorists (Dolnik & Fitzgerald, 2008:2). Due to the nature of their ideologies, the idea of negotiating with terrorists, at least in line with the reconstructed definition of negotiation used in this paper, is challenging and restricted to hostage-taking incidents, and does not relate to the substance of their ideology.

Who, Then, is a Terrorist?

Terrorists or terrorism, like other abstractions in the social sciences, has no univocally acceptable definition. Conceptual confusions abound such that

providing an all-encompassing definition of terrorism is bound to be epistemically problematic (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019:13). The quest for a definition of terrorism has elicited a description of the exercise as a search for the "Holy Grail" (Wardlaw, 1989) or a useless endeavor to be abandoned (Laqueur, 1999). Nonetheless, one point stands out conspicuously from this exercise, namely, terrorism and terrorists are made to represent a fusion of everything bad, while the opposing 'we' takes on the characteristics of everything good (Toros, 2008:409).

Consequently, in light of the widespread epistemic controversies in the academic literature, the need for a consensus on the definition of terrorism is quite desirable. Accordingly, a few such attempts are worth examining. For example, Schmid and Jongman (1988:28) view terrorism as "an anxiety-inspired method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individuals, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons". Another view conceptualizes terrorism as a premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience (Zartman, 2003:444).

It is imperative to note, however, that the way we define terrorism determines to a significant extent, the kind of counter-terrorism strategy to be adopted. For example, scholars like Hoffman (1999) interpret terrorism as a type of warfare or conflict, while others view terrorism as a mere strategy of warfare (Tilly, 2004). The former view supports the combat counter-terrorism model adopted in the US-led Global War on Terror, which dismisses the idea that terrorism is a rational cause of action. The foregoing view is reinforced by the logic of the proponents of the new terrorism discourse. They maintain that "terrorists are irrational in their objectives and use of violence, less cohesive in their structure, religious and distinct … in lethality" (Hoffman, 1999).

Spatio-temporal considerations may not allow for a holistic examination of all the definitions of terrorist or terrorism as it is not the primary focus of this paper. However, for analytical purposes, this paper adopts the simplistic description of terrorists given by Zartman and Faure (2011). They note that a terrorist is a person or a group that has been proscribed by the state for its rebellious activities, including the use or threat of violence on the populace to create a general state of apprehension. This view restricts terrorism to acts of non-state actors and rules out the possibility of terrorism being perpetrated by state actors. This is based on the assumption that a state has a legitimate monopoly over violence and the use of force.

Takfirism

Takfir is an Arabic word used to describe a Muslim as an infidel or non-believer. It is a practice of accusing other Muslims of apostasy or declaring them as infidels (Zahid & Takar, 2016). Under Islamic law, a Muslim who leaves his Islamic faith is liable to face capital punishment. This is where the terrorists find justification for their aggression against anyone; they declare apostate for refusing to see Islam through their minimalist worldview of self-righteousness (Drennan, 2008). *Takfiri* terrorism is essentially an Islamic form of terrorism rooted in the belligerent Salafi-Jihadi ideology.

Although the concept of *Takfir* has existed for many centuries in the Islamic world, it only became popularized after the defeat of the Soviet Union by the *Mujahedeen* in 1991. The fiercest proponents of this ideology in recent times were some top leaders of Al-Qaida, namely, Osama bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and the Uzbek leader Tahir Yuldash (Shahzad, 2007). According to Al-Zawahiri, for instance, *Takfir* should be understood much broader and beyond the context in which it was initially conceived. To him, even governments ruling over Muslim lands are considered illegitimate and apostates. This includes anyone, even tangentially employed by the government or state-affiliated institutions, the intelligentsia, security forces and any person collaborating or engaging with those entities. These are all considered infidels who must be fought by Allah's army until they repent and embrace Islam.

Therefore, in the context of this paper, *Takfirism* would also be understood in a much broader sense. Consequently, a reconstruction of the concept is quite desirable to encompass the violent activities of these groups against both Muslims and non-Muslims. This is particularly so because when a Muslim is declared an infidel or non-believer, he is to be treated in the same manner as a person who has never believed in Islam before. Thus, when the Al-Qaida declared war against the Americans, it was because America was seen as an infidel along with all her allies, even among governments of Muslim countries. In one *fatwa,* Sheikh Osama bin Laden admonished all Muslims:

> The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies- civilians and military- is an individual duty of every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it… we with God's help call on every Muslim who believes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulama, leaders, youths and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's US troops and the devil's supporters allying with them and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson..." (bin Laden, 1998:3).

An examination of the above-quoted *fatwa* tends to show that the war is not just against Muslims who have been declared infidels for supporting Americans, but everyone who opposes their campaign of terror. Moreso, the reason for the command, as explained in the statement signed by the top leaders of the Al-Qaida, including Osama bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri, was the allegation of "crimes committed by the Americans", which was interpreted as "a clear declaration of war on Allah, his messenger and [all] Muslims" (Kadivar, 2020:8). Therefore, *Takfiri* terrorism would be used in this paper to connote all acts of terrorism carried out by jihadists to further a religious cause for Islam. Accordingly, the terms *Takfiri*, jihadist or new terrorists would be used to mean one and the same thing in this paper.

THE "NEW" TERRORISM DISCOURSE

There is a growing trend in the literature which seeks to distinguish between "old" and "new" terrorism to understand the challenges of negotiating with terrorists (Jones, 2017:22). After the 9/11 attacks, policymakers, journalists and scholars have realized that the world is now faced with a "new" terrorism different from the terrorism of the past (Hoffman, 1998). Others have expressed the distinction as one between "traditional" and "absolutist" terrorists (Hayes, Kaminski & Beres, 2003:453). However, although there is nothing "traditional" about terrorism, this characterization may only be accepted for analytical purposes.

Many authors have expressed concern that terrorism is gradually assuming disturbing trends, particularly the increasing lethality of terrorist activities, introducing a new epoch in the study of terrorism – the new terrorism. However, as Crenshaw (2003) notes in her seminal article *"New" versus "Old" Terrorism*, there is nothing fundamentally or qualitatively "new" about terrorism. Rather, the idea of "new" terrorism is based largely on insufficient knowledge of history and misrepresentation of contemporary terrorism, as it is generally unclear when the "new" terrorism began or when the "old" ended.

Thus, to ascertain when the idea took off, David Rapoport opined in his Four Waves theory that new terrorism emerged as an aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 (Rapoport, 2001). The idea gained prominence in 1995 after the nerve gas attack by Aum Shinrikyo in a Tokyo subway station and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 by Timothy McVeigh. Although, it has been argued that McVeigh's actions belong to the category of right-wing extremism rather than religion (Crenshaw, 2003:21). By then, scholars had already begun to warn about the impending threats of new terrorism. This was later confirmed when the leader of the Al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden declared war against America in 1996.

It was consequent upon bin Laden's declaration that the Al-Qaida launched attacks against the US and its interest overseas, as could be seen in the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the attack on the USS Cole in the port of Yemen in 2000 (Chiangi, 2021:13). The 9/11 attack was rather a striking confirmation of the 'new terrorism' hypothesis and a further proof that the emerging wave of fanatical Islamic violence was more dangerous than the ethno-nationalistic terrorist groups that had existed before (Jones, 2017:25). The primary objective of this paper is not to dwell extensively on the epistemic controversies surrounding the classification of terrorism into "new" and "old" but to identify the characteristics of each category in order to establish the difficulties associated with trying to make deals with the new terrorists.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the global spread of suicide attacks against civilian targets further demonstrates that terrorism has assumed a fundamentally new dimension over the past decades. The "new" terrorists are more dangerous than the classic type, often associated with ethno-nationalistic or political agitations. They are extreme in their religious rhetoric, and "their motivations include rage, aggression, sadism, paranoia as well as fanaticism…" (Laqueur, 1998:281). They are dedicated to causing the largest possible number of casualties among their "enemies" without any "clearly defined political goals apart from the destruction of society and elimination of a large section of the population" (Laqueur, 1999:81). This is done to maintain or heighten existing trepidation in public and to remain at the epicenter of attention.

CRITICAL FEATURES OF *TAKFIRI* OR "NEW" TERRORISM AND WHY THE DIFFICULTIES OF NEGOTIATION

There is a general consensus that although negotiations with terrorists in the past have yielded positive results like the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, the Oslo Accords etc., the terrorists of today are different from the IRA and similar groups classified as the "old" terrorists. The "old" terrorist groups have not necessarily been interested in killing many people, as doing so was often counterproductive because they would have difficulty attracting popular support and empathy. It was also considered as a means of achieving the secondary goals, namely, clamor for national self-determination or social justice reforms, as the case may be (Dolnik & Fitzgerald, 2008:11).

On the other hand, the "new" terrorists are motivated largely by religious imperatives. They aim to achieve the "greatest benefits for themselves and their co-religionists only as opposed to the indiscriminately utilitarian goals of secular

terrorists" (Hoffman, 1993:3). They are unwilling to engage in any political dialogue. Their ideology:

> … make[s] them more difficult to negotiate with than older ethno- nationalist terrorist groups. The goals of newer terrorist groups are religiously inspired, apocalyptic, millenarian and therefore more fanatical than groups that have come before, meaning it is much less likely that they will make compromises with more secular governments that do not share the same ideology (Jones, 2017:28).

The implication is that while the "old terrorists are looking to bargain, new terrorists, want only to express their wrath and cripple their enemy" (Stevenson, 2002:35). There is, consequently, a general uncompromising attitude of jihadists to negotiation. It could be recalled that in 2019 when leaders of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), began negotiations with the Nigerian government for the release of 10 abducted Christians, at the point when the negotiations were almost concluded, the Islamic State suddenly directed ISWAP to dress the captives in orange jumpsuits to evoke the uniforms of the Guantanamo Bay detainees and videotape their executions on Christmas Day as a revenge for the death of Al-Baghdadi. This marked the culmination of the Islamic State's subversion of negotiation-inclined ISWAP members (Zenn, 2020). The foregoing demonstrates state actors' frustration whenever they attempt to engage in peace talks with *Takfiri* terrorists.

Contrariwise, the "old" terrorists were less fundamentalist and more capable of being reasoned with. Their goals were rational and practicable, especially those agitating for national self-determination or territorial autonomy. State actors were able to bargain and strike deals with them. To them, violence was seen "either as a way of instigating the correction of a flaw in a system … or as a means to foment the creation of a new system…" (Hoffman, 1998: 95). The objective of the anarchist movement in Europe for instance, was to overthrow political systems, especially capitalism by coordinating serial attacks on public institutions and personalities. The German Red Army Faction was also formed to overthrow strong and well-established liberal democratic systems, defeat NATO and bring down every form of imperialism (Alexander & Plunchinsky, 1992).

The point sought to be made here is that the "traditional" or old terrorists had tangible, realizable and practicable demands. Although, it appears in recent times that the ideologies of these so-called nationalist terrorists have begun to overlap with religiously-motivated terrorists following the advent of the "new" terrorists. For example, Palestinian nationalist militant groups are sometimes Islamic militant

agitators; the Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad etc., have nationalist and religious objectives in their struggle.

Convictions of revenge, right-wing extremism, and religious eschatology conversely inspure the new terrorists. Their risk of resorting to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons has grown due to increased availability (Stern, 1999). Their capacity to strike has been facilitated by what Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008:13) term the "democratization of destruction", a consequence of the proliferation of advanced technological means of warfare and the advent of the internet, which has made access to terrorist instructional materials on operational strategies and the production of explosives easily available.

The proliferation of suicide attacks has become an increasingly disturbing strategy for new terrorists. Although suicide attacks are not new strategies of terrorism, to them, suicide attacks create a culture of martyrdom in which death on behalf of the group to inflict greater damage on the "enemy" becomes increasingly attractive, and volunteers are always handy. In other words, killing and being killed are regarded as an integral part of their struggle. Accordingly:

> …the restraints on violence that are [often] imposed on secular terrorists by the desire to appeal tacitly supportive ... are not relevant to the religious terrorists. Moreover, this absence of a constituency in the secular terrorist sense leads to a sanctioning of almost limitless violence against a virtually open-ended category of targets – that is, anyone who is not a member of the terrorist's religious sect (Hoffman, 1999:3).

New terrorists are also mostly transnational and largely decentralized compared to old terrorists. They are structured in "lose networks, instead of organizational hierarchies" (Gofas, 2012:9). They are often motivated essentially by doctrines that emphasize transformational and apocalyptic beliefs, commonly associated with the religion of Islam (Crenshaw, 2003). The violent imagery "embedded in their sacred texts and the centrality of sacrifice in their liturgical traditions establish the legitimacy of killing as an act of worship with redemptive qualities" (Simon, 2003:2). This forms an integral component of the ideologies of *Takfiri* groups like the Al-Qaida, which is essentially eschatological, and thus insulated from any form of logical argumentation.

Finally, the new terrorist is expressed in the form of hatred towards Western civilization, especially the American culture and social and political systems. Their violence is expressive and not intended for any strategic purposes. Instead, they aim to destroy the world in order to save it from "eternal" damnation. The demands

of these *Takfiri* terrorists are characteristically enigmatic and impracticable. They are increasingly poised to compel the rest of the world to accept their demands, and change and adopt their values, civilization, belief system and way of life (Hayes, Kaminski & Beres, 2003:457). In other words, they are not ready to cohabit and tolerate a social system characterized by a clash of civilization.

IS IT IDEAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS?

The nagging question here has always been whether it is ideal for states to negotiate with terrorists, which has received mixed reactions from the academic community and policymakers. The opinion is divided between those who support meaningful dialogue on the one hand, and absolutists who are completely averse to the idea of negotiating with terrorists. Terrorism experts such as Hoffman (2004) maintain the absolutist or "no negotiation" stance, rationalized by the perception that capitulating to terrorist demands and seeking to engage with them by democratic governments amounts to permitting the reign of violence. It also creates the impression that the government is:

> Rewarding terrorism and terrorists' actions, legitimizing terrorism and terrorists' methods, undermining the efforts of those that have pursued political change through peaceful means, destabilizing the negotiating government's political system, undercutting international effort at outlawing terrorism and setting a dangerous precedent (Nwamkpa, 2016:12).

This absolutist view appears to have found more expression in the policies of most Western governments, including the US, than the former. For example, former US President Barack Obama stated his position unmistakably, "I have never supported engagement with extremists" (Obama, 2008). Thus, there appears to be a consensus that we both *cannot* and *should not* negotiate with terrorists (Miller, 2011:146). The reason is that "… their actions are not the result of rational instrumentalist considerations" (Jones, 2017:26).

Consequently, this absolutist position advocates a military solution to dealing with terror. Harris (2002) advised:

> You do not make treaties with evil doers or try to adjust your conduct to make them like you. You do not try to see the world from the evil doer's point of view. You do not try to appease them, or persuade them, or reason with them. On the contrary, you try to outwit them, vanquish them, or kill them. You behave with them in the same manner that you would deal with a fatal epidemic – you try to wipe it out.

However, as sound as the above-quoted advice may seem, military strategy is not always helpful. *Takfiri* terrorists believe in the divinity of their cause, and suicidal martyrdom is often an integral part of their strategy. Thus, however, a battle goes, it is a win for them based on the belief that eternal reward awaits them in the hereafter for waging war against the unbelievers.

Consequently, the question about whether or not to negotiate with terrorists is often answered in the negative before it is even considered. The demands of *Takfiri* terrorists calling for "defensive jihad" to defeat a rival system portrayed as existential threats to Islam imply that dialogue or negotiation is largely impossible. This further explains why negotiation is impossible because *Takfiri* terrorists are considered psychopaths (Jones, 2017:28) or people suffering from delusion and persecution mania (Lacqueur, 2001:80). This introduces a psychopathological perspective into the discourse and portrays terrorism as a mental health problem.

The sophistry that preceded the post-9/11 "Global War on Terror" represented the Al-Qaida and similar groups as forming the class of new terrorists, which are not only evil and irrational, but also unfeasible as negotiating partners, particularly due to the transcendental nature of their ideologies. Consequently, this confirmed the assertion that the terrorists are psychopaths and lacking in rationality. Nonetheless, this is a fundamental misattribution error because terrorists do not have a common profile, nor do they have a "common etiology, personality type or developmental trait, nor are there common conditions in the background of the terrorist that could [instigate them]" (Miller, 2011:16). Therefore, the notion that terrorism is a psychopathological problem is neither supported by factual nor anecdotal evidence. As Crenshaw (1992:31) stated, "the idea of terrorism as the product of mental disorder or psychopathy has been discredited". Therefore, the more we think of them as incapable of reason, the more likely we are to employ the military strategy against them and the less likely we will resort to diplomatic engagements.

Contrariwise, the other divisions of the scholars posit that the absolutist or no-negotiation stance with terrorists is not less damaging than negotiating with them. They maintain that governments negotiate, albeit inadvertently, with terrorists irrespective of whether they recognize it or not – a form of meta-dialogue through the actions and reactions of the government to terrorist activities (Neumann, 2007). Consequently, the absolute prohibition on negotiating with terrorists is not entirely justifiable because there is no objective standard for determining the rationality or otherwise of certain actions or an ideology. An example of the forgoing is the IRA, whose ideology appeared to be more "rational" than, for example, the Al-Qaida because its ideology was largely anchored on nationalist agitations, which are well-

known subjects in Western history and political philosophy (Neumann, 2007:129). Negotiations between the IRA and the British government resulted in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. The same result was achieved when negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) resulted in the Oslo Accord. Although it has not ended the conflict, it marked a historic rapprochement between Israel and Palestine and refocused international attention towards adopting a two-state solution (Jones, 2017:22).

Meanwhile, religious fundamentalism, the main feature of new terrorism, is quite alien to Western history and political thought as a cause of terrorist agitation. However, that alone is not enough reason to dismiss the possibility of negotiations with terrorists because such negotiations can help to achieve such temporal goals as the release of hostages. Therefore, dismissing the idea of negotiating with terrorists is not entirely correct because it can help achieve certain temporal goals, such as releasing hostages. Nonetheless, even when states are willing and ready to negotiate with *Takfiri* terrorists, the rigidity of their ideology appears to be non-negotiable. Indeed, Osama bin Laden had made it abundantly clear that there can be no dialogue with occupiers except through arms (BBC, 2004:1). Al-Baghdadi, former leader of the Islamic State, also stated quite bluntly the position of their struggle as follows:

> [T]he war will not be over until the caliphate covers all eastern and western extents of the earth, filling the world with the truth and justice of Islam and putting an end to the falsehood and tyranny of *jahiliyyah* (Manara, 2020).

The implication of the foregoing is that states are locked between having to contend with unending violence or opting for negotiation with jihadists which, apart from being difficult, does not guarantee that the violence will ever end. It appears that the groups only give room for negotiation in situations involving abduction, which would lead to the payment of ransom or the release of their members from incarceration. Thus, the submission here is that when it has to do with *Takfiri* terrorists, no amount of peace talks would ever end their campaign of violence, but to say that states should not negotiate with terrorists is not entirely correct, as taking such a rigid position would only endanger the lives of the citizens. The US government declared that it would not negotiate with terrorists in 1973 when the Saud Arabian embassy was attacked, and as a result, three lives were lost. Accordingly, while states should be ready to protect their territorial integrity and national security, in appropriate cases, they should be willing to give negotiation a chance whenever it is necessary for the protection of the lives of their citizens, especially when in the captivity of terrorists.

FEASIBILITY OF NEGOTIATION WITH *TAKFIRI* TERRORISTS

The ideology of the new or old terrorists is faith-based and rigid. However, that is not to say negotiation is not possible. The only negotiable areas, namely, the release of hostages, which may either take the form of exchange for prisoners or the payment of ransom, can only produce temporal results, and this does not affect the foundation of the ideology of the group being the main source of the problem.

Conversely, since negotiating with terrorists can confer certain advantages on them, most states generally have firm policies against negotiating with terrorists. However, clinging to that stance may be counterproductive. For instance, in March 1973, members of a Palestinian militant organization took some hostages at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum. Among them were three Westerners, including the US Ambassador to Sudan. Instead of seeking a soft landing for the hostages, US President Richard Nixon declared that there could be no negotiation with terrorists. What he did not know was that his statement had put the lives of the hostages in danger because the following day, the three Western hostages were killed (Briggs & Wallace, 2022). The problem in this regard always lies in the policy of states against negotiation in situations where it is feasible to negotiate. In other words, the no-negotiation policy with terrorists by states should, in appropriate circumstances, be relaxed for the safety of citizens. However, when a state decides to give negotiation a chance, it may only serve to confer certain advantages on the terrorists in terms of the monies paid as ransom and the release of their imprisoned members, who may sooner or later return to their gangsters' paradise to continue their acts of violence.

However, that is not to say there is no utility in negotiating with terrorists and sundry criminals. It may be exigent sometimes, but doing so with jihadists has been quite restrictive and incapable of resolving the underlying challenges posed by the rigidity of their ideologies. At the very least, it throws up fresh challenges that may sometimes become worse than the original problem. Differences in rationality, extremely destructive political/religious objectives, lack of proper hierarchical structure, and will to establish a communication channel for possible dialogue creates physical constraints for negotiation to unfold.

On the other hand, since *Takfiri* terrorists or jihadists operate on loose and decentralized cells of fragmented but ideologically connected structures, negotiating with one faction may be seen by others as a betrayal. It can even exacerbate the problem if the dissenting factions use more brutal fighting methods to compensate for the betrayal of their counterparts supposedly corrupted by state actors. The point sought to be made here is that in all of these, even if jihadists, such as the Islamic State, are willing to negotiate and voice out rational demands

that deserve any consideration from a state, there is no guarantee that the jihadists engaged with the state representatives would truthfully represent the opinion of the group as a whole or even its ideology. An illustration would suffice to drive home the point sought to be made here. In the course of negotiating the release of the abducted Chibok school girls in 2014, the Nigerian government initially failed because major factions of the Boko Haram, especially the Abubakar Shekau camp, were opposed to the idea of negotiation (Nwamkpa, 2016). However, they later succeeded in part with the other factions in releasing some of the girls because the negotiation involved concessions from the government, notably the release of prisoners and the payment of ransom.

However, let us even assume that the jihadists decide to negotiate beyond the release of hostages to include a ceasefire; the longevity of such a ceasefire may not be guaranteed as the risk that hostilities may resume in the long-run may still exist. In other words, *Takfiri* terrorists cannot be genuinely appeased and reintegrated into the mainstream. For as long as the liturgical sources of their fundamentalist ideology still exist, nothing stops them or other groups whose ideologies are equally derived from the same sources from springing up and taking arms in the future. Consequently, fears have been expressed regarding Nigeria's de-radicalization and reintegration program for the "repentant" Boko Haram fighters, as the tendency to go back and continue the violence remains high since the source of the problem is rooted in religious ideology (Aina, 2021).

Furthermore, where negotiation is geared towards the payment of ransom or other monetary benefits, it becomes a veritable incentive for the continuation of the violence, as there cannot be a guarantee that they would ever stop. For example, in 2019, the Governor of the Nigerian state of Zamfara, Bello Matawalle, embarked on peace talks with bandits operating in his state and other states in the northwest region of Nigeria. Initially, the bandits agreed to an armistice promising to give peace a chance. However, soon afterwards, the agreement ran into muddy waters (Ajibili, 2020). It turned out that the bandits fooled the Governor into parting with large sums of money, only for them to return to their killing camps to continue their campaign of terror and violence. Therefore, apart from the constraints imposed against negotiation by the rigidity of their ideology, the issue of getting the terrorists to honor their undertakings is another formidable challenge.

CONCLUSION

Takfiri terrorists or jihadists are the wrong choices for political dialogue – whether one recognizes the legitimacy of their grievances. They are never up for any negotiation in so far as the substance of their ideology will be the subject of such negotiations. Thus, as argued above, negotiations with the new terrorists can only be feasible if it has to do with the payment of ransom towards the release of hostages and, in most cases, the reciprocal release of prisoners, in which case, the ransom would serve as a source of funding for their logistics. However, that is not to say that states should shut their doors to possible negotiations. Indeed, whenever a state has the opportunity of negotiating with terrorists on any issue, it may be expedient to utilize it for the safety of its citizens.

However, although negotiations with terrorists may be strategically advantageous, they can sometimes be ethically compromising. In other words, providing terrorists "a place at the table" acknowledges their existence, actions and the validity of their interests. Therefore, in deciding when to reach out to a terrorist group, the difficulties and risks for a government must be carefully analyzed. The state must consequently determine whether those individuals are reliable – whether they have the authority to enter into binding commitments. And most importantly, do they have the ability and credibility to deliver on their promises? These are some of the most difficult judgments a democratic government will ever make. A miscalculation of any of the foregoing can be counterproductive.

Furthermore, a state must also make several tactical decisions. These include determining when the time is ripe to talk, whether it is negotiating from a position of strength or weakness, in its own eyes, in the eyes of its domestic constituents, and most importantly, in the eyes of the terrorists. A miscalculation could signal weakness, suggesting the government no longer has the stamina to prolong the fight. This could result in the government losing domestic support and embolden the terrorists, leading to an upsurge of violence and extending the campaign of terror.

Finally, despite the importance of this subject, there is regrettably little information currently available to guide policymakers in negotiating with terrorists. This is because these types of negotiations often occur in the shadow, and rarely have these experiences been memorialized, their practitioners interviewed, or their lessons institutionalized. There is no pre-existing template or framework for weighing the advantages and disadvantages of either engaging or not engaging. This creates a gap in the literature that future research should seek to fill.

REFERENCES

- Aian, F. (2021). *Nigeria: Ex-Boko Haram fighters: To reintegrate or not to reintegrate?* Available at: https://www.theafricareport.com/129820/nigeria-ex-boko-haram-fighters-to-reintegrate-or-not-to-reintegrate/amp (Accessed 24 May 2022).
- Ajibili, E. (2020). Tackling banditry and lessons from the north-east. *Vanguard News*. Available at: https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/07/tackling-banditry-and-lessons-from-the-north-east/amp/ (Accessed 2 February 2022).
- Alexander, Y. & Pluchinsky D. (1992). *The fighting communist organizations.* London: Frank Cass.
- BBC News. (2004). Usamah bin-Muhammad bin-Laden. Full text: Bin Laden tape. Translated transcript of an audio-tape said to be of Osama bin Laden, aired by Al-Jazeera satellite channel on 4 January 2004. *BBC News*. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/ 3368957.stm (Accessed 24 May 2022).
- bin Laden, O. (1998). *Text of fatwa urging Jihad against America.* Available at: https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.rdu/bitstream/handle/10066/1523/OBL19980223.pdf/sequencve=1 (Accessed 23 May 2022).
- Briggs, R. & Wallace, J. (2022). *We do not negotiate with terrorists – but why?* Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/01/we-do-not-negotiate-with-terrorists-but-why (Accessed 24 May 2022).
- Brooks, D. (2004). Cult of death. *The New York Times* (7 September 2004).
- Chiangi, M.A. (2021). Critically examining David Rapport's four waves theory of modern terrorism in the light of factual historical events. *African Journal on Terrorism, 11*(1), 11-30.
- Crenshaw, M. (1992). Decisions to use terrorism: Psychological constraints on instrumental reasoning. *International Social Movements Research, 4*(1), 29-42.
- Crenshaw, M. (2003). "New" versus "old" terrorism. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture.* Available at: https://pij.org/articles/80/new-versus-old-terrorism (Accessed 24 May 2022).
- Dolnik, A. & Fitzgerald, K.M. (2008). *Negotiating hostage crises with the new terrorists.* Praeger Security International.

- Dolnik, A. & Fitzgerald, K.M. (2011). Negotiating hostage crises with the new terrorists. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 34*(4). Available at: http://dx.doi.org.10.1080/1057610X.2011.551718 (Accessed 26 May 2022).
- Drennan, S. (2008). Constructing Takfir. *CTC SENTINEL,* 1(7). Available at: http://ctc.usma.edu/constructing-takfir-from-abdullah-azzam-to-djamel-zitouni (Accessed 4 June 2022).
- Faluyi, O.T., Khan, S. & Akinola, A.O. (2019). *Boko Haram's terrorism and the Nigerian State: Federalism, Politics and Policies.* Switzerland: Springer.
- Garner, B. (2009). *Black's law dictionary.* US: Thompson Reuters.
- Giuliani, W.R. (2001). *Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Terrorism, 1 October 2001.* Available at: <http://www.un.org/terrorism/statements/giuliani.html (Accessed 9 May 2022).
- Gofas, A. (2012). 'Old' vs 'new' terrorism: What's in a name? *Ulusarasi Iliskiler, 8*(32).
- Harris, L. (2002). Al-Qaida's fantasy ideology. *Policy Review.* Available at: https://www.hoover.org/research/al-qaedas-fantasy-ideology (Accessed 20 May 2022).
- Hayes, R.E., Kaminski, S.R. & Beres, S.M. (2003). Negotiating the non-negotiable: Dealing with absolutist terrorists. *International Negotiation, 8.*
- Hoffman, B. (1993). 'Holy terror': The implications of terrorism motivated by a religious imperative. *RAND.*
- Hoffman, B. (1998). *Inside terrorism.* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hoffman, B. (1999). Terrorism trends and prospects (chapter 2). In I. Lesser, J. Arquilla, B. Hoffman, D.F. Ronfeldt & M. Zanini (eds.). *Countering the New Terrorism* (pp. 7-38). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Jones, O. (2017). Negotiating with "new" terrorists. *Strife Journal, 7,* 22-30.
- Kadivar, J. (2020). Exploring Takfir, its origin and contemporary use: The case of Takfiri approach in Daesh Media. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East.* Doi: 10.1177/234779892092176
- Lacqueur, W. (1999). *The new terrorism: Fanaticism and the arms of mass destruction.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Lacqueur, W. (2001). Left, right, and beyond: The changing face of terror. In F. James, Hoge & R. Gideon (eds.). *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War.* New York, NY: Public Affairs Press 2001.
- Manara. (2020). The Islamic State will never be up for negotiation – or to any good. *Manara Magazine.* Available at: https://manaramagazine.org/2020/03/13/the-islamic-state-will-be-up-for -negotiation-or-to-any-good/ (Accessed 23 April 2022).
- Miller, C. (2011). Is it possible and preferable to negotiate with terrorists? *Defense Studies,* 11(1). Available at: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2011.553109 (Accessed 30 April 2022).
- Neumann, P. (2007). Negotiating with terrorists. *Foreign Affairs – New York, 86*(1), 128-38.
- Nwamkpa, M. (2016). Dialoguing and negotiating with terrorists: Any prospect for Boko Haram? *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression.* DOI:10.1080/19434472.2016.1189445
- Obama B. (2008). I won't negotiate with terrorists. *Statement, 15 May 2008.* Available at: http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NjM5YjQ3NDJhNjI1OTA0ZTQ4MmZmZjEzZDgyNmU5ZjM (Accessed 23 June 2022).
- Pilgrim, C.M. (1990). Terrorism in national and international law. *Dikinson Journal of International Law, 8*(2). Available at: http://elibrary.law.psu.edu/psilr/vol8/iss2/2 (Accessed 30 May 2022).
- Pruitt, D.G. (2006). Negotiation with terrorists. *International Negotiation, 11*(1), 371-94.
- Rapoport, D. (2001). The fourth wave: September 11 and the history of terrorism. *Current History, 100*(650), 419-24.
- Schmid, A.P. & Jongman, A.J. (1988). *Political terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories and literature.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Shahzad, S.S. (2007). Takfirism: A messianic ideology. *Le Monde diplomatique.* Available at: https://mondediplo.com/2007/07/03takfisrism (Accessed 12 May 2022).

- Simon, S. (2003). The new terrorism: Securing the nation against a messianic foe. *Brookings Review,* 21(1), 18-25.
- Stern, J. (1999). *The ultimate terrorists*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Stevenson, J. (2001). Pragmatic counter-terrorism. *Survival,* 43(4), 35-48.
- Tilly, C. (2004). Terror, terrorism, terrorists. *Sociological Theory,* 22(1), 5-13.
- Toros, H. (2008). We don't negotiate with terrorists! Legitimacy and complexity in terrorist conflicts. *Security Dialogue,* 39(4), 407-426. Doi: 10.1177/0967010608094035
- Wardlaw, G. (1989). *Political terrorism: Theory, tactics and counter-measures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zahir, N. & Takar, N. (2016). *VOA explainer: Who are Takfir extremists?* Available at: https://www.voanews/amp/explainer-takfirism/3387691.html (Accessed 20 May 2022).
- Zartman, I.W. (2003). Negotiating with terrorists. *International Negotiation,* 8.
- Zenn, J. (2020). *Negotiating with Jihadists in the Sahel and Nigeria.* Available at: https://www.lawfareblog.com/negotiating-Jihadists-sahel-and-nigeria (Accessed 23 June 2022).

DITCHING THE LAWS AND FREEING TERRORISTS: AN UNSAFE APPROACH IN COMBATING TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Dr Michael D. Hanson
University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Terrorism remains one of the serious crimes perpetrated by terrorists worldwide with despicable consequences. Existing laws on terrorism insist on the punishment of terrorists. However, the Nigerian State habitually loses many terrorists and sometimes reintegrates them into society instead of punishing them according to the law. This work examines the Nigerian State's approach of ditching the laws and freeing terrorists in dealing with terrorism. Using the doctrinal methodology, the work found that this approach is unsafe in that it weakens the laws on terrorism, emboldens existing terrorist groups, frustrates the efforts of security officials in the prosecution of the terror war, and weakens increasing collaborations with other countries of the world against terrorism in Nigeria. Therefore, the work recommends an increasingly uncompromised punishment of terrorists according to the law and the avoidance of the habitual release of terrorists under any guise.

Keywords:
Approach; Combating; Ditching the Laws; Freeing Terrorists; Terrorism; Unsafe

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has been a severe crime for ages (Hanson, 2015:107). In its evolution, acts constituting terrorism have been associated with states, organizations, and individuals. However, only those acts identified with organizations and individuals currently constitute terrorism in international and domestic laws (Hanson, 2020:135). Many international legal instruments on terrorism, particularly the United Nations (UN) treaties on terrorism, condemn terrorism and insist that terrorists be punished. Accordingly, these instruments demand that activities of organizations or individuals constituting acts of terrorism be prohibited within domestic laws of member states and that perpetrators be punished according to the nature of the offence (Akani, 2013:218). The instruments further provide that where a state in custody of a terrorist is unwilling or able to prosecute such terrorist, the terrorist should be extradited to another state for prosecution if such other state demands such extradition.

Following the demands of the existing international legal instruments on terrorism, many member states of the UN, including Nigeria, have domesticated these instruments in their national laws. Others have established national laws on terrorism for use in combating terrorism within their jurisdictions. The Nigerian State has not only incorporated these instruments into its national laws, but has also enacted other national laws. Notwithstanding these efforts, the Nigerian State usually jettisons these laws, sets terrorists free and sometimes reintegrates them into society with handsome rewards and attending unjustifiable treatment instead of punishing them according to law. This approach has taken many dimensions with different nomenclatures, including amnesty and Operation Safe Corridor (OSC). The use of this approach in combating terrorism instead of punishing them according to the law is examined in this work. Accordingly, the work is divided into five parts. Part one is the introduction. Part two examines the nature of the legal norms on terrorism. Part three deals with the approach used by the Nigerian State to set terrorists free, while part four deals with the dangers of the approach. Lastly, part five puts forward the conclusions and recommendations.

THE NATURE OF LEGAL NORMS ON TERRORISM

The nature of existing laws on terrorism in the world today is punitive. These laws were particularly activated following the UN response against terrorism. The history of this response is traceable to the establishment of the UN at the end of the Second World War to ensure world peace and security (Agbebaku, 2006:53). This is because terrorists' violence was shown to constitute a threat to world peace and security, as conventional wars (Agbebaku, 2006:137). Thus, the UN brought into existence many conventions and protocols, amongst other legal instruments, to

help member states combat terrorism. These legal instruments condemn terrorism as a crime and insist that terrorists be punished suitably to the severity of the act. For example, the 1963 Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft condemns all acts of terrorism affecting in-flight safety. It authorizes the imposition of reasonable punishment measures on any person committing the offence (20 U.S.T. 941, 704 U.N.T.S. 219). The 1970 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft requires member states to make hijacking punishable with severe penalties. This is also the demand of the 1971 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (24 U.S.T. 565, 974 U.N.T.S. 177).

Similarly, the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, demands punishment for terrorists who attack internationally protected persons, including senior government officials and diplomats (28 U.S.T. 1975, 1035 U.N.T.S. 167). In the 1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, member states agreed to prohibit and punish hostage-taking (T.I.A.S. No. 11081, 1316 U.N.T.S. 205). The 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation demands punishment for terrorists involved in unlawful acts against Maritime Navigation (1678 U.N.T.S. 222). The 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection demands punishment for persons involved in the manufacture, storage, transportation, sales and use of unmarked plastic explosives (2122 U.N.T.S. 374; Adedayo, 2013:11). The 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism commits states to hold those who finance terrorism criminally, civilly or administratively liable for such acts and to identify, freeze and seize funds allocated for terrorist activities (2178 U.N.T.S. 197). The 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism also demands the punishment of persons involved in acts of nuclear terrorism (2445 U.N.T.S. 137). In addition, the 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation demands the punishment of persons using civil aircrafts as a weapon to cause death, injury or damage.

In all these identified Conventions, states are obliged to either prosecute an offender or send the individual to another state that requests their extradition for prosecution and punishment. In addition, these instruments exist as evolving codes of terrorist offences, which establish and place responsibilities on states to domestic the treaties into their criminal laws and make them punishable by sentences that reflect the gravity of the offence. Nigeria is a signatory to, and has ratified or acceded to, all these instruments and has domesticated them (Adedayo, 2013:10). Accordingly, these treaties are binding and in force in Nigeria. Therefore, the basic

demand of these treaties is the prosecution and punishment of terrorists according to the law. There is undoubtedly no substitute for prosecuting and punishing terrorism offenders by any of these treaties.

Apart from the demand for punishment of terrorists in these conventions, the UN has also, in many Resolutions, solemnly reaffirmed its unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and committed by whoever (Akani, 2011:219). The resolutions demand that terrorism be punished as a crime. By UN Resolution 1373 of September 28, 2001, all member states of the UN and all peace-loving nations of the world are enjoined to enact new legislation or amend existing ones to criminalize all acts of terrorism and prescribe appropriate punishment (S/RES/1373/2001). Other resolutions used by the UN, which insist that terrorists be punished, include Resolutions 1267 of 1999 and 1333 of 2000, used against Osama Bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which affected Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan [S/RES/1333(2000)] and Resolutions 1368 and 1377 all of 2001(S/RES/1368/ 2001). Compliance with these UN Resolutions and Conventions on terrorism by the Nigerian State resulted in the enactment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment, etc.) Act (EFCC Act) 2002 as amended, now EFCC (Establishment) Act 2004 (Cap E 1 LFN 2004); Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011 as amended in 2013 (TPA 2011 as amended); and Money Laundering Act 2012 (Cap M18 LFN 2004). Other laws which accommodate acts constituting terrorism include Criminal Code Act (Cap C. 81 LFN 2004), Penal Code Act, the Explosives Act (Cap E17 LFN 2004), the Firearms Act (Cap F28 LFN 2004), the Immigrations Act (Cap I11 LFN), the Customs and Excise Act, and the Public Orders Acts (Cap P42 LFN 2004). All these laws provide punishment for various acts constituting the offence of terrorism in Nigeria.

The Terrorism Prevention Act 2011, as amended, is the principal Act that deals with terrorism in Nigeria. This Act prohibits all acts of terrorism and financing terrorism, and Section 1(2) (h) of the Act insists on the punishment of offenders upon conviction to a maximum sentence of death. Section 1A (2) of the Act makes the Attorney General of the Federation, the authority for the effective implementation and administration of the Act in order to strengthen and enhance the existing legal framework to ensure conformity of Nigeria's counter-terrorism laws and policies with international standards and the UN Conventions on Terrorism. In addition, he is required to maintain international cooperation, as required, for preventing and combating international acts of terrorism and to ensure the effective prosecution of terrorism matters for the punishment of culprits. The Act has, in item 19 of the amended section 40 of the Act, by referrals, made 12 of

the UN Conventions on terrorism, of which Nigeria is a signatory, part of the Act. It also incorporates many provisions of the UN Conventions on specific acts of terrorism. Although the Nigerian State has domesticated these conventions and notwithstanding the presence of other existing laws on terrorism, terrorists are usually freed from punishment, compensated and reintegrated into society.

THE APPROACH TO FREEING TERRORISTS IN NIGERIA

Although the Nigerian State has arrested and prosecuted some terrorists, others have been released without prosecution and punishment, even when they have been shown to have committed the crime. The approaches under which guise the Nigerian State has so far used in freeing terrorists have come with different nomenclatures, including amnesty and OSC. Although Boko Haram, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) have all been proscribed as terrorist organizations in Nigeria, only members of Boko Haram are beneficiaries of the amnesty offer and OSC. This group initially started hostilities in the northeastern part of Nigeria in 2009. During this period, the leader, Mohammed Yusuf, and the group, who were in opposition to Western culture, which they condemned as polluting the Islamic religion, came into conflict with the Police. This conflict resulted in the death of many police officers and members of the sect (Ukpe, 2013:2). The group then acknowledged that the establishment of a fully Islamic State in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal Sharia Courts across the country, is its goal (Ukpe, 2013:2). With this goal, the group has continuously carried out several attacks in Nigeria and beyond, leading to the destruction of many lives and property since 2009 to date. The group has been involved in the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), suicide bombers, and sophisticated weapons to commit mass murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson, torture and displacement of many Nigerians from their homes. Today, Boko Haram terrorism cuts across the entire country up to other parts of the world, such as Cameroon, Chad and the Niger Republic, with increasing statistics of the destruction of human lives and property (Chiedozie, 2014:18). According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, the terrorism of Boko Haram has led to over 37, 000 combat-related deaths and over 19,000 deaths from terrorism since 2011, mainly in Nigeria. Similarly, the manifestations of their activities have earned Nigeria a notorious position and the worst ranking on the Global Terrorism Index as the country emerges as the third country affected most by terrorism in the globe according to the Ranking in Global Terrorism Index in 2020 (Sule & Gombe, 2020:39).

In response to Boko Haram terrorism, the Nigerian State, after failing to defeat the sect and end their terrorist acts, contemplated an amnesty offer for the sect after much pressure from northern leaders (Adigbuo, 2014:483). They argued that since it was granted to Niger Delta Militants, the same should be extended to Boko Haram members (Ekannem, Dada & Ejue, 2012:232). This is because, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where militants held sway in 2006, state response via amnesty was used for the benefit of the militants instead of punishment in line with the philosophy of criminal law (Hanson, 2014:36). Following this pressure, President Jonathan, seemingly going under S. 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, then set up a Committee on Granting Amnesty to Boko Haram in 2013. The mandate of the Committee included: working out modalities for granting amnesty to members of the sect and a framework through which disarmament could take place within a 60-day timeframe (Adigbuo, 2014:483). It has been maintained that in practice, the mandate was interpreted as giving the committee three months to persuade Boko Haram to lay down their arms in exchange for a state pardon and social reintegration (Felbab-Brown, 2018:85). Although this Committee ultimately submitted its reports, it failed to succeed in getting Boko Haram to accept the amnesty offer as it was rejected by the sect, who maintained that they could not enter into any agreement with the Nigerian State (Felbab-Brown, 2018:83).

Although Boko Haram rejected the amnesty offer, the call for it met opposition demands by many, particularly on the ground that there was no wisdom in granting amnesty to a group responsible for killing people (Adigbuo, 2014:483). It was also argued that while consistent with the Nigerian Constitution, the amnesty was illegal under international law. This is because it failed to investigate and prosecute gross human rights violations, undermined the rule of law, and violated the norms of justice, truth, judicial protection, reparations, access to court, and other rights of victims (Felbab-Brown, 2018:84). Many also opposed the offer as being unconstitutional in Nigeria, in that amnesty though sometimes used interchangeably with pardon, which is provided for in section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, does not accommodate criminals such as the Boko Haram members (Hanson, 2019:121). However, despite these arguments, the Nigerian State went ahead to pressurize the sect with the offer and even set free some members of the sect in many cases, including detainees' swaps between hostages in the custody of the sects and members of the sects in government charge (Sule & Gombe, 2020:39). Accordingly, sometime in February 2020, the Nigerian State released 1400 Boko Haram members for reintegration into society (Jideofor, 2020).

While the clamor for the impropriety or otherwise of freeing Boko Haram terrorists in the name of amnesty continued and coupled with the fact of outright rejection of the amnesty offer by the sect, the Nigerian State introduced OSC in 2016 (Felbab-Brown, 2018:86). This came after the Nigerian State adopted the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (Policy Framework) in 2017. This approach provides the conduit through which the Nigerian State used, in recent times, to set Boko Haram members free and absolve them from prosecution and punishment. Therefore, since the Nigerian State failed to get Boko Haram, as a group, to accept the amnesty offer and stop their hostilities, a corridor was opened through this approach to grant freedom from punishment to Boko Haram terrorists that can defect, abscond and surrender to the Nigerian security forces. Accordingly, through the Defense Headquarters, the Federal government of Nigeria inaugurated OSC in 2016. It aimed to rehabilitate low-risk repentant Boko Haram fighters and reintegrate them back into society. It involves vocational training, access to deradicalization and civic programs, which would make them useful members of society. Following this and in 2018, 244 Boko Haram members were announced to have been released after being de-radicalized, rehabilitated and reintegrated into Nigeria's society (BBC NEWS, 16 January 2018). However, it is shown that the yardstick to determine people's eligibility for deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration in Nigeria appears unclear. This remains the case because it was arranged that high-risk members, including senior commanders, were sent to a pre-trial detention center; moderates, including foot soldiers and mid-level commanders, go to OSC for rehabilitation; most civilians arrested during military operations, which are proven innocent released to the state for rehabilitation (Akum & Samuel, 2020). However, this arrangement differs from what is being done in practice as there is no clear-cut procedure.

THE PERIL OF THE APPROACH OF FREEING TERRORISTS IN NIGERIA

Although freeing terrorists through amnesty or OSC, together with what they represent, may be considered a way out of conflict, it is undoubtedly dangerous in dealing with terrorism in Nigeria. The dangers of this approach find expression in widespread condemnations made against the government's efforts to free the terrorists and reintegrate them into society. One such condemnation is that the approach weakens the laws on terrorism because terrorists are not being punished but released with rewards. This is so because all international instruments on terrorism domesticated by the Nigerian State and domestic legislation on terrorism in Nigeria provide for punishment for terrorists. They demand that punishments

ascribed to different acts of terrorism should reflect the seriousness of the offence committed by the terrorists.

On the other hand, other countries of the world, including the United States of America (USA), France and Britain, deal with terrorism in accordance with the law. These countries have established firm State Policies in accordance with their laws – never to negotiate with terrorists or yield to terrorists' demands. Accordingly, terrorists are punished with decisive military actions and prosecution. The message of these countries to terrorists has always been to fight on and be killed or surrender and be prosecuted according to law. Sadly, the Nigerian State has no such state policy despite the plethora of legislation on terrorism. There also seems to be a lack of political will to establish and back such a policy by law. This explains why the country usually jettisons the laws and frees terrorists in an irrepressible manner. This attitude reflects Nigerian authorities' growing recognition that they cannot deal with Boko Haram in accordance with the law as done by other countries.

The approach is also dangerous in that it emboldens existing terrorist groups and situates them as heroes in Nigeria. This is so because, under this approach, terrorists are rewarded while victims are abandoned. Terrorists who successfully defect are made to undergo vocational training and training in Islamic education before being rehabilitated and reintegrated into society, together with payment of undisclosed amounts. On the contrary, victims of the Boko Haram insurgency still suffer the harsh realities of the conflict; humanitarian crisis, loss of relatives' lives and means of livelihood. Many remain refugees in grimy displacement camps in Nigeria and other countries, including Niger and Chad. It is no news that thousands of people have died due to the ongoing conflict perpetrated by Boko Haram, while property worth million have been destroyed. The anguish is still fresh as terrorist attacks continue in almost all of northern Nigeria. Yet, what the Nigerian State does is free the terrorists from punishment, compensate them and reintegrate them into society. At the same time, the victims watch on and are expected to receive them and continue to live with them peacefully. This creates a situation where there are fears that a social principle is being established in Nigeria whereby the victims of violence are neglected while criminals are rewarded (Barkindo, 2013).

The approach also operates to frustrate the efforts of security officials in the prosecution of the terror war. While fighting the terror war, the morale of the military personnel is usually high and encouraging at every success made, particularly when terrorists surrender or are captured, prosecuted, convicted or killed. The expectation is that the terror group is decimated and that such a number cannot return to the battlefield to help continue the war. However, this security

personnel usually get frustrated when captured or surrendered terrorist members are freed by the Nigerian State and reintegrated into society. This was the case in 2020 when soldiers cried out that the federal government was setting their killers free (Awolabi, 2020). This is dangerous because there is no guarantee that none of these freed terrorists would turn around and radicalize other members of society or later operate as an informant to the terrorist.

Given that many defectors keep in touch with those who continue with terrorism, it is critical that those who find their way into OSC can operate as a source of information leakages to the group, thereby frustrating the efforts of the security personnel in the prosecution of the terror war. Similarly, Nigeria's terror war has undoubtedly claimed many lives of members of the security forces in Nigeria. Accordingly, many members of the security forces have been captured and beheaded, while others have been killed in the line of duty (Aljazeera, 24 March 2020). It becomes frustrating to the security forces when perpetrators of these killings are captured or surrendered; instead of being made to face the law, they are freed and compensated. This usually frustrates the military more in the terror war and inhibits their morale, particularly as it happened in February 2020, when 1,400 terrorists that ought to have been prosecuted in accordance with the law were released by the President (Owolabi, 2020).

Furthermore, the approach is undeniably dangerous in that it weakens increasing collaborations with other countries of the world against terrorism in Nigeria. This is so because many countries do not regard Nigeria as serious in dealing with terrorism. Accordingly, we have situations where groups are proscribed as a terrorist and prohibited with accompanying punishments. Yet, these groups are celebrated and allowed to operate freely in other countries. This is the case with IPOB, in which members have been offered the right of asylum in Britain and other countries (Vanguard, 21 April 2021). Similarly, the Nigerian State continues to pay ransom to terrorists instead of arresting, prosecuting and convicting them in accordance with the law. The country, disappointingly, continues to negotiate with terrorists and other common criminals using some clerics like Shiek Gumi and ex-Presidents like Olusegun Obasanjo (Opejobi, 2021). The country has failed to establish and operate a firm anti-terrorism policy (never to negotiate with terrorists or yield to their demands); thus, it is not being taken seriously by other countries concerning collaboration regarding terrorism.

Moreover, this approach is dangerous in that it cannot operate to end terrorism in Nigeria effectively. This is because the low-rank combatants form the majority of the defectors who are finally freed and reintegrated into society. Leading high-ranking members of the group who are in charge of the perpetration of terrorism

are not captured in this arrangement. Since the group has not been firstly defeated militarily, any conflict resolution strategy, such as OSC, is dangerous and cannot be successfully implemented. Additionally, the leaders of the group who are not captured in the arrangement and who have already allied with the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP) and ISIS, and therefore extremely radicalized, cannot stop their acts of terrorism because they are, at times, the mandate of the allied bodies. Accordingly, the deradicalization process, such as OSC, that lasts for a few months and does not accommodate these concerns is dangerous and ineffective in dealing with terrorism in Nigeria (Ogunleye, 2020).

Undoubtedly, OSC, which comprises disengagement, deradicalization and reintegration (DDR), is a time-tested strategy employed by the UN in its peacekeeping operations. It is also no news that one of the requirements for DDR to take place is that a negotiated peace agreement must be signed at the end of hostilities or after parties have reached a comprehensive peace agreement that provides a legal framework in that regard. This strategy is generally employed to restore communities after civil wars and other forms of violent conflict (not while the conflict is ongoing, as in the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria). It has been shown that from 2005-2007, Indonesia employed a supportive deradicalization approach similar to the one used by the Nigerian State in dealing with terrorism (Ogunleye, 2020). However, the process failed due to many factors, including ineffective institutions for regular financial mechanisms, the nonchalant attitude of officials, and a lack of in-depth counter-ideologic procedures (Ogunleye, 2020). Other countries, including Somalia, have also employed deradicalization programs, which have failed. In Somalia, it is shown that the Serendi Rehabilitation Centre in Mogadishu offers support to 'low-risk' former members of Al-Shabaab (Jideofor, 2020). Notwithstanding this support, attacks by the group continue in Somalia to date, as Al Shabab attacked military bases in Southern Somalia in April 2021 (Maruf, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigeria State has not been able to wrestle itself free from the grip of terrorism, particularly those perpetrated by Boko Haram, since 2009. The destruction accompanying various acts of terrorism in Nigeria is enormous. In its response, the Nigerian State has adopted many strategies, sometimes in line with the UN recommendations in various conventions and resolutions on terrorism. Accordingly, the Nigerian State has complied with the demands of the UN resolutions on terrorism and has domesticated all conventions on terrorism and made them part of its national legislation used in dealing with terrorism. However, these legislations have been jettisoned by the Nigerian State, which usually sets

terrorists free instead of punishing them in accordance with the law. This approach of ditching the laws and setting terrorists free instead of punishing them in accordance with the law has been shown in this work as being dangerous in dealing with terrorism in Nigeria.

Accordingly, this work recommends an increasingly uncompromised punishment of terrorists in accordance with the law. Since all existing legal instruments on terrorism demand that terrorism be punished, contrary decisions by the Nigerian State without justification cannot be celebrated or supported. The jurisprudence of punishment shows that punishment serves as a deterrence to the offender and other persons from further commission of the offence (Iwe, 2001:254). This punishment contributes to raising the cost of the commission of crimes and thereby discourages perpetrators. According to the Game Theory of terrorism, if the cost of using terrorism to achieve political goals in society remains high or costly without any corresponding incentive, people would not resort to it (Ochoche, 2013:777). Thus, where the cost of terrorism is high, it will be difficult for people to get involved in it, and to continue the perpetration of acts of terrorism will be discouraging (Ochoche, 2013:777). Negotiations between terrorists and governments, instead of punishment of the terrorists, help provide healthier grounds for terrorism to thrive. Thus, the concern should be on making a resort to terrorism costly by denying terrorists any form of incentive and ensuring that even the environment is uncomfortable for perpetrators and their sponsors to be accommodated by insisting on uncompromised and unbiased punishment of terrorists.

The work also recommends avoidance of the habitual release of terrorists under any guise. The OSC has led to the release of many Boko Haram terrorists. However, the manner of selection of those freed has not been flawless. Apart from those released under OSC, others have been released as a condition for the release of hostages held by the terrorists. While prisoner swap is recognized and usually practiced in war situations between countries or legitimate warring parties, it is typically done at the end of the war. Again, the release of terrorists in Nigeria is at times accompanied by a payment of a certain undisclosed amount of money to the terrorists, although the government usually denies this. Many of these terrorists who are released take part in the perpetration of terrorism at later dates. Similarly, the money paid to them as ransom is sometimes used in the perpetration of terrorism at later dates. This is not promising, and combating terrorism in this manner is dangerous and should be discontinued.

The work also recommends avoidance of negotiation with terrorists for any offer of money or freedom from prosecution. Instead, the Nigerian State's demands

should be surrendered, prosecuted, or fought on and killed. This is what is obtainable in other countries that are serious about combating terrorism. Accordingly, the Nigerian State should create and operate a firm anti-terrorism policy to never negotiate with terrorists or yield to terrorist demands. This policy should be backed by law to ensure enforcement against individuals and institutions. The absence of this state policy gives individuals and the government a field day in actively getting involved in negotiations with terrorists, which leads to their release without prosecution. This situation is what contributes to fueling terrorism in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Adedayo, A.M. (2013). Constitutional democracy and acts of terrorism: The Nigerian perspective. *University of Ibadan Journal of Public and International Law*, 3, 11.
- Adibe, J. (2020). Should Nigeria have released Boko Haram suspects? *The Conversation*, 20 February.
- Adigbuo, E.R. (2014). Boko Haram: A race between amnesty and criminal tribunal. In *Law Making, Good Governance and Administration of Justice in Nigeria. Essays in Honor of Senator Effiong Bob (pp. 483).*
- Agbebaku, P.E. (2006). The UN and global coalition against terrorism. In T.A. Imobighe & A.N.T. Eguavoen (eds.). *Terrorism and Counter Terrorism: An African Perspective* (pp. 53). Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria.
- Akani, C. (2013). 2011 Terrorism Act in Nigeria: Prospects and problems. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, *2*(8), 219.
- Ako, R.T. & Omiunu, O. (2013). Amnesty in the Niger, Delta: Vertical movement towards self-determination or lateral policy shift? *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy*, *1*(1), 96.
- Akum, F. & Samuel, M. (2020). *Understanding the dangerous journey from Boko Haram to rehabilitation.* Available at: https://issafrica.org (Accessed 20 January 2021).
- Awolabi, F. (2020). 'FG is setting our killers free' – Soldiers kick as 1,400 Boko Haram suspects are released. *The Cable*, 11 February.
- Barkindo, A. (2013). The vanishing amnesty for Boko Haram. *Conflict Perspectives*, October 4, 2013. Available at: conflictperspectives.imtd.org/index.php/regions/africa/90-the-vanishing-amnesty-for-boko-haram (Accessed 12 February 2021).
- Chiedozie, I. (2014). Police arrest 20 Suspected Boko Haram members in Enugu. *The Punch Newspaper,* 26 June, 18.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended.
- Criminal Code Act, Cap C. 81 LFN 2004.
- Economic and Financial Crime Commission Act. (2004). Cap E1 LFN 2004.

- Explosive Act, Cap E 17 LFN 2004.
- Felbab-Brown, V. (2018). The limits of punishment: Transitional justice and violent extremism Nigeria case study. *UNU-CRP*, 85.
- Firearms Act, Cap F 28 LFN 2004.
- Hanson, M.D. (2014). The philosophy of criminal law: How fair so far with victims of crime. *Jurist Insight*, *1*(1), 36-56.
- Hanson, M.D. (2015). The crime of terrorism in Nigeria: Questioning the constitutionality of amnesty for Boko Haram terrorists. *Juris in Sight, Journal of the Department of Jurisprudence & International Law, Faculty of Law University of Uyo,*2, 107.
- Hanson, M.D. (2019). Terrorism in Nigeria: Questioning the unconstitutionality of granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists. *Uyo Bar Journal*, *121.*
- Hanson M.D. (2020). State sponsorship: An impediment to the global fight against terrorism. *Groningen Journal of International Law, 7*(2), 135.
- Immigration Act, Cap I 1 LFN 2004.
- Iwe, N.S.S. (2001). The dignity of man as the foundation of human rights. *Seasprint Nig. Company*, 254.
- Maruf, H. (2021). Al Shabab attacks military bases in Southern Somalia. *VOA*, *3*(4).
- Money Laundering Act, 2012 Cap M18 LFN 2004.
- Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps Act, 2007 Cap. N 146 LFN 2004.
- Nwachukwu, J.O. (2020). Boko Haram: President Buhari under fire over release of 1,400 terrorists. *Daily Post*, 12 February.
- Ochoche, J.M. (2013). Modelling Boko Haram: A game theoretical approach. *International Journal of Science and Technology*, *2*(11), 777.
- Ogundipe. S. (2018). Metele Boko Haram attack: Soldier's death toll rises to 118; over 150 missing. *Premium Times*. Available at: www.premiumtimesng.com (Accessed 4 April 2020).
- Ogunleye, A.A. (2020). Ending terrorism in Nigeria: Is Operation Safe Corridor the right approach*? Global South Development Magazine,* Sept 21.
- Opejobi, S. (2021). Bandits: Gumi discloses role he, Obasanjo played in release of Kaduna Student. *Daily Post*, May 6.

- Owolabi, F. (2020). FG is setting our killers free' – Soldiers kick as 1, 400 Boko Haram suspects are released. *The Cable*. Available at: https://www.thecable.ngfg-is… (Accessed 10 February 2021).
- Public Order Act, Cap P 42 LFN 2004.
- Sule, B. & Gombe, S.Y. (2020). Overview of the Boko Haram's sources of finance, weapons and logistics. *African Journal on Terrorism*, *9*(2), 39.
- Terrorism Prevention (Amendment Act) 2013.
- Ukpe E. (2013). The Arab connection and the upsurge of insurgency in Africa: A case study of Boko Haram in Nigeria, 1-25, 2. *A paper presented at the 2013 FPSA Conference held at the Florida International University in Miami, Florida, USA on March 16, 2013.* Available at: http://www.fpsanet.orguploads>2013_nomi (Accessed 12 July 2015).
- UN General Assembly resolution 3166 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973. Available at: http//legal.un.org>text>English>co...> (Accessed 20 May 2017).
- UN Security Council, resolution 1267. (1999). Afghanistan, 15 October 1999, *S/RES/1267.* Available at: http://www.rfworld.org/docid/3b00f2298.html (Accessed 5 January 2018).
- UN Security Council, Resolution 1333. (2000). *Afghanistan, 19 December 2000, S/RES/1333.* Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f51e14.html (Accessed 5 January 2018).
- UN Security Council, Security Council Resolution 1368. (2001). *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 12 September 2001, S/RES/1368.* Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3c4e94557.html (Accessed 18 November 2017).
- UN Security Council, Security Council Resolution 1373. (2001). *On threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 28 September 2001, S/RES/1373.* Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3c4e94552a.html (Accessed 18 November 2017). This resolution was unanimously adopted at the 438th meeting, issued in Resolutions and decisions of the Security Council, 2001 – S/INF/57 (SCOR, 56th year).
- UN Security Council, Security Council Resolution 1377. (2001). *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorists' acts, 12 November 2001,*

S/RES/1377. Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3c4e9456e.html (Accessed 18 November 2017).

- United Nations Treaty Collection. (202). Available at: https://treaties.un.org>pages>viewdetails (Accessed 17 November 2017).
- United Nations Treaty Collection. (2020). At least 50 Nigerian soldiers killed in Boko Haram Ambush. *Aljazeera, 24 March.*
- United Nations Treaty Collection. 2021. FG fumes as UK offers asylum to IPOB, MASSOB Members. *Vanguard, 21 April.*

PROSPECTS OF HARMONISING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR SURRENDERED EX-BOKO HARAM COMBATANTS IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION

Saheed Babajide Owonikoko, PhD
Centre for Peace and Security Studies
Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing number of Boko Haram combatants surrendering, a rehabilitation program for surrendered Boko Haram combatants and other returnees is gaining momentum in Lake Chad Region countries. However, these programs are significantly impacted by slow implementation, lack of clear-cut strategy, and combat posture of some Lake Chad Region countries. This study discusses the prospect of harmonizing rehabilitation programs to minimize the setbacks and maximize its potentials across the Lake Chad Region. Two typologies of harmonization programs are discussed. These are operation harmonization, in which all the rehabilitation programs are institutionalized in a single body like the Multinational Joint Task Force or harmonization in principle, protocols and procedures in which a common principle is drawn out for member states to imbibe and follow in the state rehabilitation program. The study submits that the region's stakeholders are at liberty to choose the typology of the harmonized reintegration program they want to adopt. However, consideration of harmonized rehabilitation program is significant to make rehabilitation programs for surrendered Boko Haram members impactful in the post-conflict Lake Chad Region.

Keywords:
Boko Haram; Deradicalization; Reintegration; Lake Chad Region; Lake Chad Basin Commission

INTRODUCTION

Boko Haram[i] is one of the deadliest armed groups in contemporary history. The activities of the group began with the jihadist campaigns of Yusuf Mohammed in 2002 (Mohammed, 2014; Onuoha, 2014). The group snowballed into a violent confrontation with Nigeria in 2010 after it went underground and rebuilt itself. By 2013, Boko Haram had transformed into a regional threat spreading across the Lake Chad countries (Mohammed, Momodu & Owonikoko, 2018). Today, Boko Haram terrorism has become a threat to security in the Lake Chad Region. There is no core Lake Chad Basin State—Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon—that has not experienced the horrendous activities of Boko Haram in its territory, especially in their Lake Chad territories. It is estimated that the Boko Haram insurgent group has killed over 40,000 people in Lake Chad Region (Curiel, Walther & O'Clery, 2020).

At the earlier stage of the group's activities, a hard-power approach involving the deployment of military operations from individual states or collectively under the auspices of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was adopted. Later, other soft-power mechanisms were adopted. One of the most visible soft-power approaches Lake Chad Basin States adopted in the Boko Haram insurgency's containment is the deradicalization, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program. The DDR program, as used in this study, refers to programmatic activities carried out to aid disengaged members of violent extremist groups to effectively transition into civilian life. Altier (2021) referred to this in her study as the Violent Extremist Disengagement and Reintegration (VEDR) Program. For almost a decade now, conscientious programs have been implemented across states in the Lake Chad Region to ensure that members of violent extremist groups, especially Boko Haram, surrender and transit to civilian life. This is done under different programs and auspices. The need to adopt the approach is hinged on the increasing number of insurgents surrendering to their different Lake Chad states. Given the nature of the region and the common security threat posed by the Boko Haram insurgency in Lake Chad, this paper argued for the harmonization of the rehabilitation program for surrendering Boko Haram combatants in the Lake Chad Region to make the program more effective. Data for the paper were drawn from both primary and security sources. Primary sources involved interviews and focus group discussion sessions with relevant stakeholders across the Lake Chad region. Although some of the information and data were deliberately not collected for this research, they were useful in developing this manuscript and were appropriately used. Secondary data used for the study involved relevant published articles.

Following the introduction and theoretical framework of the paper, this paper is divided into five sections. The first section interrogates the justifiability of using a soft-power approach to managing the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Region. The second section explains why Boko Haram members are surrendering. The third section reviews the rehabilitation program for Boko Haram in different countries of the Lake Chad Region. The fourth section discusses the typology and prospect of harmonization. Lastly, the fifth section is the conclusion.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two different but mutually reinforcing theories (models) guide the study. The first is the security community. A security community is a region or zone within which large-scale violence is unlikely or even unthinkable. In other words, states have stable expectations of peaceful change. This means that community members have the assurance that they will not fight each other and will settle their collective threat together amicably (Adrej, 2007; Deutsch, 1961, cited in Albert, 2017). This perspective is similar to democratic peace theory, which opined that democratic states seldom go to war to resolve impasses among themselves (Pugh, 2005; Bakker, 2017; Bakker, 2018; Bremer, 1992; Chan, 1997; Chernot, 2004). However, the security community goes beyond this. It further emphasized that nations with similar threats can work together to address common threats. The Lake Chad Basin countries have adopted this security regimen to fight the terror threats of Boko Haram after realizing that Boko Haram terrorism is unique to Nigeria, but a region-wide security threat for Lake Chad. Albert (2017) has used this concept to explain the collective deployment of military action against Boko Haram by Lake Chad countries. The concept is also suitable for explaining the centralization and harmonization of non-coercive response to the threat of Boko Haram in Lake Chad.

The second framework for this study is collective action. The concept of collective action was coined from Mancur Olson's (1965) book titled *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Good and the Theory of Group*. However, it was introduced in politics and security studies by Elinor Ostrom (2007) in his Collective Action Theory (CAT) study. The central thesis of CAT is that better optimal outcome can be attained when stakeholders within a group come together to act cooperatively rather than individually. This theory points to the power of synergy, combined efforts and unity of action in addressing a common problem nationally, regionally or continentally. It preaches "a collective group solution to a group problem". Lake Chad Basin countries have adopted the philosophy of this theory since the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency. A specific step in this direction is the reinvigoration of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) as a collective action of Lake Chad Basin States to combat the threat of the group. Similarly,

harmonizing the regional deradicalization program also aligns with this framework.

JUSTIFIABILITY FOR UTILISING A SOFT-POWER APPROACH TO BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION

The perception of the state as having the sole monopoly of the legitimate use of force has always guided how Lake Chad states engage violent groups like Boko Haram. Thus, when the group began its violent activities, Lake Chad countries used a coercive approach involving security apparatuses to trail members of the group. The belief was that when such an approach is used, it would repress the group, but this was not so. This prompted the change of strategy and the inculcation of a soft-power approach. Nigeria initiated a soft-power approach with the declaration of amnesty for the group on the condition that members of the group lay down arms and were demobilized from the group (Owonikoko, 2020) before other Lake Chad countries followed suit. The author attended a conference[ii] in Maroua, Far North Region of Cameroon, to discuss the soft-power approach to managing the Boko Haram insurgent group in Lake Chad.

The use of the soft-power approach to engaging the Boko Haram insurgency has thrown up inquisitions, one of which revolves around the moral justification for the use of the soft-power approach, such as granting of amnesty and the DDR program for members of a group that has been involved in violence and orchestration destruction in Lake Chad. Those who have opposed the use of the soft-power approach towards engaging the group believe that doing such will absolve surrendered members of the group from punishment. They expressed this will embolden other people to think that they can carry out similar acts or even more horrendous acts and get away with it via granting amnesty or the DDR program. Thus, it will tacitly promote terrorism. In a group interview with community leaders in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State, they expressed the fear that granting amnesty to Boko Haram members – and bringing them back into communities without meting out punishment – could only send the unintended message to children growing up in these communities that they could commit similar or more heinous crimes, against their communities or the state and be amnestied without punishment (Interview cited in Owonikoko, 2020:43). This sentiment was expressed during the conference the author attended in Maroua, Cameroon in September 2018, in which scholars from across the region expressed that the repentant Boko Haram ought to be dealt with according to the law rather than be pardoned and reintegrated. These sentiments conform to Bamgbose's (2010) expression of the usefulness of punishment for wrongdoing. According to

Bamgbose (2010), punishment is necessary for retribution, incapacitation, rehabilitation and deterrence. Failure to punish crimes or atrocities leaves no room for deterrence. Another argument is that using a soft-power approach, such as granting amnesty or implementing the DDR program for insurgents that have carried out horrendous activities against the state and the people, amounts to injustice. They stress that such injustice may stir up retaliation from those who fell victim to attacks by former insurgents. Trauma experienced by the victims can resonate when the ex-Boko Haram members are amnestied by the government and returned to their communities. Traumatic memories can be revived because the infrastructure destroyed in the attacks has yet to be reconstructed by the government. Indeed, a study on the reintegration of repentant and deradicalized Boko Haram members in northeast Nigeria shows this (Owonikoko, 2022a). Interaction with scholars from Lake Chad in Diffa shows that this perception also looms large among the communities in Lake Chad, especially those who suffered Boko Haram attacks in one way or the other (Focus Group Discussion with scholars from Niger, Cameroon and Chad conducted on 9 December 2020, in Diffa, Niger Republic). Despite this, many factors have made using the soft-power approach, especially the DDR program and granting the amnesty program, a worthwhile activity.

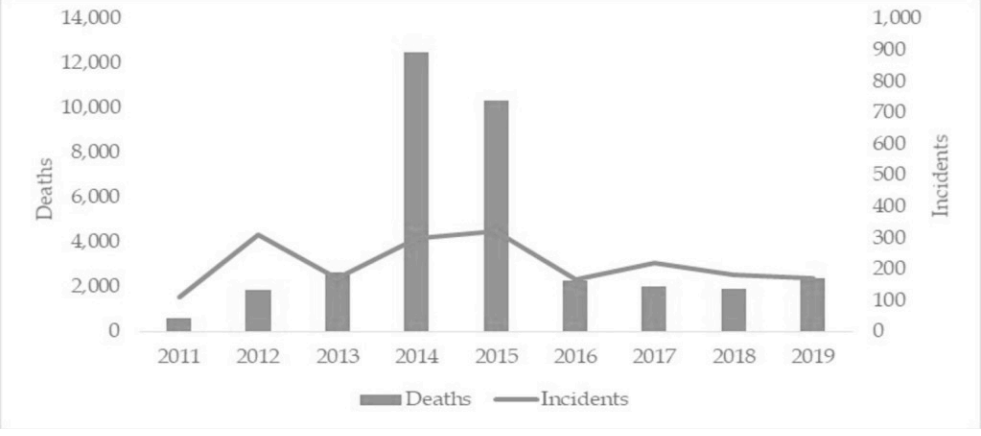
The first factor is the futility of military engagement. The first mode of engagement of the terrorist group in Nigeria and the other Lake Chad Region states is the heavy deployment of military personnel, firstly, by individual states and, later, collectively, as the MNJTF. As a result of the use of this approach, the security and defense budget of these countries rose significantly. Table 1 shows Nigeria's defense expenditure between 2009 and 2021 stood at US$27027bn. On the other hand, other Lake Chad countries like Niger, Cameroon and Chad stood at US$1844bn, US$4901bn and US$4745bn, respectively. While this is low compared to other elite countries of the world, defense budget of the Lake Chad Region State has experienced consistent increments over the years and the percentage of the budget allocation to defend is high compared to the countries' gross domestic product and the percentage of the budget allocated to other critical sectors of the countries. The reason for the incremental budget allocation to defense is that it is costly to prosecute an internal war. As Nwolise observed, internal armed conflict in Africa always leads African countries to increase their military expenditure (Nwolise, 1987). Unfortunately, military engagement with Boko Haram in Lake Chad did not bring the much-needed results despite the increase in military expenditure. Although the offensive operations of the militaries of Lake Chad countries and that of the MNJTF curtail Boko Haram from having a field day in Lake Chad, the group continues to attract newspaper headlines for its attacks. In 2015, the group was rated as the third most dread terrorist group in the world

(Global Terrorism Index, 2015). This was mainly due to the group's activities in 2014, which recorded an average of 25 attacks in a month. Since then, the group attacks have fluctuated, as Figure 1 shows, but the group continues to carry out lethal attacks. In 2020, Boko Haram used the Covid-19 pandemic as an advantage to carry out strategic attacks in Lake Chad, including the famous Chadian Boma Peninsula attack, where close to 100 Chadian soldiers were killed and approximately 50 severely injured. Between June and December 2020, Boko Haram carried out high-profile attacks that killed about 300 people on the Nigerian side of Lake Chad alone (Owonikoko, 2021). Many communities have continued to be ransacked by Boko Haram/Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) to date. All of these show the continued threat of Boko Haram despite the high military expenditure of Lake Chad states. This prompted the government of the Lake Chad region to examine other means of engaging the Boko Haram insurgents apart from the coercive approach to stem the tide of their attacks.

Table 1: Military Expenditure of Lake Chad Countries, 2009-2021

Lake Chad State	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Nigeria	1896	2226	2478	2183	2099	1908	1861	1798	1719	2028	1860	2403	2568
Niger	47.1	61.8	71.8	137.1	92.4	128.2	--	174	201	212	248	225	246
Cameroon	332	355	323	346	364	366	375	409	422	418	422	376	393
Chad	686	613	566	--	656	349	225	319	227	238	235	308	323

Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (2021), Military Expenditure by Country in Constant (2019) US$m., 1988-2021



Source: Allen (2019, cited in Onuoha, 2020:203)
Figure 1: Boko Haram attacks in Lake Chad Region, 2011-2019

Another major factor in the adoption of the DDR and amnesty program for Boko Haram is the issue of forced or involuntary conscription of members by the group. Boko Haram used many tactics to recruit people to populate the group into their folds. While some people joined the group because they believed in the ideology of Boko Haram or to avenge/revenge atrocities they faced within their communities, many joined without a clear understanding of what the group stands for due to the recruitment method adopted by Boko Haram. There are four different kinds of subtle recruitment methods adopted by the Boko Haram insurgent group, namely, deception, brainwashing, forced contagion, and forced conscription. The first is recruitment through deceit. This involves the act of causing someone to accept the ideology and cause for which the group fights as true and legitimate when in fact, it is not. This is done through many means, including open preaching and conduction of Dawah, during which wrong ideology is surreptitiously inculcated into the targets, enticement through loans, and incentivization through monetary rewards. In doing this, the group leveraged sheer ignorance of the people, illiteracy, and bad governance at all levels, including community governance and poor socio-economic conditions, to deceive them into joining the group. This typically begins from infection and befriending to show the people they mean well to them. After establishing rapport, other means are introduced, such as loans, rented apartments, stipends or even small business ventures etc., to get them close to becoming members of the group. The impression created in them using all these means is that they would be better off joining the group than continuing to be loyal members of their immediate society.

Another method of recruitment is through brainwashing/indoctrination of targets. This involves the indoctrinating target to give up their social and religious belief and attitudes and accept contrasting ones that they give through preaching and proselytization. Furthermore, they capitalize on the local people's naivety, innocence, ignorance and illiteracy to use this recruitment medium. Children and teenagers who are excessively naïve and ignorant are usually recruited using this medium. Yusuf Mohammed used this medium of recruitment while he was alive. He was going from one state of the northeast of Nigeria to another, preaching against Western education and encouraging teenagers to renege against any insignia of the Nigerian State because it is against the command of Allah. During a focus group discussion session with parents from Michika and Madagali in Mubi, they all explained that when the late Mohammed Yusuf used to come to their localities, after finishing open preaching session with the public in their localities, there were usually some designated persons from him who gathered children and teenagers, and began to have a special session of preaching and proselytization with them. One of the participants in the focus group discussion explained:

> Yusuf Mohammed was usually coming to our place to preach and after his preaching, some of his boys sent by him would gather our children and teenagers to have a special session of preaching with them. We never knew he was teaching them corrupt ideology until when we see our children leaving our localities and abandoning going to school to go to Maiduguri to become followers of Yusuf Mohammed. This was long before Boko Haram become violent. (Participant 3, 65 years, FGD Session with Parents, Mubi 11th April, 2022).

Former Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, revealed something[iii] related to this when he said, "The Boko Haram sect recruited new members, mostly through open preaching to spread their misguided ideology, targeting teenagers. They had leaders who openly preached in mosques and at special gatherings, without showing violence at initial levels" (cited in Haruna, 2016, para.11). They used the advantage of open preaching to gather impressionable children and teenagers, brainwashing and indoctrinating them to recruit them to join the group. This did not only occur in Nigeria's northeast; Nigeria's Lake Chad neighbors also experienced this recruitment pattern. However, brainwashing and indoctrination do not stop when they join the group; it continues so that they can consolidate the misguided ideology they have inculcated into them.

Similarly, Boko Haram recruited through abduction/conscription. The group uses this strategy when they need more members, especially those with specialities that may be useful in the camps, such as mechanics, doctors, nurses, women etc. Many members of the group have been enlisted through this means across Lake Chad. Another means of recruiting is through birth. This is a natural way of recruiting into the fold of the group. During interviews with "teenage women" who were forcibly conscripted to Boko Haram and were married off, they explained that Boko Haram encourage rapid childbirth to populate their group. Therefore, children are weaned very early to give a chance to another baby. Children born into this are likely not to understand anything other than the Boko Haram lifestyle.

The point made from the mode of recruitment of Boko Haram discussed above is that many members of the group joined due to deception, naivety, forceful conscription, or being born into the group. Therefore, applying the soft-power approach allows people who have regained their sanity to demobilize the group.

Furthermore, another major factor in the adoption of DDR and the amnesty program for repentant Boko Haram members is that not doing it will not allow people trapped in Boko Haram insurgent dens to navigate their way out of the group to society. Boko Haram creates fear in the mind of their members not to think of

escaping by killing anyone who attempts to escape and is apprehended. However, the fear of being rejected by their communities also makes the people not think of escaping. A former Boko Haram member explained:

> …There are many members of the group who want to leave and come back to their families and communities but the penalty for unsuccessful escape, if caught by Boko and rejection by communities, prevent many from thinking of escape…but some still manage to stage their escape irrespective of not being sure of family and community acceptance… (Interviewee 2, ex-Boko Haram member, 31, January 2020, Gombe, Gombe State).

The implication is that Boko Haram has more members to continue to wreak havoc on communities and prevent people from doing what they usually do. For instance, in northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram attacks have prevented people from farming far away. In some communities, people cannot farm beyond a few kilometers away from the capital town. For instance, in the Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State, people who want to farm cannot go beyond two kilometers from Gulak, the capital town (Owonikoko, 2022a). Therefore, traditional rulers are using this to talk to people in the communities to allow the reintegration of ex-Boko Haram members so that Boko Haram members can be depopulated in the trenches and their security can improve so they can farm where they cannot farm.

WHY BOKO HARAM MEMBERS ARE SURRENDERING

In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of people who demobilize from the group and are willing to surrender to the state. The increase in the number of Boko Haram members surrendering necessitated the workshop on the management of the disengaged Boko Haram group in Lake Chad held in Cameroon in 2018. Even after that, the number of disengaged Boko Haram members has increased significantly. There are many explanations for why Boko Haram insurgents are surrendering in their numbers.

The first explanation is infighting among members of the group. Since Boko Haram launched its violent confrontation against the Nigerian State and her Lake Chad neighbors, infighting, caused by the leadership style of Abubakar Shekau and the modus operandi of the parent group, has always resulted among notable leaders of the group that usually leads to the formation of breakaway factions. In 2012, a breakaway faction known as *Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad al Sudan* (supporters of Muslims in the Land of Black Africa), better known as Ansaru, emerged. However,

the group did not last long as Shekau forced the group back into the Boko Haram folds (Njoku, 2020; Zenn, 2019). A tougher infighting emergence in 2016 culminated in the formation of a breakaway faction known as ISWAP with support from ISIS. Since the breakaway of ISWAP, intense tussle for the control of Lake Chad has always resulted between the two factions. In 2021, one of the infighting between the two led to the death of Abubakar Shekau, the erstwhile dreaded leader of Boko Hara (Abdullahi &Adebajo, 2021). Therefore, with the death of Shekau, the whole of Sambisa Forest has come under the control of ISWAP, and those who are loyal to Shekau and do not want to succumb to the al-Banawi-controlled ISWAP are the ones surrendering massively to the Nigerian State.[3]

Arising from the infighting, some were forcefully conscripted to become members of the group. They found it difficult to come out of the group because their chance of escape is thin and capital punishment awaits anybody who attempts to escape but is apprehended. However, the consistent infighting among the group for the control of territory and superiority in Lake Chad allowed those who wished to escape to do so. One of the liberated ex-Boko Haram members interviewed expressed:

> Many of us (conscripted) wanted to escape but we could not because it is very difficult to trace our way back home and the chance of successfully escaping is very thin. If you are caught as a male trying to escape, they will slaughter you but for the female, they will beat them and lock them in a cell for days without food. These tough punishments usually make people shun the idea of escape. However, the constant attack of ISWAP on our camp allows us to run because everybody is scampering for the safety of his life (ex-Boko Haram member, 25 years, Interview, Mubi, April 8, 2022).

Furthermore, the intensified military onslaught against the group also aided the liberation of many members of the group who wanted to demobilize. On several occasions, the military onslaught against the groups in their camps has led to the destruction of their camps and the opportunity for many to escape easily with much ease. Most times, military personnel operating around the area also aided the escape of members who used the opportunity to split and infight between the two groups. They usually report to them while the military personnel lead them to designated centers where they can be profiled and slated for deradicalization or reunion with their families.

Another major factor in the increasing surrender of Boko Haram members is the contrasting activities of Boko Haram in their camps with the religious recruitment message of Boko Haram and Islamic practices as stipulated in the Holy Book –

Quran – and Hadith. Furthermore, individuals joined the group because of the promise of socio-economic improvement, justice, protection and so on from Boko Haram. Unfortunately, all of this ends up being deceits. The disillusionment created by most of the recruits made them disinterested in continuing to be a member of the group. Interviews conducted by Akum et al., (2021:8) with former members who have now surrendered across Lake Chad countries showed this as one of the most prominent reasons.

REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR SURRENDERED BOKO HARAM MEMBERS IN LAKE CHAD COUNTRIES: A REVIEW

Due to circumstances surrendering the recruitment of Boko Haram members and the increased rate at which members of the group are surrendering, Lake Chad countries have established deradicalization and reintegration programs as ad hoc programs and institutionalized systems. These programs are discussed in this section.

Cameroon

The ultimatum for 31 December 2017 given by the Cameroonian military to Boko Haram militants led to the surrender of many militants (Issa & Machikou, 2019). However, no significant preparations were made to receive the surrendered combatants. Instead, as more and more Boko Haram members surrendered, they were entrusted to the hands of the traditional rulers who carried out ritual-based rehabilitation of the ex-combatant. This required the ex-combatants to renounce Boko Haram by swearing on a copy of the Quran and then confessing their atrocities. However, most people in society believed that ex-combatants were easily pardoned. Thus, they promised to kill them if the soldiers did not (Mahmood & Ani, 2018).

The misgiving led to the government retaining the surrendered Boko Haram members in the MNJTF headquarters in Mora (Issa &Machikou, 2019). They were kept at the facility for a long time without a clear decision as to what to do with the group leading to ex-combatants complaining of idleness and escaping from the facility, raising fear of re-joining the insurgent group in the bush. This made the government devise a clear policy on how to deal with surrendered ex-combatants. An inter-ministerial committee known as the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC)was set up in November 2018 to see to the deradicalization, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Cameroon. However, the framework of operation of the committee

is still not clear. Moreover, it put together two distinct types of crises, each with different dynamics for DDR (Akum et al., 2021). Furthermore, the slow pace of the activities of the deradicalization and reintegration program of NDDRC discourages combatants who may wish to disengage (Mbarkoutou Mahatma, Maroua, Far North Region, Interview, March 2022).

Chad

In Chad, state authorities struggle to handle surrendered Boko Haram members. While the government talked about amnesty and reintegration, the reality of groups in Chad is quite different. Boko Haram members who have surrendered to the military since 2016 remained in camps without a clear strategy on what to do with them, while some ex-combatants and other returnees have gone directly to their communities without any form of formal deradicalization and reintegration program (Bukarti &Bryson, 2019; Bukarti, 2020; Ani, 2021). Fortunately, the reintegration program in Chad may succeed because it is less complicated than in other Lake Chad countries. After all, Boko Haram attacks are limited relative to other Lake Chad countries.

Furthermore, traditional rulers and communities promised some receptiveness to the ex-combatant (Ani, 2021). However, the lack of strategy to be adopted for deradicalization and the government's posture of combat have put surrendered Boko Haram members in heightened danger at the hand of security personnel to the extent that some surrendered Boko Haram suspects were summarily killed in their prison cells in N'djamena in 2020 (Punch News, 2020 cited in Ani, 2021). This has had a significant impact on the willingness of Boko Haram combatants to surrender. Although the government does not have a formal reintegration program, an ad hoc program is currently going on in the state. An inter-agency counter-terrorism unit based at Baga Sola is helping to screen high-risk ex-combatants from low-risk ones. While high-risk individuals were handed over to the Ministry of Social Affairs after psycho-social assistance from the Lac Province government, the low-risk ex-combatant were handed over to the local chiefs by the Ministry of Territorial Administration for reintegration. To make it more formal, the Chadian government, through the Ministry of Justice, has set up deradicalization, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) steering committee to address deradicalization and reintegration systematically, but this has been slow (Akum et al., 2021). The combination of these has significantly impacted the deradicalization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Chad.

Niger

The government of the Diffa region initiated an amnesty and reintegration program at a camp at Goudoumaria. This facility is named the Socio-Economic Reintegration Centre (SERC), about 200 km west of Diffa, supervised by a committee headed by the prefect and composed of the canton or village chiefs and religious authorities from each of the four departments in the region (Bosso, Diffa, Mainé and Nguigmi). This facility has been hosting surrendered Boko Haram since 2018 (Bukarti &Bryson, 2019). However, deradicalized ex-Boko Haram fighters remained in the camp for months without exit due to a lack of backing for the law. By March 2019, the government passed a law on amnesty and deradicalization for ex-combatants willing to surrender (Bearak, 2019). The law also provides a lesser punishment for those involved in serious crimes of murder. The government also supported the development of "Peace committees" (Comité de Paix) presided over by mayors and composed of community members, business people and religious leaders in the Diffa communities. The peace committees help to facilitate the reintegration of ex-militants. Yet, most communities remain reluctant to accept the defectors due to the devastating experience of Boko Haram activities in the region (Ani, 2021).

Furthermore, the time ex-combatants spent in the Goudoumaria Centre (about two years) was longer than expected, and the poor living conditions in the center also led to the attempted escape. The official number of desertions in Niger is minimal compared to the number of residents from the region thought to have joined Boko Haram since the beginning of the crisis. This raises the question of why so many ex-associates who have left Boko Haram voluntarily have disappeared.

Nigeria

Nigeria is at the forefront of the Boko Haram insurgency. Nigeria has developed the most elaborate deradicalization and reintegration programs. It has three deradicalization programs, namely, the Prison-based Deradicalization Program; Yellow Ribbon Initiative, and Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC). OPSC pertains specifically to Boko Haram ex-combatants who surrender to state forces for rehabilitation and reintegration. Although the program began in 2016, the activities leading to the beginning of the program can be traced to 2013 when the federal government of Nigeria, led by Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, announced an amnesty for Boko Haram. However, this was rejected by the group (Owonikoko, 2022b). When Muhammadu Buhari became president in 2015, he maintained the country's readiness to provide amnesty and rehabilitation to surrendered Boko Haram

members. However, a coherent deradicalization idea was implemented by his government in 2016 following the establishment of OPSC.

According to Owonikoko (2022b), the process leading to undergoing the deradicalization program of OPSC by ex-Boko Haram members typically begins with contact with soldiers, either through capturing or voluntary surrendering. They are then screened and profiled by the personnel of Operation Hadin Kai, a military operation established to fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. The screening is carried out to determine the extent and level of risk that the surrendered Boko Haram member poses and to ensure that any ex-member of Boko Haram who is about to be deradicalized is not among the 353 members of the group sternly wanted by the state. Then, the operation profiles the person through interrogation and cross-checking of information. If such a repentant member is not found to be "too risky", he is admitted into the OPSC's DRR program, and his data and personal information, including medical records, are collected and stored for usage.

Five processes are involved in the reformation ex-Boko Haram members in OPSC, as shown in Figure 2. The first stage is the arrival of ex-Boko Haram members to the camp. The next stage is the debriefing and buy-in stage, where members are orientated on why they are at the camp and are debriefed to build the trust of the ex-combatants in the program and the staff. Experts of the OPSC engage the clients in a large auditorium to explain the aim of the program, the role of all stakeholders in the program and the need for them to see benefits in the program. This is followed by team-to-group engagement in which a group of experts engage with fewer ex-combatants to personalize the process for greater interaction and better observation of the clients and their needs. In doing this buy-in, the role of the clergymen, especially the imams, is crucial. Third, in the stage is deradicalization. This is engaged simultaneously with the fourth stage—rehabilitation. These two stages address purging ex-Boko Haram members of radical ideology and re-orienting them to be better members of society. Three key areas are targeted in the deradicalization and rehabilitation stages. These are religious ideology, structural/political grievance and post-exit trauma. Focus on religious ideology set to refute Boko Haram's religious ideology used by the sect to brainwash its members. In doing this, the imams develop counter-narratives from Islamic textual materials and engage the ex-members on Islamic and religious concepts. Clients are trained in vocations of their choice by National Directorate of Employment officials to address structural/political grievances such as poverty, unemployment, marginalization and literacy. The essence of this is to ensure that the ex-member of Boko Haram gets an alternative livelihood after reintegration. This aspect of the OPSC is vital because it provides economic empowerment for

ex-combatants, enabling them to settle down well in their communities after reintegration. With this, the chance of returning to the insurgent group will be slim.

Furthermore, they were taught basic literacy, numeracy and civic education. The content of civic education is to imbue in the ex-Boko Haram members patriotism and loyalty to their country rather than Boko Haram. Post-exit trauma seeks to address trauma faced by the ex-combatants while in the jungle of Boko Haram members. This involved giving therapies such as psychotherapy, psycho-spiritual counselling, and social therapy. Reintegration and reconciliation are the last and most important in OPSC's reformation of ex-Boko Haram members. This stage ensures ex-combatants are re-admitted into their communities and reintegrated and reconciled with their communities that may have been aggrieved because of their heinous act. Thus far, over 1300 ex-combatants have passed through the rehabilitation program of OPSC in three different phases since its inception in 2016 (see Table 2). However, apart from the challenges of community acceptance of the rehabilitated Boko Haram member, the program is also significantly affected by the slow implementation. Many surrendered Boko Haram are still in camps in Maiduguri, awaiting enrolment in the rehabilitation program of OPSC. As of September 2022, over 90,00 Boko Haram/ISWAP members have surrendered as of September 2022 (Taiwo-Obalonye, 2022), and some have been in camp in Maiduguri for a long period of time, triggering an insurrection of surrendered Boko Haram members in 2021 (The General News, 2021).

Table 2: Deradicalization of Boko Haram Members by OPSC since 2016

S/N	Year	Batch/phase	No of deradicalized Boko Haram members
1	2016	First	228
2	2020	Second	601
3	2022	Third	559
4	**Total**	**-**	**1,388**

From the different experiences of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Lake Chad shared above, there are three key challenges that the countries of Lake Chad share in their different rehabilitation and reintegration programs. The first mutual challenge is operational. This has to do with the manner in which the program is implemented across Lake Chad states. The programs are slow in implementation owing to several factors. Furthermore, another major challenge is the lack of coordinated strategy in some Lake Chad countries. Although some countries like Chad which have a significant challenge in this area, have already

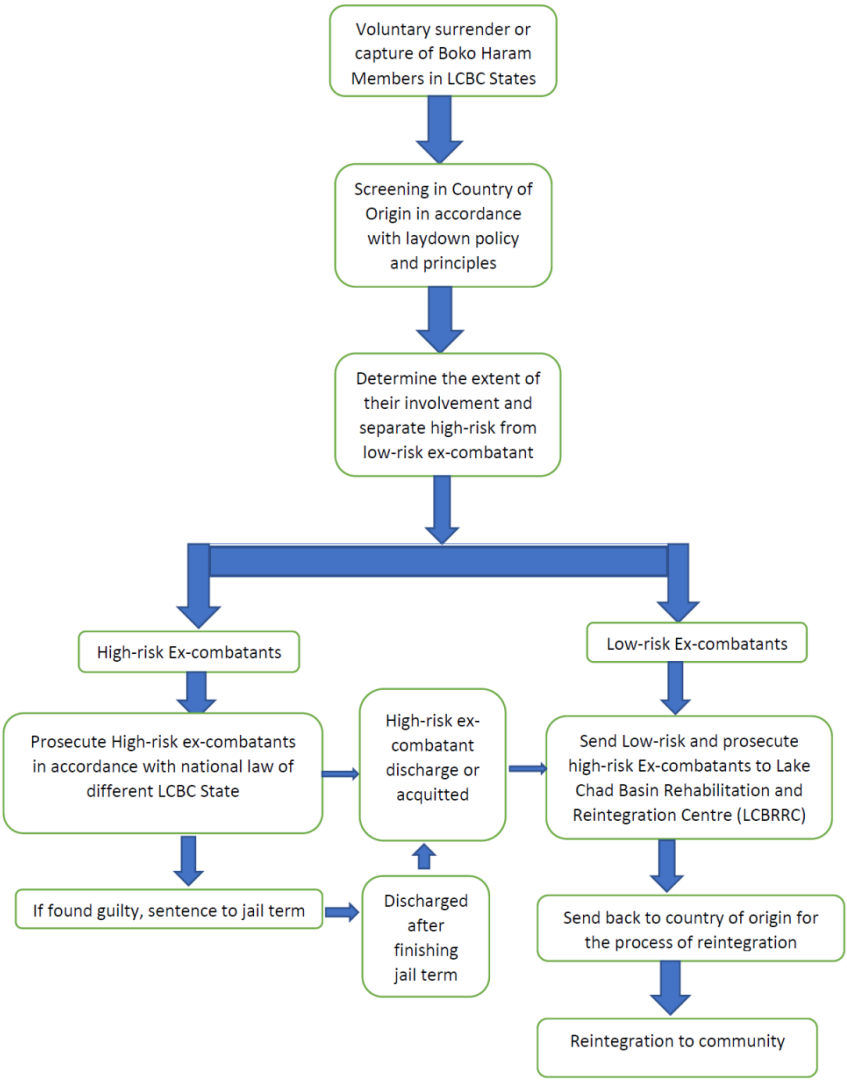
drawn-out clear-cut strategy implementation, implementation is slow and unsteady. The last challenge peculiar to all the Lake Chad countries is the problem of community acceptance. Unfortunately, the lack of a pair review mechanism among the member states, probably due to a lack of effective, friendly relations among the states, especially between Nigeria and other Lake Chad Basin States, has made improvement difficult. All of these significantly impact the success of the Lake Chad region's rehabilitation and reintegration and overall peace and stability. However, these negative impacts can be mitigated when rehabilitation and reintegration of all Lake Chad countries are harmonized and coherently implemented. Apart from this, harmonization is needed since the problem of Boko Haram and its effects are similar in all member states.

PROSPECT OF HARMONISING THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM IN LAKE CHAD

As shown in the previous section, having different rehabilitation and reintegration programs in various Lake Chad countries is faulted with many challenges that significantly impact the program's ability to engineer post-conflict peacebuilding in the Lake Chad Region. Therefore, harmonizing the different Lake Chad countries' rehabilitation and reintegration programs will significantly improve the program's effectiveness. There are two types of templates for harmonization. The first is what I refer to as operational harmonization. In this case, all rehabilitation and reintegration programs of the Lake Chad Basin countries are harmonized into one single institution with operational headquarters in a chosen member state. How will this be done? The process will begin with voluntarily surrendering or capturing Boko Haram combatants. Screening activities will be carried out on them to determine the extent of their involvement in the Boko Haram insurgency, the extent of havoc and atrocities committed and the risk they may constitute. From this screening, they will be divided into two.

On the one hand is high-risk surrendered or captured members. Those may need to be subjected to trial based on their countries' national terrorism/insurgency laws. When they are found guilty, have served their jail terms, and are discharged or not found guilty, they will be sent to the Lake Chad rehabilitation and reintegration programs. On the other hand, the low-risk ex-combatants are sent directly to the rehabilitation center. After completing the rehabilitation program, they will be sent back to their countries of origin to begin the process of their reintegration. Figure 1 shows the format of harmonized rehabilitation and reintegration programs in the Lake Chad Basin that is being proposed.

This has many advantages for Lake Chad Basin countries, especially concerning addressing the Boko Haram insurgency. One of the advantages is that it will allow the use of the best human resources from within member states and outside for implementing the program. The second advantage is that pooling human and non-human resources will also impact the program's effectiveness. However, a major challenge with this pattern of harmonization is the lack of friendly relationships among the Lake Chad Basin countries. This has already impaired the ability of the MNJTF put together collectively by Lake Chad Basin countries to combat the Boko Haram insurgency in Lake Chad (Albert, 2017). Similarly, the collective response to addressing the shrinking Lake Chad Basin has also been impacted by the conflictive relationship among the Lake Chad Basin countries, especially between Nigeria and her Lake Chad neighbors (Owonikoko & Momodu, 2020).



Source: Researcher's own conceptualization
Figure 2: Proposed format for the Organization of Harmonized Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program in Lake Chad Basin

It is difficult to see how this conflictive relationship will not impact the effectiveness of the operational harmonization of rehabilitation and reintegration programs. However, if implemented, it has the propensity to make rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Lake Chad more impactful. In implementing this pattern of harmonization, uniform principles and policies have to be agreed upon regarding who can be brought to the rehabilitation center for rehabilitation. For

instance, there seems to be a generally accepted principle that only low-risk ex-combatants can be rehabilitated, but how does one define low-risk ex-combatant? This application may differ from country to country and must be harmonized.

The second pattern of harmonizing rehabilitation and reintegration programs is what I named harmonization in principle. There is no centralized form of institution or infrastructure for rehabilitating repentant ex-Boko Haram under this arrangement. However, harmonized principles, protocols, procedures and tenets guide the rehabilitation program of Lake Chad Basin States. With this agreement in principles, protocols and procedures, Lake Chad Basin countries will be doing almost the same thing in their countries. This offers an alternative form of harmonization to operational harmonization, but ensuring that the member state followed the principles and procedures is difficult.

CONCLUSION

This study makes a case for harmonized rehabilitation programs in Lake Chad. This is suggested by looking at the many similarities that the regional states and people of the region share as well as the similarity in the nature of the threat facing them. The study proposed operational harmonization or harmonization in principle for the rehabilitation program for the ex-combatants of Boko Haram. However, the region's stakeholders are at liberty to choose the typology of harmonized reintegration program they want to adopt. Nevertheless, consideration of harmonized rehabilitation program is significant to ensure it is impactful in the post-conflict Lake Chad Region.

REFERENCES

- Akum, F., Hoinathy, R. & Samuel, M. (2021). Managing the journey out of violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin. *Institute for Security Studies, West African Report*, *30.* Available at: https://issa frica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-32-1.pdf (Accessed 2 June 2022).
- Albert, I.O. (2017). Rethinking the functionality of multinational joint task force in managing Boko Haram crisis in Lake Chad Basin. *Africa Development*, XLII, *3*, 119-135.
- Ani, C.N. (2021). Rehabilitation without restitution: The pitfalls of restorative justice in communities affected by Boko Haram insurgency. *Text of a Paper Presented at CORN-West Africa Workshop held at Lagos State University, June 6-7.*
- Bakker, F.E. (2017). Do liberal norms matter? A cross-regime experimental investigation of the normative explanation of the democratic peace thesis in China and the Netherlands. *Acta Politica, 52*(4), 521-543. doi:10.1057/s41269-016-0002-4
- Bakker, F.E. (2018). *Hawks and doves: Democratic peace theory revisited.* PhD thesis, Leiden University.
- Bamgbose, O.A. (2010). *The sentence, the sentencer and the sentenced: Towards prison reform in Nigeria.* Inaugural Lecture. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Bearak, M. (2018). *Boko Haram brought terror to Niger. Can a defectors program bring peace?* Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2018/11/20/feature/boko-haram-brought-terror-to-niger-can-a-defectors-program-bring-peace/ (Accessed 4 June 2022).
- Bremer, S.A. (1992). Dangerous dyads: Conditions affecting the likelihood of interstate war, 1816–1965. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 36*(2), 309-341.
- Bukarti, A.B. (2019). *Making peace with enemies: Nigeria's reintegration of Boko Haram fighters.* Available at: https://warontherocks.com/2019/03/making-peace-with-enemies-nigerias-reintegration-of-boko-haram-fighters/ (Accessed 10 June 2022).
- Bukarti, A.B. (2020). *The challenge of Boko Haram defectors in Chad.* Available at: https://warontherocks.com/2020/05/the-challenge-of-boko-haram-defectors-in-chad/ (Accessed 10 July 2022).
- Bukarti, A.B. & Bryson, R. (2019). *Dealing with Boko Haram defectors in the Lake Chad Basin: Lessons from Nigeria.* Available at: institute.global/sites/default/files/articles/dealing-With-Boko-Haram-Defectors-in-the-Lake-Chad-Basin-Lessons-From-Nigeria-pdf (Accessed 19 June 2022).
- Chan, S. (1997). In search of democratic peace: Problems and promise. *Mershon International Studies Review, 41*(1), 59-91.

- Chernoff, F. (2004). The study of democratic peace and progress in international relations. *International Studies Review, 6*(1), 1079-1760.
- Haruna, A. (2016). Wary of Boko Haram rebirth, Borno moves to regulate Islamic preaching. *Premium Times,* August 11. Available at: http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/208467-wary-boko-haram-rebirth-borno-moves-regulate-islamic-preaching.html (Accessed 6 June 2022).
- Mahmood, O.& Ani, N.C.(2018). Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, cooperation and livelihoods. *ISS-Dexis Report commissioned by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives.* Available at: https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-07-06-research-report-1.pdf (Accessed 30 May 2022).
- Mohammed, K. (2014). The message and methods of Boko Haram in Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria* (pp. 9-32). Leiden, African Studies Centre.
- Njoku, E.T. (2020). Merchants of terror: Neo-patrimonialism, counter-terrorism economy, and expansion of terrorism in Nigeria. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review,10*(2), 83-107.
- Nwolise, O.B.C. (1987). *Factors explaining high defense expenditure in Africa, 1967-1977.* PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Owonikoko, B.S. (2020). Amnesty for Boko Haram: Lessons from amnesty program for militants in the Niger Delta Region. *Africa Insight*, *49*(4), 39-54.
- Owonikoko, B.S. (2021). Implications of Covid-19 for peace and security in Lake Chad Basin Region. *IPSS Policy Brief*, *15*(6).
- Owonikoko, B.S. (2022a). "Take them to Government House or Aso Rock": Community receptivity to the reintegration of Operation Safe Corridor's deradicalized Ex-Boko Haram members in northeastern Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *8*(1).
- Owonikoko, B.S. (2022b). *Comprehensive report on transitional justice mapping/assessment in Borno.* Adamawa and Yobe State submitted to the National Human Rights Commission.
- Owonikoko, B.S. & Momodu, A.J. (2020). Environmental degradation, livelihood, and the stability of Chad Basin Region. *Small Wars & Insurgencies, 31*(6), 1295-1322.
- Pugh, J. (2005). Democratic peace theory: A review and evaluation. *CEMPROC Working Paper Series*.
- Saïbou, I. & Machikou, N. (2019). *Reintegrating former Boko Haram associates: Perspectives from the Far North Region of Cameroon*. Available at: www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GCCS-PB-Reintegrating-Former-Boko-Haram-Associates-2019.pdf (Accessed 3 June 2022).

- The General News. (2021). *Repentant Boko Haram terrorists' riot in Maiduguri. November 18.* Available at: https://tgnews.com.ng/2021/11/18/repentant-boko-haram-terrorists-riot-in-maiduguri (Accessed 19 October 2022).
- Taiwo-Obalonye Juliana. (2022). At UNGA: 90,000 Boko Haram/ISWAP members have voluntarily surrendered – Zulum. *The Sun, 25th September.* Available at: www.sunnewsonline.com/at-unga77-90000-boko-haram-iswap-members-have-voluntarily-surrendered-zulum/ (Accessed 19 October 2022).
- Tusicisny, A. (2007). Security communities and their values: Taking masses seriously. *International Political Science Review,* 28(4), 425-449.
- Zenn, J. (2019). "Boko Haram's Factional Feuds: Internal Extremism and External Interventions". *Terrorism and Political Violence*. https://doi.org /10.1080/09546553.2019.1566127

[i] The term Boko Haram in this study is used to designate JAS and its breakaway factions, especially as the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP).

[ii] The title of the conference is Regional Workshop for Experience Sharing on the Management of Disengaged People from Boko Haram in the Lake Chad held between February 14-16, 2018 at University of Maruoa, Cameroon. The author presented a paper titled "Amnesty for Boko Haram members: Lessons from the Amnesty for Militants in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria".

[iii] This information was given by a notable personality from Borno State during one of the programs on transitional justice which the author also served as a resource person in Yola, Adamawa State.

ACSRT TECHNICAL PAPER: FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS IN THE SAHEL-SAHARA REGION OF AFRICA: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STEMMING A LONG-LASTING THREAT

Field Research Study Commissioned by the African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and AUC Department of Political Affairs, Peace & Security (PAPS)

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) poses a serious threat to global peace, security and stability, particularly in various African countries. Analysts have cautioned about the relocation of FTFs following the collapse of the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) Caliphate, including terrorism-affected African countries. This poses grave implications for these countries and their respective regions.

This policy paper presents options and recommendations for addressing the threat of FTFs in Africa's Sahel-Sahara region. It is based on findings from a field study conducted in Tunisia, Mali and Niger. The findings show that the flow of FTFs in this region is likely to be long-lasting, with long-term and near-permanent impacts from a security and socio-economic perspective.

FTF operations affect trade and economic activities, undermine investor confidence, and threaten the psycho-social wellbeing of people residing in these countries. Despite efforts by governments and international partners to address the phenomenon, these threats persist. This points to a need for a new approach to deal with the FTF situation in the Sahel-Sahara.

INTRODUCTION

FTFs are individuals or groups who travel to conflict zones to engage in terrorist acts. Estimates suggest that over 50,000 terrorist fighters from more than 100 countries have travelled to Syria, Iraq and Libya in the last 10 years to join ISIS. Over 7,000 foreign fighters from North Africa went to Syria and Iraq, and approximately 5,000 European citizens joined the terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria.

The influx of FTFs in conflict-driven areas further complicates the terrorism landscape and should be addressed to minimize the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. As aptly pointed out by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), FTFs who "… remain in conflict zones, return to their countries of origin or nationality, or relocate to third countries, continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security".[i]

Similarly, in 2018, and again recently in 2020, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) expressed "… deep concern over the growing influx of foreign terrorist fighters from outside the continent and the threat they are increasingly posing to peace and security in Africa".[ii] The AU subsequently requested[iii] the AU Commission, African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT/CAERT) and AFRIPOL to develop a comprehensive framework for countering FTFs.

FTFs are present in the Sahel-Sahara region and the Horn of Africa, while some reports mention[iv] their presence in other parts of the continent. For countries bordering the Sahel-Sahara region, the threat that FTFs pose compounds national and regional security challenges. In particular, the return and relocation of FTFs threatens to boost the operational capability of local terrorist groups and affiliates. FTFs also have tremendous knowledge in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), for instance.

The upsurge of FTFs across the continent has been especially prominent in the Sahel and Central African regions and, more recently, in Mozambique (in Southern Africa). This means that no region in Africa is spared of this menace. FTFs bring fighting and field experience with them, in addition to their technical expertise in the manufacture of all types of IEDS. FTFs' military experience often acts as a force multiplier to the local terrorist activities, and their choice of tactics can fuel the escalation of national conflicts across borders.

In recent times, FTFs have established, sustained and expanded terrorism and other forms of violent conflict across the Sahel Sahara region's remote and poorly controlled frontiers. More than 5, 000 FTFs are believed to be fighting in the Sahel, mostly based in southern Libya. The increased number of returning FTFs, along with the elevated frequency of terrorist acts, represents a major challenge for national and regional security.

The evolving threat of FTFs has elicited numerous global, regional, and national responses. For instance, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017) established and reinforced international obligations related to border security and information sharing. This includes the use of passenger name records (PNR) and advance passenger information (API), biometrics, and watchlists. Resolution 2396, in particular, calls for greater judicial cooperation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies for FTFs and accompanying family members.

In an effort to implement these international obligations, Sahel-Saharan states have put in place measures to prevent, disrupt, prosecute, rehabilitate, and even reintegrate FTFs. However, the phenomenon persists with increasing sophistication. This adds urgency to the need to clearly understand how the threat of FTFs can be addressed; also, as part of broader efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel-Sahara.

In the lead-up to the upcoming AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government Extraordinary Session on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government, this paper provides AU member states with policy recommendations on some of the key issues as these states seek to address the flow and return of FTFs in the region. Following a brief overview of the phenomenon and the factors that drive it in the Sahel-Sahara region, the policy paper examines state responses to addressing the challenge. It then articulates policy options based on findings from a field study conducted in Tunisia, Mali and Niger. Commissioned by the ACSRT/CAERT, this research focused on the impact of FTFs on terrorism in the Sahel-Sahara region.

FTFS IN THE SAHEL-SAHARA REGION: AN OVERVIEW

The phenomenon of FTFs in the Sahel-Saharan region can be traced to the early 1990s, when many 'mujahedeen' (fighters who fought in the Afghan War from 1979 to 1989) returned to their various countries of origin. It is estimated that hundreds of Africans were mobilized and deployed to Afghanistan. Here, they participated in the guerrilla war against the then Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics (USSR) after its invasion of the country to defend the communist proxy government in Kabul in 1979. The departure of Soviet troops in February 1989, however, saw many foreign fighters returning to their countries of origin. Others joined Maktab al Khidamat (MAK, or the 'Bureau of Services'). Founded by Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam, MAK was subsumed into al-Qaeda in 1988.

Many of the foreign fighters who returned to their home countries founded terrorist networks or cells which gave rise to organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). A substantial number of these Soviet-Afghan War veterans also created or joined affiliate terrorist organizations in their respective countries with the intent of overthrowing governments.

The most recent wave of FTF incursion in the region occurred after the fall of ISIS in 2017. When the Syrian conflict began in 2011, several foreign fighters, including some from Africa and Western Europe, travelled to join ISIS. Many of them were positioned at the core of ISIS' identity, its trajectory, and its shifting fortunes. During the interviews conducted for this paper, it was indicated that some returnees acquired basic field experience to plan and manage terror attacks, provide training in handling sophisticated artillery, as well as manufacture explosive devices and weapons. Others have shaped a new generation FTFs, including re-organizing and reviving sleeper cells. This development further influenced the dynamics and rise of terrorism in the Sahel-Saharan region.

In Libya, for instance, it is reported[v] that over 3,000 foreign fighters in ISIS-affiliated local groups are exploiting the fragile political situation to establish a strong foothold. Many former al-Qaeda-affiliated groups have joined forces with ISIS, causing more havoc.

The affiliation of FTFs to these home-grown terrorist groups has strengthened the network and coordination of terrorist groups across the region. It has also led to an emulation of the ISIS brand of brutal terror tactics.

In the Sahel, the security situation is getting worse as conflicts driven by terrorist groups, insurgents and local militias spread across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Strong social and ethnic connections among region countries further help mobilize fighters beyond national borders. Some of the militants fighting in the Sahel region and Lake Chad Basin (LCB) – with groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam waal Muslimeen (JNIM), Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – are believed to be foreign fighters linked to al-Qaeda and ISIS.

The porosity of the borders within the African continent also makes it easy for terrorist fighters to move from one country to another. For instance, JNIM or ISGS fighters can easily move across the Sahel-Sahara region and beyond.

Indeed, evidence suggests[vi] that the presence of FTFs in the region has bolstered the strength and operational capacity of terrorist groups. In January 2020, the former UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, reported to the UNSC[vii] that the rise of terrorism in the Sahel region and West Africa was unprecedented.

Apart from the worsening humanitarian situation, the geographic focus of terrorist attacks had shifted eastwards from Mali to Burkina Faso and was increasingly threatening coastal states in West Africa. By all indications, the influx of FTFs within and outside the continent has not only transformed the terrorism landscape, but also poses a significant threat to the stability of individual states.

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE THE FLOW AND RETURN OF FTFS IN THE SAHEL-SAHARA

Several factors account for the high number of FTFs in the region. Three of these will be explored here. The first is the security vacuum and a conducive political context. A series of political upheavals and regime changes seemed to have helped create fertile ground for exploitation by Al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliate groups. Some countries' security apparatus and governance structures were largely ineffective for an extended period. In several contexts, state authority was also weakened and became fragmented. The growing political stalemate in Libya and fragile political transitions in some Sahel-Sahara states emboldened several terrorist groups both within and outside the continent. These groups were able to operate without much resistance from state actors. For example, ISIS seized Sirte, Libya, in February 2015 – not because it was strong, but because it faced no real resistance.

Other political and security turmoil cases in the Sahel have further motivated FTFs to reinforce the capacity of home-grown terrorist groups. In Mali, the weakness of the state following the Tuareg rebellion in 2012 and the subsequent political instability is largely blamed for the current security situation across the Sahel. From Mali, violent extremist groups have expanded to Burkina Faso and Niger with the assistance of FTFs from ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

The second factor is the presence of ISIS and Al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadist groups in the Sahel-Sahara region. Examples of these groups include Ansar Sharia

in Libya, the Libyan Islamist Fighting Group (LIFG), ISGS, and JNIM. The leadership and the militant base of these groups include veterans from Afghanistan's Anti-Soviet jihad period. The existence of these groups has facilitated the influx of FTFs from Syria and Iraq, some of whom were originally from North Africa. For instance, most of the surviving African citizens who joined ISIS in 2011 have returned, with some joining local extremist groups.

Lastly, a host of vulnerabilities have also facilitated the easy incursion and rise of FTFs in the region. These include long and porous borders; large numbers of loosely governed or ungoverned spaces; corruption; a lack of the rule of law; marginalization; deep-seated socio-economic grievances; impunity of the political elite; and pervasive perceptions of injustice.

Exploiting these vulnerabilities has provided sanctuary and safe havens for terrorist development, plotting, and violent activities. In Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, these vulnerabilities largely account for the growing influx of militants from other parts of Africa fighting under the umbrella of ISGS and JNIM.

EXISTING RESPONSES

The increasing threat of FTFs in the Sahel-Sahara region has elicited some responses from the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs), national governments, and international development partner organizations.

Broadly, the approach has seen a combination of military (hard) approaches and non-military (soft) approaches. These approaches are generally determined by the human, financial, moral, and political resources to generate an effective response. The balance between hard and soft power is key for effective impact.

The military approach usually follows the sequence of monitoring, arresting, following up, pre-empting, stopping, and disrupting the base, flow and return of FTFs. Many countries in the region have also strengthened border security and information sharing.

The non-military approach involves educational, cultural, social, and economic interventions. Many of these are targeted at preventing the youth from being enticed by FTFs. Soft approaches also target major and minor drivers of the phenomenon by addressing issues such as unresolved grievances, bad governance,

localized conflicts, incomplete national reconciliation, personal trauma and feeling of injustice. The intention is to also address the stimulus incentives that drive would-be FTFs.

Furthermore, African countries have reformed their laws to deal with FTFs through arrest, prosecution, and the conviction of perpetrators. In Tunisia, for example, the legal system was successfully employed to dismantle the base of FTFs operations through strong cooperation between the government, security forces and the judiciary. This cooperation drew on a law introduced in 2015 (Law 26), which deals with Tunisians who travel to any part or region of the world to join any terrorist group. The punitive nature of this law has arguably helped to reduce the number of Tunisians who leave the country to join terrorist groups.

Most of the countries in the Sahel-Sahara have also continued to implement the United Nations' global strategy on counter-terrorism. By domesticating the global strategy through national counter-terrorism policies, they are dealing with all forms of terrorism to collectively prevent and combat the threat posed by FTFs.

CHALLENGES TO ADDRESSING FTFS

Despite efforts to combat FTFs in the Sahel-Sahara, many challenges and pitfalls have occurred. For example, large areas lack a state presence due to the geographic vastness of many of the countries in the Sahel-Sahara, especially Niger and Mali. These areas then serve as so-called 'free zones' or 'ungoverned spaces', where FTFs can operate alongside local terrorist groups.

Porous borders enable unfettered entry into many countries in the Sahel for FTFs. This enables them to exploit existing socio-economic and political challenges to pursue their agenda. Human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings by some elements of defense and security agencies have further worsened matters, as such trends enable FTFs and their affiliate groups to mobilize local support in pursuit of their objectives.

Another crucial challenge is the deficit in inter-governmental and inter-agency collaboration in fighting the phenomenon. Although security agencies are an integral part of the fight against FTFs, no one institution can combat this fight alone. The nature and dynamics of these threats call for a dual 'whole-of-the-government' and 'whole-of-the-society' approach. However, complementarity and synergy between soft and hard approaches continue to be weakened by inadequate cooperation among the relevant stakeholders and multiple uncoordinated initiatives to combat the threat.

The inability or failure to accurately identify and disrupt the financing or funding networks of FTFs has also been a major challenge. Many of the experts interviewed indicated that the strategies used to identify and disable the financial outflows that support FTFs remain ineffective. In some contexts, this is due to the complicity of security agencies and political actors in the money-laundering business. There are also allegations that some politicians and businessmen/women use the services of FTFs for their clandestine activities, including masterminding terrorist attacks to cause disaffection for the ruling government and engaging in the trading of illicit drugs, among many others.

Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of states in the Sahel-Sahara have weak capacity in terms of their legal regimes for prosecuting, rehabilitating, and reintegrating FTFs. This leaves a big vacuum in the legal pathway for dealing with FTFs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The phenomenon of FTFs in the Sahel-Sahara region is a complex phenomenon with grave security and socio-economic implications for the region and the rest of Africa. The flow of FTFs is likely to be long-lasting, and the impact on the region is expected to be devastating and near permanent. FTFs operations have also affected trade and economic activities and foreign investor confidence in the region, elevating psycho-social stress among people residing in these countries. Despite efforts by the government and other international agencies to address the menace, a combination of political, geographic and socio-economic factors has conspired to make success rather elusive.

Therefore, a new and better approach to deal with the FTF phenomenon in the Sahel-Sahara region is needed. Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are intended to help mitigate, if not eliminate, the increasing threat of FTFs in the Sahel-Sahara region:

1. Sahel-Sahara countries should strengthen inter-agency and inter-governmental collaboration and cooperation in combatting the FTF phenomenon. This should be based on mutual trust and a common vision.
2. International partners should share with African states the lists of their nationals who have become FTFs to help identify these individuals when they enter the continent.
3. Intelligence gathering and timely information sharing on the activities of FTFs should be improved significantly. It may be necessary to establish new

agencies or units where they do not exist, particularly among countries in the Sahel Sahara region.

4. Bilateral, regional, inter-regional and continental mechanisms operating in subsidiarity, cooperation, and mutually reinforcing complementarity are key. The AU should provide direction and leadership through the ACSRT, AFRIPOL and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA).

    - *Member states and relevant institutions should adopt a human rights and rule-of-law-based approach in all measures aimed at countering the threats and challenges posed by FTFs. Security cannot be achieved at the expense of human rights and the rule of law.*

5. Member states should reinforce the rule of law; uphold individual and collective freedoms; fight corruption, social inequality and unemployment; and eliminate funding sources for terrorism.

    - *Member states, RECs and RMs should encourage exchanges between border communities and help initiate economic projects (including micro-enterprises, small industries and artisanal manufacturing) to improve their standard of living; and*
    - *Member states should develop and implement gender-sensitive reintegration and rehabilitation programs for returning FTFs.*

6. Member states should prioritize the identification of a list of persons who travelled to conflict zones to fight as FTFs. There is an accompanying need to identify who left the so-called caliphate, find out where they have gone, assess the risks they pose, and take the appropriate action to protect the public from harm.
7. In that sense, the AU – through its specialized institutions, namely, ACSRT, AFRIPOL and CISSA – should initiate contacts with Iraqi and Syrian Intelligence Agencies to gain access to their lists of FTFs who are likely to make their way into Africa.

    - *There is an urgent need to promote enhanced cooperation between ACSRT, AFRIPOL, INTERPOL and other relevant institutions on data exchange and access to information regarding FTFs.*

8. In the interim, the Sahel-Sahara region should step up the monitoring and control of borders, particularly in coastal countries, in line with the decisions of the 1040th meeting of the AU PSC.[viii]

[i] See for example United Nations (UN) Office of Counter-Terrorism (2020). Foreign terrorist fighters. Available at: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/foreign-terrorist-fighters (Accessed 30 October 2020).

[ii]See the Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council at its 812th Meeting 23 November 2018, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia PSC/PR/COMM.DCCCXII. Woldemichael, S. (2019). Africa needs a continental strategy on foreign terrorist fighters. Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africa-needs-a-continental-strategy-on-foreign-terrorist-fighters and Communique PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLVII) at its 957th Meeting 20 October 2020. Addis Ababa. htpps://caert.org.dz

[iii] ibid

[iv] See for example "How 'foreign' are foreign terrorist fighters in Africa?" Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-foreign-are-foreign-terrorist-fighters-in-africa (Accessed 12 May 2022). Also Africa needs a continental strategy on foreign terrorist fighters. Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africa-needs-a-continental-strategy-on-foreign-terrorist-fighters.

[v] See for instance https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2016/03/09/Italy-says-ISIS-has-5-000-fighters-in-Libya-.

[vi]Barrett, R., Foggett, S., & Salyk-Virk, M. (2017). Beyond the caliphate: Foreign fighters and the threat of returnees. *Soufan Centre.* See Foreign fighters: An updated assessment of the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq, *The Soufan Group*, December 2015

[vii] See UN News. Unprecedented terrorist violence in West Africa, Sahel region. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1054981 (Accessed 20 March 2020).

[viii] See https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1040th-meeting-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-held-on-22-october-2021-at-ministerial-level-on-the-report-of-the-chairperson-of-the-commission-on-continental-efforts-in-preventing-and-combating-of-terrorism-and-v#:~:text=Communiqu%C3%A9%20of%20the%201040th%20meeting%20of%20the%20Peace,Combating%20of%20Terrorism%20and%20Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Africa.

African Journal on Terrorism

African Journal on Terrorism is published by African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

Chahid Boukhazara Abdellah Street
P.O. Box 141 Post Office, El-Mohammadia, Algiers, Algeria
Tel.: +213 23 82 09 44/46, Fax: + 213 23 82 09 47
Website: www.caert-ua.org

ISSN 2617-8478
9 770261 784780