

# **IDIS JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY (IDIS-J)**

## **Countering Terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa**

**Volume 1, Number 1, June 2018**

**A Publication of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies  
University of Nairobi**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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## **IDIS Journal of International Studies and Diplomacy (IDIS-J)**

The IDIS Journal of International Studies and Diplomacy is a quarterly peer-reviewed publication of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya. The Journal aims at generation of knowledge to ignite academic debates, provide policy recommendations for state and non-state actors, as well as inform the general public on current issues, events, and processes in the International Studies discourse.

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## Editorial

The United Nations lists international terrorism and violent extremism among the leading security concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Globalization and technological sophistication of this millennium, manifested in rapid expansion of communication technology, liberalization of movement of people, goods, services and ideas across territorial borders; the emergence of a mushrooming “Global Civil Society” of new non-state actors as players on all issues affecting humanity, have become enablers of terrorist organizations and disgruntled individuals, to successfully execute fatal terror on a global scale and rendering the old state-centric hard power counter strategies ineffective.

As terrorism and extremism has intensified, so has scholarly inquiry with different actors pooling ideas and resources together, in a bid to better understand pertinent aspects of the phenomenon and cushion humanity from its deleterious effects.

The articles contained in this maiden, inaugural issue of IDIS Journal of International Studies and Diplomacy (IDIS-J) under the theme: *Countering Terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa*, seek to contribute to greater understanding of the Terrorism enterprise, by examining and assessing the performance of the countering strategies employed and suggesting more effective approaches.

This issue IDIS-J is informed by research papers presented by the authors during an international Symposium on ‘*Countering Terrorism: In Search of a Grant African Strategy*’ organized by IDIS in May 2016. Being the first in this region to address this theme, the Symposium was exploitative and prescriptive, suggesting a research and policy agenda that scholars needed to embark upon for effective countering of terrorism.

This volume contains a total of six articles presented at the Symposium and subsequently peer reviewed by eminent scholars in the International Studies discipline. As a product of the Symposium, the articles broadly examine and analyze performance of the strategies employed by states in Africa (as of 2016) in combating terrorism and the emerging nuances and rapidly changing dynamics with regard to the various counter terrorism strategies being employed.

Maria Nzomo in the article: *Countering International Terrorism in Africa: The Gender Factor*, argues that dominant patriarchal narratives have masked the role of women’s agency in acts of terrorism and anomaly that has also seeped into institutional and legal frameworks designed to counter terrorism. Nzomo further notes that many of the scholars that have attempted to address this shortcoming have tended to homogenize and feminize women’s role in terrorist action. The article proposes an analytical and policy approach that focuses on the gender rather the women factor.

Patrick Maluki in the article: *Learning from Country Best Practices: In Search of a Grand Strategy*, examines some of the progressive practices and strategies that with proper contextualization and amplification could be leveraged to deter, manage and eventually defeat terrorism in the continent. As Africa experiences population explosion, the prospects of youth dividend could be put at risk if communities do not develop sustainable intrinsic capacity to lessen the allure of terrorism among the youth.

Mustapha Yusuf Ali in his article: *Counter-Measures to the Radicalization of Youth into Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (Brave)*, suggests some pragmatic ways in which African countries can build resilience against recruitment, legitimization and intimidation of youth into terrorism.

Adams Oloo in the article: *The Role of the State and Non-State Actors in Africa's Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Practice: The Case of Horn of Africa*, argues that Counter-terrorism strategies and practice in the Horn of Africa are best advanced through a holistic approach that encompasses both state and non-state actors, as well as distinct and inter-dependent components including national, regional and the international, geared towards neutralizing the enabling environment that terrorists thrive on.

Martin Ouma in the article: *Africa Union Peace and Security Council as an Instrument for Counter-Terrorism in Africa: An Assessment* notes that at intergovernmental level, African countries, through the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), have concretized a number of strategies that could effectively counter terrorism on the Continent, but most of the strategies remain aspirational. Ouma explores some of the factors that could be hindering APSA from effectively discharging its mandate and offers some suggestions on the way forward.

Winnie Rugutt on the other hand, in the article: *Countering Violent Extremism in an Age of the Islamic State: Lessons from Northern Nigeria*, argues that terrorism in Nigeria has taken root, fuelled by such enablers as corruption, bad governance and ethno-religious schism. Rugutt examines the ways in which Nigeria for over a decade, has engaged in countering terrorism and violent extremism, including combining soft and hard counter terrorism strategies.

**Maria Nzomo**  
Editor in Chief

# Countering International Terrorism in Africa: The Gender Factor<sup>1</sup>

Maria Nzomo<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*This article re-examines and analyzes the strategies that exist for countering terrorism in Africa, focusing primarily on the gender<sup>3</sup> factor. It pays special attention to the narratives inspired by patriarchal ideologies, that distort women's and agency in terrorist activities and create the impression that only "abnormal" women engage in terrorist action. It also examines institutional and legal frameworks designed to counter terrorism and argues that they remain gendered. It thus suggests that measures for effective response to terrorism, must factor in both men's & women's agency. In particular, there has to be a radical paradigm shift from the gender-neutral approaches that render the role of the feminized women invisible, to one that employs a feminist perspective in counter-terrorism analysis and response. The article notes that hard militaristic approaches alone, have proven to be quite ineffective in combating the growing intensity of the terrorism menace. It thus recommends multifaceted strategies that seek to understand and positively harness the various roles played by state and non-state actors, especially women and other feminized persons. The social relativism that pays little attention to the latter in decision making and implementation, hinder the application of effective counter-terrorism strategies and lose strategic and important actors against terror and promoters of peace.*

## 1.0 Introduction

The phenomenon of Terrorism is neither new nor recent as it dates back to 431AD in Ancient Greece and early Roman Empires<sup>4</sup>. Yet for many decades, it was but one of many global security concerns that scholars and policymakers addressed. However, during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, terrorism has become one of the key issues that have engaged the attention of scholars, policymakers, NGO's and the public at large.

International terrorism knows no boundaries and makes no distinction between the rich and poor; or the weak and the strong states. It is a response to complex

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was published in the Journal of Science Technology Education and Management (J-STEM), Vol.7 No. 1, 2014, and its revised form is published here with the kind permission of STEM Editor.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Nzomo is Professor of International Relations & Governance; Director at the Institute of Diplomacy and International studies, University of Nairobi, & ex-Ambassador of Kenya to the UN & the WTO, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of "gender" should not be equated with "women issues" Gender is the socially constructed meaning of what it means to be male or female. It is an analytical and ideological tool that helps us explain hierarchical power relations based on social categories of masculinities & femininities.

<sup>4</sup> Prasoou, P. *The Merchants of Terror: Vol. 1 Terrorism: Past, Present and Future*, (Cipra Books, 2006).



sets of concerns and the phenomenal expansion of modern technology and globalization, manifested in increasing porosity of physical boundaries and the explosion of information and weapons technology. The liberalization of movement of people and goods across borders and states' reduced capacity to control cross-border movement of people, information and flow of goods and services have greatly facilitated and enhanced the possibility of execution of terrorist acts.

International terrorism is clearly one of the most important international security issues of our times. It is a global problem that has awoken the world community to the interconnectedness of our human survival concerns in a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> Century world. The stupendous event of *11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 bombing of the US-* (hereafter termed- *9/11*), was clearly the wake-up call to the magnitude and universality of the terrorist threat. The rapid expansion of globalization at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with all its benefits, complexities and challenges, has contributed to the increase of global human insecurity; upsurge of various forms, levels and magnitudes of conflicts and violence in all its aspects, including terrorism. 21<sup>st</sup> Century globalization has also inspired an upsurge of politics of identity and a resurgence of various forms of cultural and faith based fundamentalisms resulting in multiplication of conflicts and what Huntington terms: "Clash of Civilizations."<sup>5</sup> The rise of the Global Civil Society<sup>6</sup>, as part of a mushrooming industry of non-state-actors seeking to be major players on all key issues affecting the global community, has also challenged the traditional role of the state in International affairs. So, at both the level of analysis and praxis, the non-state actors either as perpetrators or victims, have become key players in defining and shaping responses to international terrorism.

For some African countries like those found in or within the proximity of the Horn of Africa, such as Kenya, terrorism has become a familiar but "unwelcome visitor"<sup>7</sup> since the mid-1970s. Kenya experienced its first terrorist bombing in 1975 followed by another in 1981. But the most eminent terrorist attack was the August 1998 bombing that targeted American Embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), leaving both countries with many casualties. In Kenya, 250 Kenyans and 4 Americans were killed; 4,000 wounded and all buildings and properties in the vicinity destroyed<sup>8</sup>. These terrorist attacks were followed by another attack of Kenya in 2002.

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<sup>5</sup> Huntington, S.P. *The Clash of Civilisations and The Remaking of World Order*, (Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Anheier, H. et. al.(eds) *Global Civil Society* (2001) New York, Oxford University Press, & Hoge *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 87 (April 2008), No. 2:2.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, L. "What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Terrorist Threat" London. John Murray, 2008: 43.

<sup>8</sup> Aronson, S.L. "Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics in Approaches to Counterterrorism" *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, Vol. 7 (November 2013) Series 1 & 2.

These and subsequent attacks shifted the attention of the Africa region towards the search for viable responses to terrorism; by preparing anti-terrorist legislations and intensifying anti-terrorist surveillance. The policy and paradigm shift also occurred in other extra- African countries, including the US following the 9/11 bombing of that country. The US Defense Strategy policy shifted to a new form of *deterrence-preventive* strategy-, guided by the US 2002 anti-terrorist legislation - the *Patriot Act*. This security policy otherwise termed the “Bush Doctrine,”<sup>9</sup> declared “global war on terrorism”<sup>10</sup>. Among the focal points of US counter-terrorism measures then and now included Afghanistan, Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Iran, the Asian sub-continent including Pakistan and India, the Horn of Africa and Eastern African countries of Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Kenya, among others.

Nevertheless, neither the “Bush Doctrine,” nor the specific counter-terrorism measures that were put in place could prevent subsequent terrorist actions around the world. Indeed, 9/11 was followed by a series of other high-profile terrorist-related incidents; such as the Madrid train explosions, the London Underground train attacks, the car bomb at Glasgow Airport, and the Taj Mahal hotel bombing in India, as well as repeated bombings of France, UK, Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia, among others. In this regard, despite the immense pressure put on Kenya and Tanzania to enact counter-terrorism legislations and measures following the 1998 bombings, this did not stop the subsequent deadly bombings of various locations in Kenya, including, the 21 September 2013 terrorist attack of the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi<sup>11</sup> and the Garissa University bombing, in April 2015, nor the emergence of *Al Shaabab* as a terrorist organization based in Somalia with links to Al Qaeda and the July 2010 attacks of Kampala, Uganda, to cite just a few cases.

Terrorism around the world has indeed continued to occur with increasing frequency and magnitude and with new modes of attack. This has provoked debates and raised questions among scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders in the Africa and elsewhere, as to the efficacy of the mechanisms and strategies in place for responding to terrorism. Indeed, the high occurrence and global spread of terrorism and the seeming inability of the World Community to combat it, despite legislative and other counter-terrorism

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<sup>9</sup> The Bush Doctrine is a phrase used to describe various related foreign principles of the 43rd States, George. The phrase was first used by Krauthammer in June 2001 to describe the Bush Administration's "unilaterally withdrawing from the ABM treaty and rejecting the Kyoto protocol. After 9/11 the phrase described the policy that the United States had the right to secure itself against countries that harbour or give aid to terrorist groups, which was used to justify the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Aronson, S.L. “Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics in Approaches to Counter-terrorism” *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, (November 2013) Vol. 7 Series 1 & 2.

measures, has not only brought into question the viability of the strategies in place for responding to terrorism, but also the underlying conceptual, ideological and institutional frameworks underpinning action. In particular, feminist scholars have questioned the viability and efficacy of the state centric approach for managing terrorism that has tended to ignore the role of non-state actors (especially women) as both agents of counter-terrorism as well as perpetrators of terrorism.

## **2.0 The Gender Factor in Terrorism: Knowledge Gap and Theoretical Arguments**

Despite the numerous studies that have been conducted on the phenomena of terrorism, there remains significant gaps in knowledge that beg analysis and answers to one of the most important and vexing human (and gender) dimensions of war/conflict, terror and peace. In this connection, this article shows that the existing frameworks for both analysis and policy interventions in conflict prevention and resolution as well as the existing counter-terrorism measures have not meaningfully addressed the gender question. Pursuant to this, the feminist perspective, argues that at the level of theory, the dominant international relations paradigms that populate the academy remain gendered; not value free but heavily influenced by a patriarchal ideology that largely equates masculinity with objectivity. This is evident from the scholarly discourses examined below, that reveal the gendered stereotypes that continue to marginalize and distort women's agency in scholarship and public policy. Similarly, governance structures and processes as they exist at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century tend to be patriarchal and highly gendered. In this connection, although there is steadily increasing data on terrorism in general and violent extremism in particular, neither policy makers, civil society nor scholars, have paid meaningful attention at both the level of analysis and/or praxis, to the gender aspects of international terrorism in Africa. Thus, the gender information available tends to employ perspectives that reveal the influence of patriarchal ideology. This tends to provide a distorted analysis of the gender factor in international terrorism and the roles women play, especially as perpetrators, in light of the role of Samantha Lethwaite in terrorist action, examined below.

Guided by the feminist perspective, this article makes the case that women just as men, are actors and change agents, whose agency, presence and voice must be made visible in all areas of human endeavor. This visibility also needs to be accompanied by a recognition/appreciation that as change agents, they are not mere instruments or service providers for male terrorist leaders. By employing the feminist approach, the article seeks to challenge and deconstruct these distortions of women's agency and voice in terrorism activities and to point to the real, as opposed to the imagined motivations of women's involvement in terrorism. It also explores and takes into account the gender differential modes of participation in terrorism, while recognizing equality of men and women and their capacities for being not only caring and empathetic, but also violent and

exploitative.<sup>12</sup> The study further takes into account that the notion of a homogenous category of women as being non-violent, caring and empathetic<sup>13</sup> is a misnomer. In this regard, not all women are victims of war or a driving force for peace. Some, though fewer than men, are active actors in wars, as active combatants and as terrorists. The article further attempts to unmask the stereotyped view of female terrorists as, “black (or white) widows,” for example; deconstruct and unveil gender roles as fluid, contextual and arbitrary,<sup>14</sup> as well as correct the dominant narrative that propagates the notion that “normal” women are inherently more disposed towards moderation, compromise, and tolerance in their attitudes towards international conflict<sup>15</sup>. It questions why only women but not men are labeled normal or abnormal in relation to terrorist activities. In so doing, the study seeks to contribute to continuing feminist efforts to demasculinize violence and aggression as men’s activity and de-feminize peace and tranquility as women’s activity.

The article draws evidence of its key arguments from various events and relevant scholarly debates on motivations, factors and forces that lead women to be involved in terrorism, including exclusion from governance and decision-making processes, oppression and discrimination and the gendered and masculine nature of the recruitment process. Within this context, feminist scholars note the increasing female involvement in terrorist networks and their changing roles within these networks. Unlike the past when women played primarily reproductive roles: birthing, nurturing and nursing male terrorists, women are increasingly taking up principal roles at the forefront, notably becoming: suicide and homicide bombers, hijackers, and hostage takers. However, most of the same scholarly debates tend to feminize and explain away this show of agency, by arguing that the female terrorist actors are instruments of male patriarchs or “victims of social media, or some extreme condition of deprivation. The paper thus seeks to place into correct perspective female involvement in terrorism and make the case for women’s agency on matters of peace and conflict. Furthermore, even when women are victims, for example when experiencing gender-based violence, they still remain active participants in both securing peace and designing strategies for survival.

### 3.0 State-Centric and Gendered Counter-Terrorism Responses

Available evidence points to the fact that the counter-terrorism strategies in place are inadequate in respect to low appreciation of the role of non-state actors. In

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<sup>12</sup> Eager, P.W. *From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists: Women and Political Violence*, (Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Goldstein, J. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001) pg. 49.

<sup>15</sup> Sahliyah, E. & Deng, Z. “The Determinants of Palestinians’ Attitude Toward Peace with Israel” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 47 (December 2003) (4): 701.

particular, the numerous existing counter-terrorist national, regional and international legal frameworks tend to be completely gender blind. For example, the OAU Convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism, which was adopted at the 35<sup>th</sup> OAU Summit in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999, by African states, to provide the regional architecture necessary for preventing and countering acts of terrorism in the region<sup>16</sup>, is largely gender neutral. While the convention has general provisions to enable states to work towards countering terrorists' activities, the gender dimension has been completely overlooked, with only a few phrases in the convention addressing a perpetrator as a "he or she" with no clear indication of the gender disaggregated composition of the terrorist make up characteristics.

In the case of Kenya, The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012<sup>17</sup> is the main legal framework concerned with counterterrorism efforts. The Act employs supposedly "gender neutral" language. The Act describes terrorist action as one which involves the use of violence against a person; endangers the life of a person other than the one committing the action; creates a serious risk to the health, safety of the public or a section of the public or results in serious damage of property through the use of firearms or explosives<sup>18</sup>. Even the criticisms made by human rights non-state actors prior to the coming into force of this Act, did not demonstrate any sensitivity to the gender concerns that should have been factored in by the Act. Civil society was only concerned that the government had developed a national counter-terrorism policy that seemed to be tailored to US demands,<sup>19</sup> and hence argued the terrorist counter-terrorism law should not be dealt with in isolation, but rather as part of a broader initiative to deal with the range of security issues facing Kenya.<sup>20</sup> Neighboring states to Kenya like Tanzania and Uganda also have their own counter-terrorism legislations in place. Just like Kenya's Suppression of Terrorism Act 2012<sup>21</sup>, Uganda's Anti-Terrorism Act, 2002<sup>22</sup> and Tanzania's Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002<sup>23</sup> are also gender

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<sup>16</sup> Treaty on Cooperation among the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Combating Terrorism (1999): OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999  
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/OAU-english.pdf> accessed on November 3, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> <http://frc.go.ke/legislation/download/18> accessed on November 3, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> "House Team Dismisses Revised Anti-Terrorism Bill" *The East African Standard* (June 6, 2006:5).

<sup>20</sup> Mulama, J. "Opposition to Anti-Terror Law That "Violates Even Basic Human Rights" *Inter Press Service, Johannesburg* (March 12, 2007:12).

<sup>21</sup> <http://frc.go.ke/legislation/download/18> accessed on November 3, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/tldb/showDocument.do?documentUid=6589> accessed on November 3, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.immigration.go.tz/downloads/Tanzania\\_Prevention%20of%20Terrorism%20Act%202002%20.pdf](http://www.immigration.go.tz/downloads/Tanzania_Prevention%20of%20Terrorism%20Act%202002%20.pdf). accessed on November 3, 2014.

blind raising concerns about the lack of a strategy for addressing the gender dimensions of international terrorism in the region. The tendency by governments to keep gender firmly tied to sex and soft issues, is quite prominent within the field of counter-terrorism<sup>24</sup>.

Another state centric and gender-blind instrument for countering terrorism is the *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* which was adopted by member states on 8 September 2006<sup>25</sup>. The strategy, which consists of a resolution and an *annexed Plan of Action* (A/RES/60/288)<sup>26</sup>, was tailored to enhance national, regional and international efforts to strategically counter terrorism. Some of the practical steps outlined in the resolution range from strengthening state capacity through the involvement of non-state actors to promote and protect human rights within the context of counter-terrorism efforts and to counter terrorist threats, to better coordinating United Nations system's counter-terrorism activities. Although it recognizes the role of non- state actors, it does not unpackage the specific non-state actors (especially women's NGOs) and state how they would collaborate with the state to counter terrorism.

Even where it highlights the way in which non-state actors can assist to bolster state efforts, it does not mention the role women could play in counter-terrorism efforts. This gender insensitivity is even more intriguing, considering that UNSCR 1325 which was endorsed by UN member states has been in place since 2000. The UNSCR 1325, specifically amplifies the role of women in peace and conflict processes and emphasizes the need for greater and effective participation of women in decision-making on conflict prevention, management, and resolution and post conflict reconstruction. However, this resolution *although emphasizing the need for women to be included on peace keeping tables, does not go beyond the depiction of women in an instrumental manner*; as a vulnerable group and as a problem to be resolved. In this regard, Shepherd<sup>27</sup> notes that the resolution focuses on state sponsored armed conflict as opposed to other forms of structural violence such as terrorism. Furthermore, UNSCR 1325 excludes from its discourse structural factors that are an obstacle to women's agency, such as patriarchy, and other types of violence against women that occur outside the war system. Pratt and Ritcher-Devroe<sup>28</sup> note in this regard, the Resolution's essentialist representation of women, in which they are only viewed as victims of war in need of protection or peace-builders. Pratt and Ritcher-Devroe conclude that if the

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<sup>24</sup> Bedont, B. & Martinez, K.H. "Ending Impunity for Gender Crimes Under the International Criminal Court" *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, VI (1999) (1) pp. 65 – 85.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml#poa4> accessed on November 3, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Shepherd, L.J. *Gender, Violence and Security* (London Zed Books, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Pratt, N. & Ritcher-Devroe, S. "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security" *International Journal of Politics*, No. 13 (2011) (4): pp. 489 – 503.

United Nations language continues to work with ‘utopian visions’ of women in security, then transformative agency will remain impossible<sup>29</sup>.

The negative responses by states to the adoption of a gender perspective on counter-terrorism in 2009 in the General Assembly<sup>30</sup> indicates just how deeply rooted patriarchal norms and values are in states-craft and hence the resistance towards the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into legal and institutional structures and processes. Patriarchy mainly needs women to conduct a mopping exercise as an aftermath of war and violent conflicts. In this case, after terrorist incidents, the institutional response and recognition of women is only in connection with the role women play at community level post-conflict peace processes. State response also depicts women as a showcase category of protected subjects.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the most prominent counter-terrorism narrative revolves around two main actors, the rogue terrorist against the just male warrior<sup>32</sup>. This narrative relies on images and perceptions of the female mother, child or victim who require protection. Such images of women placed side by side with the gendered image of the terrorist, are concurrent with ideas that revolve around the sexual vulnerability of women rather than those highlighting female participation, empowerment or agency against terrorist acts<sup>33</sup>. These perceptions legitimize the denial of women’s agency and voice and their right to participate in matters of international terrorism. As Charlesworth observes in regard to the media response following the September 11 terrorist attack:

*“Women were depicted as heavenly rewards for terrorists or as victims of the attack, preferably widows of murdered men, rather than focusing on bringing to the fore the women who themselves worked daily in the twin towers or in the rescue services.”<sup>34</sup>*

She further notes that women in the armed services and firefighting teams were also conspicuously invisible.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Scheinin, M. “Counter-terrorism and Human Rights” in Sheeran, S. & Rodley, N. (eds.), (Routledge Handbook of International Human Rights Law: Routledge, 2013) pp. 581-595 (Following the presentation of the report on gender and counter-terrorism by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, a number of states criticized it for its use of a social definition of gender as opposed to a biological one, and its documentation of the ways in which counter-terrorism undermined the rights of LGBTI individuals as well as those of women).

<sup>31</sup> Charlesworth, H. “Are Women Peaceful? Reflections on the Role of Women in Peace-Building” *Feminist Legal Studies* 16 (2008): pg. 347.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.0 Women as Perpetrators of International Terrorism

*“Traditionally, women have been perceived as victims of violence rather than as perpetrators. Yet they are now taking a leading role in conflicts by becoming terrorists and, specifically, suicide bombers—using their bodies as human detonators.”*<sup>36</sup>

As this quote suggests, there is a general misconception that only men engage in acts of terrorism. And yet, female involvement in perpetration of terrorism is neither new nor recent. One of the first documented cases in the history of women’s involvement in terrorist activities dates back to 1881, when a female member of a radical revolutionary group at the time known as the People’s Will,<sup>37</sup> was named as the key mastermind in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881<sup>38</sup>. Although most perpetrators of terrorism worldwide remain men, women are increasingly becoming involved in terrorist attacks. It has become increasingly evident that women are not only victims of terrorism and counterterrorism measures but may also be volitional actors in perpetrating acts of terrorism.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, emerging research shows that globally, the percentage of females in armed combat ranges from between 10% to 30% of the total combatants<sup>40</sup>. Further still, between 1985 and 2006, over 220 women engaged in suicide attacks, constituting about 15% of the total suicide attacks worldwide.<sup>41</sup> In 2007, there were eight instances of female suicide bombings in Iraq, and by August 2008, 27 more female suicide bombers gave up their lives in support of terrorism<sup>42</sup>.

#### 5.0 Triggers of Female Involvement in Terrorism: The Gendered Debates

*“If we are to comprehend more fully the role of women as terrorists, we must recognize that women comprise a self-conscious, dynamic sector of our society which often perceives itself as an oppressed majority – a majority oppressed not only because of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin but also because of sex.”*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bloom, M. “Female Suicide Bombers Seek Equality and Dignity”,  
[http://www.gale.cengage.com/pdf/samples/SP\\_9780737744484.pdf](http://www.gale.cengage.com/pdf/samples/SP_9780737744484.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Sophia-Lvovna-Perovskaya> accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung “Gender and security policy in West Africa” (2011).

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.consultancyafrica.com/terrorism-in-africa-the-role-of-women-in-terrorist-groups> accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.fpip.org/articles/behind\\_the\\_surge\\_in\\_iraqi\\_women\\_suicide\\_bombers](http://www.fpip.org/articles/behind_the_surge_in_iraqi_women_suicide_bombers) accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Georges-Abeyie, D.E. "Women as Terrorists," in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, by Freedman L.Z & Alexander Y. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1983) pp. 71 – 84.



The idea of female participation in terrorist activities continues to baffle both scholars and policymakers as it defies the logic of patriarchal defined roles of women as peace-makers, life-givers, nurturers and care takers. *Much of the scholarly analysis recognize that some women just like men, can and do participate in terrorist activities.* However, scholars are divided on the factors and forces that explain female involvement in terrorist activities, *with most of the extant literature falling short of recognizing women's full agency in terrorist activities. The latter studies suggest that women are not volitional actors but "victims of circumstances"* which lead them to terrorism. Some argue that women are recruited into terrorist activities through "an appeal to ideology, coercion using physical and emotional distress, leveraging family relationships, causing dishonor or shame, and conducting internet campaigns"<sup>44</sup>. In this respect, it is argued that terrorists understand society's social, political and economic organization and use the psychosocial positioning of women as vertical transmitters of morals and family values<sup>45</sup> to involve them in terrorism.

Other scholars assert that women's engagement in terrorism derives from socio-cultural variables such as marginalization, social dislocation, and alienation, which drive women into terrorism in order to: earn a living, gain respect or acquire social status<sup>46</sup>, isolation caused by cultural norms and practices, emigration, conversion to certain religions and criminal behavior. Sageman<sup>47</sup> for example, takes the view that terrorist groups recruit women by employing one of three approaches: i) *top-down*, ii) *horizontal* and iii) *bottom-up*. In regard to the *top-down approach*, terrorist organizations actively recruit female members by approaching them. The PKK<sup>48</sup> for instance actively approaches Kurdish women with promises of freedom and protection, while employing slogans such as 'liberating women, liberating Kurdistan'<sup>49</sup>. In addition, religious terrorists in Pakistan target young girls through *Madrassas*<sup>50</sup>, and use them to exercise control over their families through the radicalized girls<sup>51</sup>. The advent of information

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Byrd & Decker, "Why the U.S. Should Gender its Counter-terrorism Strategy" [http://www.us\\_gender\\_counterte rrorism\\_strategy.com](http://www.us_gender_counterte rrorism_strategy.com) accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Atran, S. "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism," *Science*, 299, (March 7, 2003), pp. 1534 – 1539.

<sup>47</sup> Sageman, M. *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Kurdistan Workers' Party.

<sup>49</sup> Özçınar, Z. & Kaya, B. "Women join terrorist PKK for many reasons, mainly seeking freedom" *Today's Zaman* (January 29, 2012) [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=116F9ECB7435D31A5C42BF7596C9F52D?newsId=269867](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=116F9ECB7435D31A5C42BF7596C9F52D?newsId=269867) accessed on April 6, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Religious schools.

<sup>51</sup> Bloom, M. "Bombshells: women and terror" *Gender Issues* (2011) 28, pg. 14.

communication technologies especially the internet and its widespread use and accessibility to people from all walks of life, has resulted in the shrinking of time, space and distance, thus facilitating the expansion and connectedness of terrorists' networks globally. Thus, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century terrorists conduct their campaigns, recruitment and other terrorist actions through the internet and social media. The scholars note in this regard that there are a number of websites dedicated to instructing women on the necessary steps to take in providing medical care to wounded soldiers. The websites cited include the *Al-Qaeda* sponsored websites that publish online magazines such as "*Al-Khansaa*," and "*Al-Shamikha*" that mainly focus on encouraging women to support male *jihadis* and raise their children to believe in an extremist ideology.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Sageman's *horizontal approach* argument attributes radicalization of women to the effect of social networks including pre-existing familial bonds of members already involved in terrorist organizations<sup>53</sup>. A case in point is that of Samantha Lewthwaite, who is alleged to be the widow of a deceased Kenyan- Fahmi Jamal Salim- who was associated with an al-Qaeda commander, Musa Dheere<sup>54</sup>. Sageman's *bottom-up approach*<sup>55</sup> however gives women agency by recognizing that females actively approach terrorist organizations to be recruited for reasons that may include self-liberation from the bonds of tradition and gender inequality<sup>56</sup> or avenging the death of a family member<sup>57</sup>.

Many scholars also identify religion as one of the instruments used to mobilize women to support terrorist agendas<sup>58</sup>. It is argued that this form of mobilization that invokes religion occurs due to women's dependence on men, not only to provide leadership but also livelihood and sustenance. This blind reliance triggers them to turn to terrorism in the hope of being able to independently sustain themselves from the meagre rewards they receive for their activities in those groups<sup>59</sup>. Furthermore, terrorist groups take up religious identity and use

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<sup>52</sup> [http://csis.org/files/attachments/04192012\\_TheRolesofWomeninTerrorismandCounterterrorism\\_Panel.pdf](http://csis.org/files/attachments/04192012_TheRolesofWomeninTerrorismandCounterterrorism_Panel.pdf) accessed on April 8, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Sageman, M. *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> *The Guardian*, (Friday 27 June 2014) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian> accessed on July 16, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Sageman, M. *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Cunningham, K.J. "Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 26 (3) (May - June 2003), pg. 181.

<sup>57</sup> Shah, B., Ul Islam, N. & Taseer, S. "Lady parts" *Newsweek*, (September 23, 2013) pp. 30 – 33.

<sup>58</sup> Sjoberg L. & Gentry, C.E. *Women, Gender and Terrorism* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2009), pg. 41.

<sup>59</sup> Terror's 'Invisible Women', <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/04/opinion/la-oe-cunningham-women-jihadists-20120404> accessed on November 9, 2012.

religious values and practices to promote their radical agenda<sup>60</sup>. This often occurs when state policymakers engage in counterproductive counter-terrorism efforts,<sup>61</sup> based on profiling persons who profess Islamic faith and wear the distinct Islamic dress. This may lead both women and men who profess Islamic faith, to develop a sense of exclusion and as a result rationalize engagement in terrorist activities because of marginalization and discrimination<sup>62</sup>. Similarly, Sue Mahan and Pamela Griset in their research have categorized the roles played by women in terrorism into four main categories: Spies, sympathizers<sup>63</sup>, warriors<sup>64</sup> and dominant forces.<sup>65</sup>

Within these, the women take part in operations, transport of merchandise and sometimes they are the communication tools within the cell. Others take charge of logistics: smuggling and providing hiding places for weapons; as well as providing food and sexual services for men in combat, among other support services. Yet others provide strategic information, choose well-populated targets to result in the greatest number of victims, conduct observations and accompany males to the site of an attack to detract suspicion.<sup>66</sup> Other female terrorists simply provide temptation.<sup>67</sup> They also participate in the recruitment and training of young women who have been chosen to be suicide bombers.<sup>68</sup> Women thus continue to be involved in terrorist activities because of their strategic and tactical value to dominant male terrorists. It is further argued that in spite of the ever-rising different roles women play in terrorism, sometimes these roles are dictated by special conditions, where due to violent conflicts, males become casualties, and hence women engage in terrorism in a bid to fill the positions left by men.

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<sup>60</sup> Qarzi, F. "The Muhajidaat: Tracing the Early Female Warriors of Islam," in *Women, Gender and Terrorism*, ed. Sjoberg, L. & Gentry, C.E (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2009), pp. 44 – 57.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> *Global Post*, "In Saudi Arabia Women Join Fight Against Terror" September 2010 <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/saudi-arabia/100903/saudi-arabia-women-join-fight-against-terror> accessed on October 9, 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Perez, G., *Women and Terrorism: Female Activity in Domestic and International Terror*, (Argon and Collins, 2012) pg. 16.

<sup>65</sup> *The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* "Female Suicide Terrorism - Consequences for Counter-Terrorism" (2010) No. 5 <http://www.organizationforsecurityandcooperationineurope.org> accessed on September 13, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre "Women in terrorism: a Palestinian feminist revolution or gender oppression?" (2006) *Centre for Special Studies* (C.S.S).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> "Eliminating Violence Against Women: Forms, Strategies and Tools" (April 2008) [http://www.unicri.it/news/2008/0804-3\\_crime\\_commission/eliminating\\_violence.pdf](http://www.unicri.it/news/2008/0804-3_crime_commission/eliminating_violence.pdf) accessed on September 12, 2013.

An example of this is in Chechnya where women were involved in radical groups or whose family members of female activists showed an articulated willingness, compassion and legitimization for participation of women as actors in the very violent acts as well as supporters.<sup>69</sup>

Some scholars argue that the motives of women undertaking suicide missions are more complex and at least initially, contain personal motivations. These motivations may include avenging a personal loss or achieving fame and recognition, escaping a life of sheltered dullness and achieving gender “equality” or nationalism<sup>70</sup>. For example, women of the ETA terrorist group expressed this as the only opportunity of becoming “equal” to men<sup>71</sup> - but within the context and structures and processes of patriarchy. In this connection, suicide or homicide bombing when executed by women and young girls reaps a lot of media attention. This is demonstrated by the case of Chechnya ‘black widows’<sup>72</sup> and Palestine’s first female suicide bomber Wafa Idris,<sup>73</sup> who was elevated to the status of a heroine and became the reference point in recruiting female terrorists to Palestine’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade<sup>74</sup>. This group of scholars therefore argues that females’ sexuality plays an important role in the group dynamics and does alter the nature of terrorism itself. The fact that women receive more attention than men for carrying out the same terrorist act is understood by terrorist groups and the female terrorists themselves. “*We know that the audience will be shocked by seeing that it is the same woman who gives life, who also takes life.*”<sup>75</sup>

It is important however, to note that there is no evidence as suggested by the analysis above, of the archetypal female terrorist or counter-terrorist. Her description is varied from her physique to her role within the organization and

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<sup>69</sup> The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe “Female Suicide Terrorism -Consequences for Counter-Terrorism” (2010) No. 5  
<http://www.organizationforsecurityandcooperationineurope.org> accessed on September 13, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Meyers S. L. “From Dismal Chechnya, Women Turn to Bombs” *New York Times*, September 10, 2004.

<sup>71</sup> MacDonald, E. *Shoot the Women First*, (London, Fourth Estate, 1991) pg. 97.

<sup>72</sup> Meyers, S. L. “From Dismal Chechnya, Women Turn to Bombs” *New York Times*, (September 10, 2004).

<sup>73</sup> Usher, G. “At 18, Bomber Became Martyr and Murderer” *The Guardian*, (March 30, 2002).

<sup>74</sup> Claudet, S. “More Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers Could Be On The Way: Analysts” *Middle East Times*, (March 1, 2002).

<sup>75</sup> Schweitzer, Y. “Female suicide bombers for God,” *Tel Aviv Notes*, No. 88, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, (9 October 2003).

to her psychological make-up<sup>76</sup>. Scholars such as Adler<sup>77</sup>, Chesney-Lind,<sup>78</sup> and MacDonald<sup>79</sup> attribute this conception to the socially constructed ideology of women as life-givers, not life-takers and the belief that women are not psychologically wired for aggression. It automatically assumes that the violent female offender is an anomaly, or, at the very least, an involuntary participant. Even when a violent female offender or terrorist has been implicated it is assumed that she is not the brain behind the brawn, or a willing and eager participant.<sup>80</sup> Rather, she is assumed to be a victim of circumstances beyond her control or providing secondary (soft) support to a larger male-dominated terrorist campaign. Such dismissive assumptions on the status of women in terrorist activities increase the likelihood of terrorist networks utilizing female participants as their instruments to perpetrate terrorist acts.

The scholarly debates reviewed above share one running theme: that women join terrorist organizations for varied reasons but in most cases, not as volitional actors but as reluctant (victim) actors, driven to terrorism by either pressure or influence of male associates or extreme socio-economic or political circumstances beyond their control. Little attention is given to the possibility that women as autonomous actors, decide on their own volition, to join terrorist networks, driven by the same motivations as men, for national, political and human rights causes, as triggers for engaging in terrorist activities.<sup>81</sup>

## 6.0 Media Portrayal of the Female Terrorist

Some sections of the media, through their portrayal of the female terrorist, tend to legitimize and reinforce the patriarchal mindsets and stereotyping of women prevalent in political and academic discourse.

This gendered portrayal views female terrorist actors, as irrational, hysterical, hyper-feminine, masculine<sup>82</sup>, sexual deviants or fanatical and cruel perpetrators

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Adler, F. *The incidence of female criminality in the contemporary world* (NY: New York University Press, 1981).

<sup>78</sup> Chesney-Lind, M. *The female offender: Girls, women, and crime* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997).

<sup>79</sup> MacDonald, E. *Shoot the Women First*, (London, Fourth Estate, 1991) pg. 97.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Cunningham, K.J. "Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26, No. 3 (2003): pp. 171 – 195.

<sup>82</sup> Bielby, C. "Bonnie und Kleid: Female terrorists and the Hysterical Feminine" *Forum* 2, (GB: University of Edinburgh, 2006) pp. 1-18  
<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/archive/02/bielby.pdf> accessed on June 17, 2014.

of violence<sup>83</sup>. These portrayals according to Sternadori <sup>84</sup> fall into four main categories: *naïve, defenseless victims*<sup>85, 86</sup>; *failed wives and mothers*<sup>87</sup>; *sexual deviant*<sup>88, 89, 90</sup> and *ruthless aggressive perpetrators of violence*<sup>91, 92, 93</sup>. As Patkin rightly put it, "... media representations of female terrorists consciously seek out alternate explanations behind women's participation in terror in a way that does not seem paralleled in the coverage of male suicide bombers, whose official ideological statements appear to be taken at face value."<sup>94</sup>

## 7.0 International Terrorism: The Gendered Media Portrayal of Samantha Lewthwaite

The Horn of Africa sub-region has indeed been dubbed as the most vulnerable to radicalism and extremism, especially international terrorism in Africa. Kenya and Somalia have been identified among the countries in the Horn of Africa region that are predisposed to terrorist activities,<sup>95</sup> and are said to be the most

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<sup>83</sup> Gentry, C. and Sjoberg, L. "Narratives of Mothers, Monsters and Whores" in *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, (London: Zed Books, 2007) pg. 41.

<sup>84</sup> Sternadori, M. "Sexy, Tough, or Inept? Depictions of Women Terrorists in the News" Paper on Female Terrorists in the Media (2007) [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/7/2/0/9/p172098\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/7/2/0/9/p172098_index.html) accessed on June 19, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> Galvin, M.D. "The Female Terrorist: A Socio-Psychological Perspective" *Behavioural Science and the Law*, 1 (1983): pp.19 – 32.

<sup>86</sup> Inger, F. "Power and migrant Muslim women" *International Sociological Association* (2010) Gothenburg, Sweden.

<sup>87</sup> Dickey, C. "Women of Al Qaeda" *Newsweek*, (October 23, 2005) <http://www.newsweek.com/2005/12/11/women-of-al-qaeda.html#> accessed on June 21, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> Neuburger, L. *Women and Terrorism* (Britain, Macmillan Press, 1996) pg. 35.

<sup>89</sup> Newman, H. "The Worst Exploitation" *The Boston Globe*, (January 7, 2004) [http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2004/06/07/the\\_worst\\_exploitation/](http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2004/06/07/the_worst_exploitation/) accessed on June 18, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> Tremlett, G., "ETA's new generation of female fighters" *New Zealand Herald*, (August 1, 2009) [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/terrorism/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=340&objectid=10587920](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/terrorism/news/article.cfm?c_id=340&objectid=10587920) accessed 20 June 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Gentry, C. & Sjoberg, L. "Narratives of Mothers, Monsters and Whores" in *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, (London: Zed Books, 2007) pg. 36.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Patkin, T. "Explosive Baggage: Female Palestinian Suicide Bombers and the Rhetoric of Emotion" in *Women and Language* (2004), 27:2 pg. 85.

<sup>95</sup> West, D. "Combating Terrorism in the Horn of Africa and Yemen." *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/yemen-report-bcsia.pdf>. accessed on September 20, 2012.

vulnerable to terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>96</sup>.

Rosand *et al.*,<sup>97</sup> concur and attribute this to a number of factors including, severe civil and interstate conflicts, weak governance, and statelessness, poverty, political isolation, porous borders, which working in concert, increase the vulnerability of the region to the growth of radical Islamic extremism.<sup>98,99, 100</sup> Since 1998, terrorist attacks have been on the rise in the Horn of Africa and in particular in Kenya and Somalia. Kenya has experienced the largest number of terrorist incidents and the trend is on the rise<sup>101</sup>. In fact, following its military intervention into Somalia in October 2011 in pursuit of the *Al-Shaabab* terrorists that had incessantly attacked Kenya, there has been a sharp spike in the number of terrorist incidents within the country.<sup>102</sup> In Somalia, more than two decades of civil war, has created insecurity, crisis of governance and loss of legitimate authority of the state<sup>103</sup>. Within this context, violence perpetrated by the *Al-Shaabab* terrorist organization, continues to cause insecurity in both Somalia and the region<sup>104</sup>.

In Kenya and Somalia specifically, a growing number of women have been involved in terrorist activities including the planning, training, financing, information dissemination and other forms of perpetration of terrorist acts. In Somalia, two major suicide attacks in 2012, are said to have been spearheaded by women working with *Al-Shaabab*<sup>105</sup>. These attacks led to the death of the Transitional Federal Government's interior minister, and two other prominent government officials<sup>106</sup>. It was also reported that another young female suicide

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<sup>96</sup> Bashir, A. H., Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Speech at the Meeting of Ministers of Justice of IGAD member states on Legal Cooperation Against Terrorism, (20 September 2007).

<sup>97</sup> Rosand, E, Millar, A. & Ipe, J. "Enhancing Counter-terrorism in Eastern Africa" *African Security Review*, No. 18: (2007) 2.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Wright, L. *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), pp.163-198; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, (2004), pp. 57 – 70.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> World Bank Report "Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics" (January 2005).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Nantulya, P. "Beyond Westgate: Towards a Comprehensive and Conflict Responsive Counterterrorism Strategy" *Conflict Trends* (November 2013) pp. 11 – 18.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

bomber killed six people in Mogadishu on *Al-Shaabab's* orders<sup>107</sup>. As elsewhere, such involvement has been aided by globalization and information technology.

The 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013 Westgate terror attack in Nairobi that killed at least 72 people, a number of whom were foreigners, is believed to have been planned and headed by a female terrorist, Samantha Lewthwaite. This claim was further supported by accounts from a number of the hostages who managed to escape<sup>108</sup>. Furthermore, *Al-Shaabab*, the terrorist organization that took responsibility for the atrocious act, actually praised Samantha Lewthwaite online for a job well done, following the terrorist attack at the Westgate shopping mall.<sup>109</sup>

## 8.0 Lewthwaite and Gendered Media Portrayal

Sjoberg notes that the socially constructed meaning of femininity and masculinity defines women by their ability to have children<sup>110</sup>. The motherhood role is then used to frame female terrorist activity. A good example to illustrate this argument is the case of Samantha Lewthwaite. In almost all media depictions of her, the writers and reporters tend to cast her in terms of her motherhood role and hence refer to her as 'the mother of three children' or 'the mother of four' among others. The Daily Telegraph<sup>111</sup> for example, in an interview with a police officer in which the paper was seeking information on Samantha, is quoted as having observed that "Samantha Lewthwaite is one of the names in our records. She had 'three children' with her..." Similarly, Samantha's father was also quoted as saying, "I cannot believe she would be involved in something like this and be there with 'the children'..." To amplify this image of Samantha, the newspaper posted some pictures of her posing with her young child and husband and her newborn child. In addition, the Sun's<sup>112</sup> cover page on the day following the 7/7 London bombings, posted a large picture of Samantha Lewthwaite cradling her second child in a motherly gesture. The caption at the bottom of the picture read: "He kissed 'our child' goodbye then went off to blow up King's Cross." This media portrayal of her role as a nurturer and life giver, seems intended to legitimize patriarchy by deflecting attention away from her role as a powerful agent of international terrorism. This narrative further depicts Lewthwaite the female terrorist, as a domesticated terrorist, thereby downplaying the violence of

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<sup>107</sup> <http://terrorismnafrica.com/al-shabaab-sends-woman-to-kill-somali-pm/> accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>108</sup> Nantulya, P. "Beyond Westgate: Towards a Comprehensive and Conflict Responsive Counterterrorism Strategy" *Conflict Trends* (November 2013) pp. 11 – 18.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Sjoberg, L, Gentry. C. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (Britain, Zed Books, 2007) pg. 33.

<sup>111</sup> Pflanz, M., Laing, A., Rayner, G. & Whitehead, T. "Was the White Widow among attackers?" *The Daily Telegraph* (September 24, 2013) pg. 4.

<sup>112</sup> "Married to a 7/7 Suicide Bomber" *The Sun* (September 8, 2005) Scott D. C. pg. 18.



the terrorist act itself<sup>113</sup>. In other words, according to this narrative, although women may be terrorists, they do not pose much of a threat because they are motivated by their nurturing instincts as women. Such ideas and accounts of female terrorists in the media have the effect of limiting the role of female terrorists to the private sphere, thereby reinforcing the patriarchal-determined traditional gendered norms.

Another equally distorted media image of Samantha Lewthwaite, is as the “white widow” and as a sexual deviant with multiple relationships with men. In this connection, several articles highlighted the number of husbands she has had and how ‘quickly’ she moves on to another upon the death of one. In the *Guardian*<sup>114</sup> for instance, the writer states that “for a while, she condemned his attack (her first husband’s suicide attack at King’s Cross), but by 2008, just three years after his death, she was in ‘her search for a new husband’, and was expressly looking for a jihadist – and found one – He (the second husband) has since been thought to have died while on a terrorist mission, and latest reports suggest Lewthwaite may have made ‘a third match’. Another newspaper, the *Mail Online*<sup>115</sup>, quotes an excerpt from a BBC interview that claimed that “Lewthwaite agreed to marry Salim because she wanted a young man of a different race, preferably the black race, who was very handsome and strong in Muslim faith.” Such accounts of Samantha portray her as a cold-hearted “white widow” who has no qualms about moving from one man to the next following their death. According to Gentry and Sjoberg<sup>116</sup>, such gendered narratives are intended to portray violent women as wayward, dysfunctional or possessing a perverted sexuality. In such cases, female sexuality is highlighted as an underlying explanation for female violence. By dubbing Lewthwaite as the ‘White Widow’, the media was portraying her in a similar manner to ‘black widow’- the term used in Chechnya to describe the Chechen female terrorists who took part in bombings and assaults following the death of their husbands<sup>117</sup>. The ‘white’ part of the name is in reference to her ethnicity. Even some *Al-Shaabab* postings on the internet described Lewthwaite as the ‘white sister’<sup>118</sup>. The use of such nicknames is not only derogatory to women but also serves to place such women in an “abnormal” class of their own—the class of ruthless female terrorists who are social deviants that have failed to live up to the expectations of society.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> “The Radicalisation of Samantha Lewthwaite, the Aylesbury Schoolgirl who became the ‘White Widow’” *The Guardian* (June 27, 2014).

<sup>115</sup> Hall, J. “‘White Widow’ Samantha Lewthwaite marries into the family of a notorious al-Qaeda commander” *The Mail Online* (June 30, 2014) <http://www.mailonline.co.uk> accessed on July 1, 2014.

<sup>116</sup> Gentry, C. and Sjoberg, L. “Narratives of Mothers, Monsters and Whores” in *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, (London: Zed Books, 2007) pp. 27 – 57.

<sup>117</sup> “She is accused of planning a bomb onslaught...but who is the “White Widow”?” *Belfast Telegraph* (March 9, 2012) pg. 16.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

## 9.0 Resilience of Patriarchy

The above review of the scholarly debate and media portrayal on women, participation in terrorism reaffirms my overall argument that International Relations discourse and action remains gendered and highly influenced by patriarchal ideologies. As in other areas of governance in public life, patriarchy is deeply rooted in the terrorist structures and hence there is really no tangible evidence that demonstrates that women's participation in terrorist activities lead to the transformation and humanization of the war system. In other words, the active participation of women in terrorist activities does not necessarily challenge or transform the underlying patriarchal values and norms engrained in the terrorist structures and processes. Beyler concurs and asserts that, "*It is mostly men who govern this infrastructure... Women are rarely involved in the higher echelons of the decision-making process of these groups. Women may volunteer or might be coerced to conduct a murderous strike, but the woman's role is ultimately dictated by the patriarchal hierarchy that rules Islamic societies and its terrorist groups.*"<sup>119</sup> Beyler concludes that the emergence of female terrorists cannot and should not be construed as the emancipation or liberation of women, especially if used in the Western sense of the word<sup>120</sup>. Other scholars like Karla J. Cunningham,<sup>121</sup> Miranda Alison,<sup>122</sup> Caron Gentry<sup>123</sup> and Jessica West<sup>124</sup> emphasize female agency in terrorist activities but do not provide any evidence to show that their narratives view this agency as autonomous and volitional and whether such agency can meaningfully challenge patriarchy and masculinity in terrorist structures and processes.

## 10.0 Women as Agents of Countering Terrorism

The gender factor in counter-terrorism measures is severely under-reported and often disregarded by both scholars and governments.<sup>125</sup> The role that women can and do play in curbing and preventing terrorism outweigh the role they play in perpetrating it. Women are important actors against terror, as well as an instrument for peace. Women's role in other arenas of peace building and peacemaking especially in post conflict societies is well documented in many studies. However, the role of women in preventing violent

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<sup>119</sup> Beyler C. "Using Palestinian Women as Bombs" *New York Sun*, November 15, 2006.

<sup>120</sup> Farhana A. "The Bomber Behind the Veil" *The Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 2005.

<sup>121</sup> Cunningham, K.J. "Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26, No. 3 (2003): pp. 171 – 195.

<sup>122</sup> Alison, M. "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security," *Security Dialogue* 35, No. 4 (2004): pp. 447 – 463.

<sup>123</sup> Gentry, C. "The Relationship between New Social Movement Theory and Terrorism Studies: The Role of Leadership, Membership, Ideology and Gender," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, No. 2 (2004): pp. 274 – 293.

<sup>124</sup> West, J. "Feminist IR and the Case of the 'Black Widows': Reproducing Gendered Divisions," *Innovations: A Journal of Politics* 5 (2004): pp. 1 – 16.

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.chrgi.org/projects/docs/A64211.pdf> accessed on August 16, 2013.

extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism has hardly been documented. In the few documented cases, women are depicted as basically torturers. For example, Fletcher and Stover note that where women have been actors as counter-terrorist agents of the State, they have demonstrated the same type patriarchal mindset as men. They note in this respect that female guards and interrogators in some cases use counter-terrorism management techniques, in which they employ gender (feminized) coercion methods<sup>126</sup> to interrogate male Muslim prisoners. The female interrogators use their bodies as an interrogation technique to coerce compliance of male Muslim terrorist prisoners,<sup>127</sup> by for example, initiating physical contact to interrupt the prisoners during their prayers, which then would first require performing cleansings, as Muslims cannot pray after physical contact with females<sup>128</sup>. The rationale of using this method of coercion and interrogation, derives from the belief that Arabs and Muslims only understand force and that their biggest weakness is shame and humiliation in the form of being 'feminized'<sup>129</sup> De-masculinization and feminization of the subject is thus used as a tool of humiliation and extorting information from the terrorist suspects, in societies that are deeply rooted in patriarchal norms. What emerges from this example is that, even when women are portrayed as counterterrorist actors, their role remains instrumental and subordinate to a higher authority. Furthermore, patriarchal images of femininity and masculinity shape the strategies they employ in counterterrorist action.

There is therefore need to pay greater attention to those women and men that are key and strategic actors in the areas as of gender activism, peace and conflict, governance, human rights and media. This category if facilitated could become key agents, players and reformers in defining and shaping counter- terrorism response strategies.

For example in Kenya, women human rights and peace building NGOs such as, FIDA (K), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI-Africa), Maendeleo Ya

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<sup>126</sup> The Schmidt-Furlow Report in Denbeaux, M. & Denbeaux J. "Torture, Who Knew? An Analysis of the FBI and Department of Defense Reactions to Harsh Interrogation Methods at Guantánamo" *Seton Hall Law Review* Vol. 41 (January 31, 2012) (4) *Symposium: National Security Policy and the Role of Lawyering: Guantanamo and Beyond* Article 7, mentions gender coercion methods like placing female underwear on the heads of male prisoners, compelling them to wear *burkas*, dresses, women's coats, perfumes and make-up.

<sup>127</sup> Stover, E. & Fletcher, L. "Guantanamo and its Aftermath: U.S. Detention and Interrogation Practices and Their Impact on Former Detainees" (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2009) *Berkeley Human Rights Centre and International Human Rights Law Clinic* <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/HRCweb/pdfs/Gtmo-Aftermath2.pdf> accessed on June 28, 2014.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Zurbriggen, E.L. "Sexualized torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib prison: Feminist Psychological analyses" *Feminism and Psychology*, 18: (2008) pp. 301 – 320.

Wanawake Organization (MYWO), the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK), the Coalition on Violence against Women (COVAW), and the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) could work together with governments to implement at the national level, programs for countering violent extremism and terrorism.

The above notwithstanding, it is increasingly acknowledged that women like men, have the potential to play a major role in combating terrorism. But this can only happen if they are actively and consciously involved in decision-making processes, intelligence efforts and community initiatives being implemented to deter extremism and radicalization. For women to become a strategic asset in combating terrorism, they also need an enabling environment that adequately responds to their socio-economic welfare and other needs that drive some to terrorist activities. Terrorist movements are increasingly taking advantage of the failure to tap into this potential. In this regard, women's specific capacities, experience, knowledge and talents that can be utilized to make a vital contribution to a stable and secure society, need to be investigated and documented, through systematic research. Such research would help identify social contexts and conditions where women could have a significant impact in preventing their children from joining or getting exposed to extremist activity. They, therefore, can make effective agents of counter-terrorism within the context of their socially acquired maternal roles and capacity to influence and dissuade their children away from terrorism.

Some scholars assert that strengthening relationship ties within the family unit can serve as a credible counterterrorism strategy that is a non-violent alternative to extremism and terrorism. Bjørge for example, notes the importance of avoiding a 'social vacuum' when a terrorist turns away from terrorism and repents.<sup>130</sup> In his study of what moves right-wing extremists to de-radicalize, he explains that upholding family commitments like getting a boyfriend or girlfriend outside that environment, are some of the strongest motivations for abandoning a terrorist organization.<sup>131</sup> Good programs such as those that facilitate getting employment or getting married are all geared towards rehabilitation of extremists and terrorists.<sup>132</sup> These programs adopt 'softer' strategies rather than the militaristic approaches, which were adopted by many states especially following the 2001 September 11 terrorist attack. Such programs include education and dialogue, poverty eradication policies, etc. Through these programs, violent and

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<sup>130</sup> Bjørge, T. "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right" in Bjørge T. & Horgan, J. *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2008) pp.30-48, pp. 41 – 42.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid (Getting a girlfriend (or boyfriend) outside the group is a frequent cause of quitting violent extremist organizations. Such situations obviously involve establishing new bonds of loyalty and setting different priorities).

<sup>132</sup> Boucek, C. "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia" in Tore Bjørge T. & Horgan, J. *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2008), pp. 212 – 223, pp. 214.

radical terrorists and extremists get rehabilitated and incorporated into credible social networks that discourage them from involving themselves with their former extremist affiliations.

## 11.0 Conclusion

This article has examined and analyzed the gender dimension of terrorism, paying special attention to the narratives inspired by patriarchal ideologies that distort women's agency in terrorist activities and create the impression that only "abnormal" women engage in terrorist action. The possibility that perfectly normal women can independently and on their own volition decide to join terrorist networks, is silenced by the dominant discourse that insists on depicting the female engaged in terrorism as a social deviant or a vulnerable victim of circumstances.

The study has noted that institutional and legal frameworks designed to counter terrorism are equally gendered, as is the media portrayal of female terrorists. Under these circumstances, moving forward, I suggest the employment of a feminist perspective in analyzing issues of gender in international relations. Further, strategies to combat terrorism must be guided by a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental causes that drive human beings to carry out suicidal actions that cause death to themselves and many innocent people. Hard militaristic approaches alone have to date been proven to be quite ineffective in combating the growing intensity of the terrorism menace. Effective responses to terrorism require multifaceted strategies that seek to understand and positively harness the various roles played by both state and non-state actors /stakeholders, especially the female gender. For women to play an effective role in combating terrorism, there has to be a true shift that embraces gender lenses in counter-terrorism response, peace, security and development. The social relativism that pays little attention to the contribution of women in decision making hinder the application of effective counter-terrorism strategies and loses women as important actors against terror and promoters of peace.

Furthermore, need is there to critically analyze the impact of various global changes such as the swift expansion of globalization; explosion of information technology and the widening gap in the distribution of power and resources, as well as the extent to which these have shaped the rapidly multiplying modes of terrorist behavior and acceleration of terrorist and counterterrorist actors and actions.

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# Learning from Country Best Practice in Africa: In Search of a Grand Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Patrick Maluki<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The article examines the different manifestations of terrorism and the coping strategies adopted by states in Africa to manage the scourge. The most used counter terrorism strategies include military deployment, regional collaborations, anti-terrorism legislations, training and capacity building, anti-money laundering initiatives, forensic science/surveillance as well as economic empowerment initiatives. The article note that each counter terrorism strategy has particular situation where its utility can be maximized, and the article recommends states in Africa should apply situation specific strategies to effectively manage terrorism in the continent.*

**Key Words:** Counter-terrorism, deterrence, compellence, counter-terrorism strategy

## 1.0 Introduction

Terrorism as a phenomenon, has posed an international security threat for a long time. Robi Chakravorti (1994) divides the history of its practice in three categories: establishment, anti-establishment and criminal-professional<sup>2</sup>.

Establishment terrorism focuses on social solidarity through enforced compliance; they propagate punishment for violation of norms and sacrifices for their preservation. Examples include the burning of women as witches under Christianity and of 'suttees' in parts of Hindu India, beheading or amputation of body parts practiced by some Islamic countries and public hanging or lynching of people under the aegis of constitutional secular governments<sup>3</sup>.

Anti-establishment terrorism focuses on changing the status quo in society. The Jacobin reaction to the French monarchy during the French Revolution and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia are good examples of anti-establishment terrorism. Lastly, there is the criminal-professional terrorism<sup>4</sup>. The Mafia in Italy, the Ku Klux clan in the US and the 'thugs' of India are good examples. For instance, in Italy when government tried to crack down on the mafia, criminal gang members murdered two anti-mafia judges and gunned down a priest in church,<sup>5</sup> as a response.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Patrick Maluki is a lecturer at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.

<sup>2</sup>Robi Chakravorti (1994). Terrorism: Past, Present and Future. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 36 (Sep. 3, 1994), pp. 2340 – 2343 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4401715>) accessed on 16/2/2016.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## 2.0 Trends in Terrorism Manifestations

In the different epochs of its existence, terrorism has taken different forms and manifestations in line with the prevailing global conditions and environment. This has often generated confusion in the understanding of the concept, nature of its manifestations and possible mitigation strategies.

The European conquest of Africa depicted a number of terrorist acts while the ensuing liberation movements such as the Mau Mau in Kenya and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa were branded as terrorist groups. This state of affair has resulted in the maxim of: *'one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist'* - a statement which depicts the tendency of buck-passing and blame game in matters relating to criminal responsibility associated with terrorism.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a form of terrorism appeared that was typified primarily by its international character<sup>6</sup>, and the related shockwave brought about by the terrorist threats and attacks throughout the world. In this century, there has developed a trend in terrorism from the pure Jihadism and religion to 'religiously' inspired ideology, whose main purpose is to change the system. This emerging terrorist wave justifies their acts as arising from a collective revolutionary ideology that exceeds specific and concrete domestic requirements to bring about an effect throughout the international community<sup>7</sup>.

In 1937 the League of Nations adopted the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism. In the Convention, it was recognized that the expression of the act of terrorism meant criminal act against a state that is intended to create an atmosphere of terror in the minds of particular persons or the general public<sup>8</sup>. In this context, member states affirmed the principles of international law in which it is the duty of every member state to refrain from any act designed to encourage terrorist activities directed against another state and, undertake as provided, to prevent and punish activities of this nature and to collaborate for this purpose. Subsequently, the international community through the United Nations has dealt with terrorism from a legal and political perspective. In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy under resolution 60/288, which stated that terrorism "constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security"<sup>9</sup>. As a multilateral response, the United Nations has continued the efforts of combating new terrorist threats and challenges on the basis of international law.

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<sup>6</sup>Walter Laqueur, (2000). *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* Oxford Academic Press UK.

<sup>7</sup> Burke, J. (2004). *Al Qaeda: the true story of radical Islam*. (London: I.B. Tauri).

<sup>8</sup> League of Nations, *Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism*.

<sup>9</sup><http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml#poa4> accessed on February 3, 2016.

Kenya has experienced terrorist threats since the 1970's. However, the first major attack attributed to the Al-Qaeda group occurred in 1998 when two bombs exploded outside the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi killing 224 people.

Since then the country has experienced 167 attacks which has led to more than 763 fatalities and 5,313 injuries<sup>10</sup>. While the 1998 and 2002 terrorist attacks were attributed to Al-Qaeda, most of the other attacks especially from 2010, have been attributed to Al-Qaeda affiliate groups such as Al-Shabaab. The structure of Al-Shabaab follows a three-layered superstructure: the *Qiyaddabi or Shura* (Council), the Muhaajirrum (the foreign fighters and Somali with foreign passports) and the Ansar (the local Somali fighters)<sup>11</sup>.

For a long time, Kenya has been viewed as collateral in the execution of international terrorism where the real target was always a third state with which the terrorists group had grievances. This was the case particularly during the Norfolk Terrorist bombing in early 1970's, the attack on the US embassy in 1989 and the Kikambala bombing of the Israeli airliner. This trend is fast changing, and Kenya, today, is a direct target of terrorist attacks. The recent attack on Garissa University, Westgate Mall and sporadic attacks in Eastleigh, Coastal region and North Eastern regions of Kenya are true testimonies that Kenya is now a direct target of terrorist attacks. This state has been made worse by the attempts of terrorist groups trying to seek legitimacy in Kenya by recruiting and radicalizing Kenyan citizens into terrorism, hence the term "home grown terrorism" which is gaining currency in Kenya.

The growth of radicalization in Kenya has manifested itself in the spread to extreme Islamism mainly perpetuated by Wahabi ideology. This has resulted in the emergence of extremists and terrorist groups influenced by these ideologies. The development has further been influenced by a number of economic and social factors that has contributed to the growth of domestic radical groups. 'Home-grown' extremists have emerged and the current wave of radicalization into extreme violence in Kenya may be associated with individuals or groups that are inspired by religion and socio-economic factors.

The high occurrence and global spread of terrorism and the seeming inability of the World Community to combat it despite legislative and other counter-terrorism measures, has not only brought into question the viability of the strategies in place for responding to terrorism, but also the underlying conceptual, ideological and institutional frameworks underpinning action<sup>12</sup>.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century global environment that is driven by communication technology the act of terrorism has changed to become the leading international

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<sup>10</sup>Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephen Marrison (2015). The terrorist threat in Africa.

<sup>11</sup>Mwangi, O. Gakuo. (2012). 'State collapse, Al-Shabaab, Islamism, and Legitimacy in Somalia' *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 13(4): 513-527:519.

<sup>12</sup> Maria Nzomo (2013) the gender dimension of international terrorism (unpublished paper).

security threat. Specifically, after the September 2011 terrorist attack in the US, there was a dramatic change which showed that terrorists were ahead of governments. Using efficient information gathering and communication skills, they have been able to mount undetected explosions in different parts of the world. This new development spurred a number of studies on terrorism in search of possible solutions to the menace.

Unfortunately, most of the work was preliminary as it tried to define terrorism and failed to develop effective counter terrorism strategies. Worse still, most of this work was done in the West and none in Africa. This gap in the literature on African counter terrorism strategy has generated research interest in the field.

### 3.0 Counter-Terrorism Strategies

Terrorism is a highly concentrated as well as a globally distributed phenomenon that owes its survival to ability to adapt and adjust to challenges and countermeasures while continuing to identify and exploit its opponent's vulnerabilities. Despite its resilience, the struggle against terrorism, however, is never-ending. Norton. Bensahel, N. (2006), sees counter-terrorism activities as state actions that thwart terrorist violence by use of all tools of statecraft such as military force, criminal law measures, intelligence operations, regulatory controls, and diplomacy.<sup>13</sup>

Since terrorism is defined by the act and its intentions, which is basically to cause panic, fear and harm, then the contrary may imply that counter terrorism is a foundation on which defensive strategies and tactics are based. Counter terrorism must of necessity constitute the use of personnel and resources to prevent terrorism and their support networks. Indeed, success against terrorism efforts must be as tireless, innovative, and dynamic as that of the opponent<sup>14</sup>. The development of counter-terrorism policies reflected domestic political processes and different national approaches and could be explained by different self-conceptions and institutional practices. In Norton Bensahel's words counter terrorism is both a preventive and a responsive mechanism to terrorist activities. The Global Terrorism Index indicates that the two most successful strategies for ceasing the operations of over 80% of terrorist groups have been either policing or through the initiation of a political process. Only 7% were eliminated by full military engagement. A fundamental aim is that counter-terror strategy needs to have short, as well as long term goals. Efforts should not just be concentrated in stopping specific terrorist attacks, but also disrupting, breaking up, and eventually ending terrorist groups<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>Norton. Bensahel, N. (2006). "A Coalition of Coalitions: International Cooperation against Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29: 35 – 49.

<sup>14</sup>Martin G (2009), *Understanding Terrorism, Challenges, Perspectives and Issues*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed, Sage Publications.

<sup>15</sup>The Global Terrorism Index (<http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism>).

But it is important to appreciate the fact that counter terrorism is not as easy as I have tried to put it. It is hard to apply strategic studies concepts such as deterrence and compellence to counter terrorism. First terrorist groups are very amorphous and mutate frequently, they are also very innovative, their acts difficult to predict. This makes it hard to understand their centre of gravity that generates the zeal to keep fighting. Such characteristics have eroded states' capacity to mount effective counter terrorism strategies.

For instance, should states concentrate on countering the spread of terrorism ideology which generate new terrorists, day-by-day; or should they try to deter the terrorist acts of violence which cause panic, fear and harm? Is terrorism a poor man's war or rich man's war? Can we dismantle terrorists' networks without adversely affecting the economic welfare of societies? And lastly, there is the question of trading rights for security. As we all know one of the most popular counter terrorist strategies has been the enactment of security laws, but such have attracted criticism from human rights groups compromising international human standards at the expense of national security<sup>16</sup>.

In Kenya for instance the Security Laws (Amendment) Act 2014 attracted much criticism that saw the government taken to court. But despite these challenges, countries in Africa have put in place a number counter terrorism of comparative importance. These include but are not limited to:

### 3.1 Military Deployments

In 2011 Kenya deployed Kenya Defence Forces in Somalia to counter the threat of Al-Shabaab terror group<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, Ethiopian military forces continued counter-terrorism operations in Somalia in partnership with the Government of Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and were instrumental in combating Al-Shabaab in southern and central Somalia<sup>18</sup>. In addition, Nigeria committed a battalion of ground forces and logistical support in January 2013 to the ECOWAS, as part of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali. The Nigerian troops remained in Mali until July when the infantry battalion returned to Nigeria. Some smaller military logistical support elements remained in Mali along with their Formed Police Unit. Nigeria is also a member of the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Partnership.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), Migwi Pius (Col.) and Imbiakha Charles (Lt. Col.). (2014). (Eds.) *Operation Linda Nchi, The Official Account: Kenya's Military Experience in Somalia*. Nairobi: Kenya Defence Forces.

<sup>18</sup>Nzau, M. (2010). Counter-Terrorism in the Greater Horn of Africa 2004-2010: Revisiting the Somalia Question. *Journal of Language, Technology and Entrepreneurship in Africa*. 2(3): 163 – 177.

### 3.2 Anti-Money Laundering Initiatives

Ethiopia is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), an associate member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Nigeria is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), a regional Financial Action Task Force. This has helped Nigeria make significant progress in its anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). Nigerian government has been freezing and confiscating terrorist assets as designated by U.S. Executive Orders and by UNSCRs.

Kenya is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. In October 2012, Kenya was recognized by the FATF for progress in improving its anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime.

The Kenya National Assembly passed the 2013 Finance Act, containing amendments to the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act that strengthened Kenyan legal provision criminalizing the financing of terrorism. The Central Bank of Kenya recently ordered closure of all informal money transfer systems, *Hawalas* believed to be conduit for terrorism financing and took steps to encourage more people to use the formal financial sector in order to increase financial integrity by ensuring regulatory oversight.

Senegal is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA). The country also established procedures for the freezing of an account and other assets of known and suspected terrorists and terrorist organizations.

South Africa's financial intelligence unit is the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC), which requires intelligence to report to the FIC included banks, financial institutions, car dealers, attorneys, gold dealers, gambling establishments, real estate agents, foreign exchange dealers, securities traders, money lenders (to include those who lend against shares, e.g., brokers), entities selling travelers cheques, and Johannesburg stock exchange-registered individuals and companies.

Tunisia is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force. The Financial Intelligence Unit, the Tunisian Financial Analysis Commission (CTAF) are headed by the governor of the Central Bank and include representatives from a range of other agencies. The Tunisian penal code provides for the seizure of assets and property tied to narcotics trafficking and terrorist activities. Algeria's cooperation with Tunisia on counter-terrorism is particularly robust: an agreement between the two countries established military-to-military communications and a coordination committee in order to improve information sharing related to counter-terrorism activities.



Tanzania too is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) is responsible for combating money laundering and terrorist finance.

### 3.3 Regional Collaborations

The OAU Convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism, which was adopted at the 35<sup>th</sup> OAU Summit in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999, by African states, provides the regional architecture necessary for preventing and countering acts of terrorism in the region<sup>19</sup>.

To improve its counter-terrorism capacity, Ethiopia participated in programs funded through the US' Regional Strategic Initiative and Anti-Terrorism Assistance program (ATA), to develop capacity in its on leadership and management, border security, and investigative skill development.

As a member of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counter-terrorism, Ethiopia participates in regional and multilateral forums for Counter-terrorism, including IGAD Security Sector Program trainings, which build the capacity of IGAD member states to mitigate, detect, and deter terrorist activity<sup>20</sup>.

Kenya is a member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counter-terrorism and is a strong ally of the United States in the fight against al-Shabaab and al-Qa'ida (AQ).

Furthermore, Kenya remains one of Africa's largest beneficiaries of the US government's Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program focused on building law enforcement capacities in the areas of border security, investigations, and crisis response, and on the institutionalization of counter-terrorism prevention and response capabilities. DHS Customs and Border Patrol assistance provided multinational training including Kenya for rural border patrol units such as those in the Kenya Police Service and the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Tanzania is a member of the AU, the South African Development Community, and the East African Community, all of which have initiatives to address counter-terrorism. Through the East African Police Chiefs' Organization and South African Police Chiefs' Organization, the National Counter Terrorism Center

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<sup>19</sup> Treaty on Cooperation among the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Combating Terrorism (1999): OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999  
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/OAU-english.pdf> accessed on November 3, 2015.

<sup>20</sup>IGAD Conference (2003). "The Prevention and Combating of Terrorism," IGAD Secretariat, Addis Ababa, 24 –27 June.

maintains more frequent, informal contact with other police forces in the region. The Tanzania police force also works closely with Interpol. Tanzania is a member of the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counter-terrorism and participates in Global Counter-terrorism Forum events focused on the Horn of Africa.

Senegal is a member of the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Partnership (TSCTP). This is a multi-faceted, multi-year strategy aimed at defeating terrorist organizations by strengthening regional counter-terrorism capabilities, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces, promoting democratic governance, discrediting terrorist ideology, and reinforcing bilateral military ties with the United States<sup>21</sup>. The risk of violent extremism and terrorist activity in Senegal had increased following public threats against the country by terrorist organizations in northern Mali.

This saw the contribution of more than 900 troops to the UN Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and worked to enhance the capabilities of its police, gendarme, intelligence, and military forces to fight terrorist threats. At the regional level, Algeria has promoted the Comité d'état-major opérationnel conjoint (CEMOC), a joint counter-terrorism committee in cooperation with Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

### 3.4 Anti-Terrorism Acts/Legislation

In 2011 Ethiopia passed the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP) legislation that has been used to prosecute and convict individuals associated with terrorist activity. Similarly, Nigeria's Terrorism Act of 2011 was revised by a joint Senate-House of Representatives conference committee in December 2012 and the amendments enacted into law called the "Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011. The law mandated the National Security Advisor (NSA) as the coordinator for all counter-terrorism intelligence activities, and the Attorney General as the lead official for enforcement.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012<sup>22</sup> is the main legal framework concerned with counter-terrorism efforts in Kenya. Neighbouring states like Tanzania and Uganda also have their own counter-terrorism legislations in place.

Just like Kenya's Suppression of Terrorism Act 2012<sup>23</sup>, Uganda's Anti-Terrorism

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<sup>21</sup>U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism, Chapter 5 – Country Reports: Africa Overview, 28 April 2006, available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64335.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>22</sup><http://frc.go.ke/legislation/download/18> accessed on November 3, 2015.

<sup>23</sup><http://frc.go.ke/legislation/download/18> accessed on November 3, 2015.

Act, 2002<sup>24</sup> and Tanzania's Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002<sup>25</sup> are the main legal framework concerned with counter-terrorism efforts in both countries respectively. Kenya's 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2011 Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act, and 2010 Prevention of Organized Crime Act, together provided a strong legal framework under which to prosecute acts of terrorism. The landmark 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was passed in 2013 that strengthened the criminalization of financing acts of terrorism.

Regulations for the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act were drafted in 2011 and published in August 2012 as the Prevention of Terrorism Regulations 2012. The regulations established the police and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) as the institutions that are to collect and respond to reports of terrorist activity. The regulations also formalized the process for freezing assets, deeming a person a suspected terrorist, and sharing information between government agencies. The most recent but highly controversial legislation in Kenya is the Security Laws (Amendment) Act of 2014.

In 2007, the Government of Senegal amended its criminal code to establish criminal offences for terrorist acts as defined in the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. In addition, 12 separate articles in the criminal code provide the Government of Senegal the authority to prosecute terrorist activities.

In Senegal, the Ministry of Justice made positive improvements in 2013 by reinstating the Court of Illicit Enrichment to try cases of corruption. In addition, the three-year "Kaaraange Plan" (Protection Plan) launched in June 2013, is aimed at anticipating and preventing threats from terrorist groups. The plan is a joint effort between the police and gendarmerie, with training support from France.

On the judicial level, the Algerian government has tightened up its counter-terrorist measures by amending its Penal Code to include new types of crimes in the list of the terrorist activities. These crimes include the use of nuclear material, hostage-taking, damaging air, land and naval navigation facilities, the destruction of communication infrastructure and crimes related to the financing of terrorism.

In 2004, the South African government enacted the Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act (POCDATARA), which it used for the first time in 2012. The aim of the Act is "to provide for measures to prevent and combat terrorist and related activities; define the offence of terrorism and other offences associated or connected with terrorist activities;

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<sup>24</sup><https://www.unodc.org/tldb/showDocument.do?documentUid=6589> accessed on November 3, 2015.

<sup>25</sup>[http://www.immigration.go.tz/downloads/Tanzania\\_Prevention%20of%20Terrorism%20Act%202002%20.pdf](http://www.immigration.go.tz/downloads/Tanzania_Prevention%20of%20Terrorism%20Act%202002%20.pdf). accessed on November 3, 2015.

codify convention offences; give effect to international instruments dealing with terrorist and related activities; provide a mechanism to comply with UNSCRs; set out measures to prevent and combat the financing of terrorist and related activities; and define investigative measures in respect of terrorist and related activities.

SAPS/CI Division, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, and SSA are currently tasked with detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism within South Africa. The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is involved from the beginning of most counter-terrorism investigations and prosecutes such cases. All entities possess the knowledge, resources, intelligence capabilities, and sophisticated techniques to effectively implement current counter-terrorism legislation. However, problems exist with interagency investigative cooperation and intelligence sharing.

In Tunisia the 2003 counter-terrorism law remains the primary piece of legislation for dealing with terrorism offences. The Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence share responsibility for detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism. In particular, the Anti-Terrorism Brigade (BAT) – an elite unit under the Ministry of Interior’s National Police – is responsible for tactical operations related to Counter-terrorism. In Egypt, the ‘terrorist entities’ law consisting of ten articles was passed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, which gives the government greater powers in detaining individuals and groups considered harming national unity and disrupting public order.

### 3.5 Training and Capacity Building

To improve its counter-terrorism capacity, Ethiopia participates in programs funded through the U S’ Regional Strategic Initiative and Anti-Terrorism Assistance program (ATA), to develop capacity in its leadership and management, border security, and investigative skill development.

Nigerian enjoys cordial relations with the U.S. on counter-terrorism cooperation<sup>26</sup>. The Government of Nigeria has an intelligence infusion cell, the Joint Terrorist Branch (JTAB), tasked with streamlining coordination and information sharing on counter-terrorism matters among key agencies, which includes the State Security Service (SSS), the intelligence agencies, the national police, and the military<sup>27</sup>.

The Nigerian government participates in U.S. counter-terrorism capacity

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<sup>26</sup> Soros, George (2006): *The Age of Fallibility: Consequences of the War on Terror*, Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>27</sup>Jessica R. and Piombo (2007), “Terrorism and U.S. Counter-Terrorism Programs in Africa: An Overview,” *Strategic Insights*, January [journal on-line].

programs under the U.S. Department of State's Anti-Terrorism Assistance program, including the training of Nigerian Police Force members in the awareness and capacity to protect and preserve evidence from the crime scene of a suspected terrorist act<sup>28</sup>. Through the ATA program, Nigerian Police, customs officials, and immigration officers also participated in an interagency rural border patrol training to build the law enforcement sector's ability to effectively utilize all agencies in tackling rural border security challenges.

With US training and assistance, the government established an Anti-Terrorism Police Unit, the Joint Terrorism Task Force (later disbanded), a National Counter-Terrorism Centre, and a National Security Advisory Committee. Senegal worked to improve its law enforcement capacity by participating in multilateral training events organized by the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF), AU, and the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS). The U.S. Department of State's Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program provided training and enabling equipment to build their investigative and border security capacities. Through the Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI), ATA helped establish a Cyber Crime Investigative Unit with the Senegalese National Police, Criminal Investigative Unit.

### **3.6 Economic Empowerment/Development Initiatives**

There is a very close link between poverty and terrorism in the sense that poor people are more susceptible to radicalization. The poor are deprived of both material and emotional resources and feel lonely and disillusioned. It is in such a state that terror groups enlist most of their followers. This implies that counter terrorism should an economic angle that aims at capacity building the vulnerable groups by proving means of livelihood.

The Nigerian government is employing a more comprehensive strategy to address Boko Haram that combines security efforts with political and development efforts to reduce appeal by the group to the local communities. The government is working to address the legitimate concerns of the people of northern Nigeria and protect the rights of all. In addition, Nigeria continues to engage with national and local leaders through US-funded projects that expand vocational skills training for youth at risk of violent extremist messaging and recruitment<sup>29</sup>. Counter terrorism measures deduced include poverty alleviation programmes, economic development, education and social reforms. The Nigerian government is also aggressively addressing the challenges of poverty

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism, Chapter 5 – Country Reports: Africa Overview, 28 April 2006, available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64335.htm>;Internet; accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>29</sup>Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephene Morrison; the terrorist threat in Africa; available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles59534>.

through its youth empowerment program like ‘*You Win*’ and investing massively in infrastructure to promote economic development.

Similarly, Tunisia is making concerted efforts to improve socioeconomic conditions in the country through economic development and education programs in order to counter radicalization and violence. It is working closely with the US aid agency (USAID)’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) on several programs designed to counter violent extremism<sup>30</sup>. The programs, which include awareness campaigns, youth centres, and educational activities, seek to engage youth who are at risk of being recruited by violent extremist organizations. On its part, Egypt has earmarked \$1.3 billion for development and counter-terrorism efforts in the restive Sinai Peninsula, to contain Islamist insurgency<sup>31</sup>.

### 3.7 Forensic Science/Surveillance

The Government of Nigeria instituted the collection of biometric data for passport applications of all Nigerian citizens and upgraded the Nigerian machine-readable passports. Screening at the ports of entry of major airports in Nigeria including Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano improved, with passenger name records (PNR) being collected in advance for commercial flights. Border security at rural and extended land borders with Benin, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad were vulnerable to exploitation by Boko Haram and Ansaru.

Tunisia has an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and maintains fingerprint records for identification cards, criminal records, and latent prints. Tunisia also maintains a DNA data base and has expressed an interest in becoming a Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) member. Tunisia does not currently share its biometric data with any countries. Algeria and Tunisia have signed an agreement to strengthen border security coordination, including the creation of joint patrols to combat terrorism, human trafficking, smuggling, and illegal migration.

### 4.0 Conclusion

This paper has discussed the various counter terrorism strategies used by African states in the fight against the terrorism scourge. It notes that the development of counter-terrorism policies around the world reflects domestic political processes and different national approaches by states.

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<sup>30</sup>Bandyopadhyay, S., Sandler, T., Younas, J. (2010). *Foreign Aid as Counter-terrorism Policy*. St. Louis, MO. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

In this effort, in addition to local legislation global partnerships in the fight against terrorism occupy a key position in most of African country's counter terrorism strategies. For instance, Kenya has entered into cooperative agreements with the US government to counter terrorism<sup>32</sup>. Ethiopia participates in programs funded through the U.S.' Regional Strategic Initiative and Anti-Terrorism Assistance program (ATA), and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counter-terrorism. Nigerian enjoys cordial relations with the U.S. on counter-terrorism cooperation. The Government of Nigeria through help of the US has an intelligence infusion cell, the Joint Terrorist Branch (JTAB), tasked with streamlining coordination and information sharing on counter-terrorism matters among key agencies. Senegal works to improve its law enforcement capacity by participating in multilateral training events organized by the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF), AU, and ECOWAS.

As a multilateral response, the United Nations continue the efforts aimed at combating new threats and challenges on the basis of international law. The action undertaken in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States has seen the adoption of three major Security Council Resolutions (1368, 1373 and 1377) addressing terrorism in several ways.

However, in order to respond to emerging and more complex terrorism, challenges and to help fill the gap between the enormous need for counter-terrorism capacity building and available resources, in Africa the UN needs to deploy increased technical resources<sup>33</sup>.

Lastly, it is important to note that every counter terrorism strategy has its most appropriate situation at which its utility can be maximized. For instance, military deployment may be most appropriate in situations where eminent attack is about to happen or has already happened and the state needs to repulse the attackers. But if employed excessively it may raise resentment among the local community and provide fertile ground for radicalization of the youth into terrorism.

Regional collaborations are important for synergizing various states' intelligence as well as military capacities to thwart potential terrorist attacks.

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<sup>32</sup>Testimony of Robert F. Godec, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Nomination Hearing*, November 28, 2012.

<sup>33</sup>United Nations. (2010) Africa and International Counter-terrorism Imperatives, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. <http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/reports/new-reports/OSAA-TerrorismPaper-12Nov2010.pdf> accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

However, it must be based on genuine goodwill and commitments of all collaborating states since matters of security cannot be delegated. States must apply due diligence to match the chosen strategy with the right situation on the ground. Otherwise use of certain counter terrorism strategies in some situations may turn out to be more of a liability than an asset to the fight against terrorism.



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# Effective Counter-Measures to the Radicalization of Youth into Terrorism in Africa: From Theory to Practice – The Case of Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE)

Mustafa Yusuf Ali<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Recent surveys indicate rising number of youth who use, sympathize with, or support the use of violence as a way of resolving long-standing grievances and conflicts, including those that are of ideological nature. Most extremist organizations and networks appreciate the importance of ideology, narratives and communication for the purposes of recruitment, legitimation and intimidation purposes to target the youth. This paper focuses on the radicalization of youth into violent extremism and terrorism, the ideological motivations that drive them into terrorism, and the enabling factors, including the pull and push factors that create the environment upon which radicalization thrives.*

*Using statistics, the paper argues and explains why youthful fighters recruited to join the so-called Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist groups mainly come from Africa, or from Europe but with origins in Africa. The paper addresses the unpreparedness of African states and their agencies to effectively deal with certain manifestations of this particular asymmetric form of conflict, whose battlegrounds are largely in people's minds—ideological, and partly in the field. Beyond the military and law enforcement approaches, the paper concludes, and proposes a dual strategy of an intelligence-led and a counter-ideological response. The complementary approaches of information asymmetries claw-back and ideological push-back as envisioned in the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) program in Kenya, are presented as one of the good practices for a successful counter-ideological approach.*

**Key Words:** Terrorism, Violent Extremism, Radicalization, Asymmetric Warfare, Youth, Africa

## 1.0 Introduction: Understanding Radicalization, Radicalism, Extremism, Violent Extremism and Terrorism

When, in July 2016, intelligence officials started scouring through data and information that the Syrian Arab and Kurdish militias had earlier seized from the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS)<sup>2</sup>, the discovery was startling. From the 10,000 documents and 4.5 terabytes of digital data seized in Manbij, located in northern Syria, close to the Turkish border, information gleaned confirmed that IS terror networks had marshalled, sucked in, pulled together, decentralized and deployed over 43,000 fighters from 120 countries across the six continents.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mustafa Yusuf Ali is the Convenor, *Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) Program*.

<sup>2</sup>The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syrian (ISIS), is variously, also called the Islamic State (IS), or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Daesh as is popularly referred to in the Arab world. Throughout this paper, I simply call it by what it refers to itself – the Islamic State (IS), although its Islamic nature is highly contested.

Their terror networks spanned the globe, interconnected by a universal ideology, operations globalized, while at the same time localized, particularized, self-led, and with sleeper cells able to mount coordinated attacks, and lone wolves capable of devastating hits across all the six continents. A significant number of recruits came from countries in Africa. Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia and Nigeria others provided some of the highest number of recruits into IS and other terror groups around the world, besides Afghanistan and Pakistan.

From the once highly structured hierarchical and centrally managed al Qaida terror network, to the loose networks of gangs in South and South East Asia, terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a globalized business. Ideology has become terrorism's major currency and the youth, its workers. From al Qaida to the Moro Islamic Liberation Fighters (MILF), Abu Sayyaf, to the *Jamat Ahl Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l Jihad* (Boko Haram)<sup>3</sup> in West Africa, to *Harakat Al-Shabaab al Mujahidin* (Al-Shabaab) in East Africa, to IS in the Levant, these terrorist groups and networks now operate like a McDonald or KFC franchise. IS, with its *wilayat*<sup>4</sup> system of governance, are essentially managed locally, as long as they have sworn *bai'at*<sup>5</sup> to the *Khalifa*, somewhere in the plains of Sham. Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Al Murabitun, Movement for Jihad and Oneness (Mujao)—all in Africa, are quickly becoming the building blocks to the more globalized terror networks of al Qaida and the IS.

Radicalization, extremism, violent extremism and terrorism are security challenges facing many African countries. These terms, and those emanating from attempts to address the vices, including counter-violent extremism, de-radicalization, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization, are used interchangeably or in relation to each other. I start by defining these terms.

*Extremism* in this paper is the strict adherence to a set of narratives or belief systems (whether political or religious) that constitute assaults on the mainstream values, orientations and principles in the society. Extremist narratives exist on a continuum—at the extreme right and extreme left of ideological spectrums across political, racial, tribal and religious lines. When extremists resort to acts of coercion in the pursuit of their objectives, it degenerates to violent extremism. On the other hand, *radicalism* (not to be confused with *extremism*) is 'standing at a distance from the mainstream political or religious thinking'. *Radicalism* is distinguishable from *extremism* as open-minded and open-ended, while *extremism* is close-minded. Extremists harbour distinct willingness to use violence while radicals do not, at least along the trajectory path of radicalization.

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<sup>3</sup>Also referred to as *the al-Wilayat al-Islamiyya Gharb Afriqiyya* after joining IS.

<sup>4</sup>*Wilayat* is an Arabic word meaning 'province' or devolved unit that is self-governing but uses similar laws to those of terrorists in territories they control.

<sup>5</sup>*Bai'a* is loyalty pledged by swearing to the *Khilafa* (caliphate).

*Radicalization*<sup>6</sup> is a process through which an individual or groups of individuals are transformed by an ideology or belief system shifting mind-sets away from the mainstream. *Radicalisation* helps to 'fulfil a sense of meaning, belonging, acceptance, purpose, value, having special power, dignity and respect' as well as being a defender of a religion, race, tribe, political thinking or a cause. When the process leads to violence, then it is referred to as *radicalization into violent extremism* (RVE) process. In itself, *radicalization* is not harmful. It could actually be a useful process if brings about positive change, and destructive if it brings about negative change. *Radicalisation into violent extremism* process is a comprehensive package built on several tiers of narratives that provide adherents with easy answers to the causes and solutions to their grievances. The tiers of narratives include political, historical, socio-psychological, instrumental and theological narratives.

*Counter-radicalization* are measures taken to prevent vulnerable individuals and groups from getting radicalised and becoming extremists or violent extremists. *Counter-radicalisation* involves deliberate set of policies and programmes aimed at addressing some of the conditions that may propel individuals and groups to subscribe to the path of extremism. These conditions may be social, political, economic, legal and educational programmes specifically designed to deter disaffected individuals and groups from crossing the line and becoming extremists. *Counter-radicalisation* requires tackling both the root causes and consequences of vulnerability that facilitate recruitment and indoctrination while at the same deploying counter-narratives measures to build support, acceptance and appreciation of those actions.

*De-radicalization* is the process of divorcing individuals or groups from previously held extreme views considered dangerous for stability and development in a society. Its objective is to purge extremists of the non-mainstream beliefs and get them imbibe mainstream orientation in preparation for their rehabilitation and reintegration into the society. Some practitioners use the term 'risk reduction' (RR)<sup>7</sup> to represent de-radicalization. *De-radicalisation* seek the rejection of violence while promoting attitudinal and behavioural change necessary for reintegration. Successful *de-radicalisation* is relevant to *counter-radicalisation* programmes.

*Counter-violent extremism* is a realm of policy, programs, and interventions designed to prevent individuals from engaging in violence associated with radical political,

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<sup>6</sup>The European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalization stated that radicalization as a construct is 'ill-defined, complex and controversial.' Rik Coolsaet, (Belgian expert) alongside an Australian expert made the conclusion that 'the only thing that radicalization experts agree on is that radicalization is a process. Beyond that there is considerable variation as to make existing research incomparable.'

<sup>7</sup>See Khalil, J. and Zeuthen, M., (2016). Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Program Design and Evaluation. Whitehall Report 2-16. RUSI Publication.

social, cultural, religious, ideologies and groups. It requires addressing the factors conducive for the spread of extremism. The building blocks for *counter-violent extremism* includes developing credible socio-political and economic infrastructure, countering extremist narratives and building social resilience for community engagement. Lastly, terrorism is understood in this paper to mean ‘premeditated, politically motivated violence’ or threats of violence, ‘perpetrated or threatened against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents’<sup>8</sup> to achieve political or ideological goals.

## 2.0 Background and Context

Many extremist militant groups including al Qaida, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and others have in the last decade, focused on, and improved on their outreach through the mainstream and social media. These media are key enablers and strategic assets propelling the violent extremist groups to achieve information asymmetry. The terrorist groups have therefore invested significantly in developing narratives and media platforms. Upon these platforms, the groups have launched their narratives and propaganda to reach their intended audiences to achieve the three-pronged objectives of legitimation, intimidation and recruitment.

The narratives carry ideological messages carefully targeted at especially young Muslims, or would-be converts, and those who are willing to join ‘the struggle’, thus radicalizing them. The targets begin to adopt extreme and violent views. Apart from seeking religious legitimacy for their actions, the goal of these extremist violent groups includes recruiting young men and women to their ranks and file, who are then trained and deployed for their *jihad*.<sup>9</sup> Some are become sleeper cells waiting to launch attacks as a lone wolf, in a lone wolf pack or as lone attacker.

Although recruitment targeting youth, some of whom are children, is a global phenomenon, African countries have been mostly affected, providing ready and willing recruits due to the widespread nature of enabling factors making recruitment possible. Tunisia alone, has supplied the highest number of recruits fighting for the IS. The context across Africa is complicated by the potential for increased violence, radicalization and violent extremism by returnees from the battle fields in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Afghanistan and other theatres of wars.

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<sup>8</sup>See Bureau of Counterterrorism, United States Department of Publication. (June 2015). Country Reports on Terrorism, 2014.

<sup>9</sup>*Jihad* is an Arabic term meaning ‘struggle’. The person doing the ‘struggle’ is called *Mujahid*.

In its usage, *Jihad* has been misinterpreted to mean war whose actual meaning is *al-harbor qital*. It is divided into two—the greater *Jihad*—spiritual struggle; and the lesser *Jihad*—physical struggle. All extremist groups simply interpret *Jihad* as war.

There is growing number of incidences targeting law-enforcement officers, non-Muslims and mainstream Muslims and clerics by groups claiming to be Al-Shabaab and their sympathizers. Some of the main features giving extremist groups space and latitude to operate unchallenged in Africa include increasing misinterpretation of scriptures for violent ends by self-styled charismatic ‘clerics’, increasing negative narratives of hatred of ‘religious other’ and increasing belligerent language (now more online than offline) by extremists subliminally poisoning the minds of many young persons. Bastardization or misuse of Islam for violent purposes by extremist groups and individuals mostly goes unchallenged or met by muted (sometimes and in some cases non-existent) response from mainstream clerics and the general community. This encourages and emboldens the extremist groups.

Some of the characteristics of the violence include widespread fear of reprisals among mainstream Muslim clerics from the violent extremist groups and their sympathizers. The clerics are threatened with or targeted for assassination and harm as a result of their mainstreamed stance towards religious issues considered by violent extremist groups as ‘betrayal of the *Ummah*’.<sup>10</sup> Combined with extremist intra-faith intolerance to misinterpretation, bastardization and misuse of religious scriptures to justify violence, to widespread intolerance among members of different sects within the Muslim community, the environment has been toxified.

Some of the indicators of violent extremism include growing incidences targeting non-Muslims and mainstream Muslims by violent extremist groups and their sympathizers and puritanical tendencies among youth and adults embracing the *takfir*<sup>11</sup> ideology. Exclusivist identity, construction of a belligerent ‘other’ to selective, partial and literalist discourses delivered on various platform are other indicators are some key indicators of societies sliding down the dangerous extremist path. Increasing use of religious texts and concepts to legitimise and justify alienation, discrimination and violence using the social media messaging and narratives by violent extremist groups and their sympathizers is on the upswing.

### 3.0 Trends in Africa

By end of 2015, the highest number of fighters in the IS, numbering 9,000 came from North Africa and the Maghreb. Middle East followed closely with 6,000 fighters, 5,500 from Russia and its former republics, 5,000 from the European

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<sup>10</sup>*Ummah* means the Muslim community.

<sup>11</sup>*Takfir* is a word derived from *takfir* meaning apostate. Most extremist groups that claim to be Islamic are *takfiris*, meaning they would label any Muslim disagreeing with their core beliefs, often extreme, as having left Islam, and therefore no longer Muslim.

Union block of countries, 2,000 from South and South East Asia, 300 from the Horn of Africa and its diaspora, 250 from USA and a few from the rest of the world.<sup>12</sup> With the exception of a few, many of the foreign fighters had criminal records for minor crimes back home, with a few having served time in prisons. To these young men (and women) who mostly lived on the margins of society, the IS propaganda offered them ‘an attractive alternative of belonging, purpose, adventure and respect.’<sup>13</sup>

Tunisia topped the country that contributed the most number of the youthful fighters in Iraq and Syria. With a population is roughly 10 million, Tunisian nationals appear to number 6,000 fighters, breaking the record for highest number of fighters per capita.<sup>14</sup> Algeria, Morocco followed closely behind. The statistics become interesting as two countries in Europe – France and Belgium topped the list of countries in Europe whose nationals are fighting for the IS. The identity of the fighters appears to be largely that of second or third generation Algerian, Tunisian or Moroccan. According to the Soufan Group Research, the ‘secular nature of European countries like France and Belgium, ... coupled with a sense of marginalization among immigrant communities, especially those from North Africa, appeared to have played a role in the radicalization process.’<sup>15</sup>

At its peak, the Boko Haram had about 5,000 fighters aged between 14 and 35 years old. Most of the fighters came from Nigeria. A few came from the neighbouring countries of Cameroun, Chad and other West African countries. In 2014, Al-Shabaab had roughly between 4,000 and 6,000 core fighters distributed mainly in the South-Central Somalia, and some in Kenya and other East African countries. Most of its fighters are youthful, aged between 15 and 35 years old.

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<sup>12</sup>See The Soufan Group research publications. Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Iraq and Syria. December 2015. pp. 12 – 13.

<sup>13</sup>See The Soufan Group research publications. Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Iraq and Syria. December 2015. pg. 13.

<sup>14</sup>See United Nations Security Council, Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) by States. Affected by Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Second Report. S/2015/683, September 2, 2015.

<sup>15</sup>See The Soufan Group. Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Iraq and Syria. December 2015.



A survey<sup>16</sup> done in Eastleigh, Nairobi, in January 2015 indicated that 7.2 per cent of those studied support violence as a way of resolving disputes and would use or support use of violence to resolve long-standing grievance, including those that are of ideological in nature. Eighty-seven (87) per cent of Kenyan youth in Al-Shabaab considered that religion, and the need to defend religion (Islam) was the main reason for them joining the militant group. Sixty-one (61) per cent of those already recruited said they would stay in Al-Shabaab as matter of 'religious' responsibility and to the community. Ninety-seven (97) per cent of those researched said that they felt Islam was under threat, and therefore the reason for joining and staying in Al-Shabaab to defend Islam.<sup>17</sup>

In the research, forty-nine (49) per cent of Kenyan youth in Al-Shabaab said that the Kenyan government was the biggest threat to Islam, while twenty-four (24) per cent said that the West was the biggest threat to Islam, and eighteen (18) per cent of those researched said a combination of both. Twenty-six (26) per cent of Al-Shabaab consider waging an 'all-out war' against the Kenyan Government and the religious other, while seventy-four (74) per cent stated that it was legitimate to target fellow Muslims that they considered *Murtadin*<sup>18</sup> and *Munafiqun*<sup>19</sup> from among the mainstream Muslim community.

Four (4) per cent of youth in Eastleigh and three (3) per cent in the Coast said that they would join an outlawed group if approached. Many of those who showed interest in joining outlawed groups came from marginalized communities, and largely felt discriminated against by the system.

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<sup>16</sup>See the Baseline Assessment on Countering Violent Extremism in Eastleigh and Selected Informal Settlements. Global Communities. [Online].  
<http://www.globalcommunities.org/>

<sup>17</sup>See Institute of Security Studies. (2014). Radicalization in Kenya: Recruitment to Al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council". [Online]  
<https://www.issafrica.org/publications/papers/radicalisation-in-kenya-recruitment-to-Al-Shabaab-and-the-mombasa-republican-council>.

<sup>18</sup>*Murtadin* is an Arabic term meaning apostate.

<sup>19</sup>*Munafiqun* is an Arabic term meaning hypocrite.

No.	Drivers: (Sage-man) Push Factors (Structural)	Drivers: (Sage-man) Pull Factors (Appeal)
1	Denial of basic political and civil liberties.	Social networks and personal relationships.
2	Gross violation of human rights and government repression.	Material and social benefits of belonging to a violent extremist group.
3	Widespread corruption and perceived impunity for elites.	Charismatic leaders or attractive ideas and causes.
4	Poorly governed areas.	Traumatic events or tragedies experienced directly by individual, family, groups or community.
5	Protracted violent conflicts.	Appeal of ideologies propounded by extremists.
6	Government perceived as illegitimate.	Well executed strategic communication and outreach campaigns.
7	Previous support to violent extremist groups to serve national strategic interests.	Effective linking of local grievances with global narrative of conflict and confrontation.

*Fig.1. Chart showing factors creating enabling environment for violent extremism and terrorism to thrive.*

#### 4.0 The Narratives and Ideological Motivation

Most extremist organizations and networks recruiting from Africa, appreciate the importance of narratives and communication to reach out to the youth across the continent. In the recruitment and legitimation for their attacks, they focus on immediate and future rewards (after-life). Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, IS and other groups make use of religious reasons and religiously-biased narratives as the key drivers to achieve and retaining legitimacy. They have developed compelling sets of narratives that are pulling many young people to join them or seek sympathizers from among the general populations.

The meta-narratives of the extremist groups this author studied while designing the BRAVE program, had five key components. The first, and which is found in all the groups’ meta-narratives, is the ‘war against Islam’ narrative. The second narrative was the conspiracy to marginalize and exclude Muslims in order to weaken Islam. This built on the third narrative – that of ‘duty’ to wage *Jihad*<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Arabic word meaning to struggle, to strive.

against non-Muslims, especially against the governments in Africa. Making *Hijrah*<sup>21</sup> for *Jihad*, the IS and Al-Shabaab stated, was incumbent for those youth, who ought to know that the only way to 'achieve victory was through armed struggle, self-sacrifice and active support to the cause'. This constituted the fourth component. The fifth, was the promise of the restoration of the of *Khilafa*<sup>22</sup> which appealed to many youths joining the extremists' struggle.

In Kenya, the various meta-narratives of Al-Shabaab on online magazines, social media, other media, and physical spaces are trying to put together a master-narrative that exploits existing narratives, grievances and historical injustices to appeal to the general Muslim population in Kenya.<sup>23</sup> The world-view being encouraged by especially Al-Shabaab through its narratives, is that of 'war against Islam', and drills its consumers to view the ongoing global events through the 'us-versus-them' lens. In this extremists' world view, 'us' is the Muslim world and 'them' are the 'infidels' or the '*kuffar*' aided by the West, with the claim that the USA as its leader. The Muslims who are seen to work for, or with the Kenyan Government, according to the extremists, are seen as either hypocrites (*munafiqun*), or at worst, apostates (*murtadin*) which, according to them, carries a mandatory death sentence.<sup>24</sup>

The charge of hypocrisy, betrayal or apostasy is normally used on the Muslim populations or leaders who support or work with governments to defeat their (violent extremists) causes. In the fifth issue of Al-Shabaab's online magazine *Gaidi Mtaani*, it publishes pictures of Kenyan soldiers on its cover and dedicates a story to address the issue of Kenyan Muslim soldiers, encouraging desertion. The magazine refers to them as the 'hunting-dogs' of the Kenyan Government acting on a wider scheme to destroy Islam. Magazines such as *Gaidi Mtaani* aim to achieve three key objectives in their communication namely; propagation for recruitment, legitimation and intimidation.

An observation of the militants (Al-Shabaab) online presence<sup>25</sup> including in the chatrooms, on twitter, Facebook, blogs and online content (*Gaidi Mtaani*) from

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<sup>21</sup> Arabic term used as concept in Islam meaning to migrate, but often misinterpreted and extended by extremist groups to mean to move from *Dar al Harb* (the abode of war) to *Dar al Salaam* (the abode of peace).

<sup>22</sup> Caliphate in English, Khilafa is a form of Islamic government led by a Caliph.

<sup>23</sup> Watch the recent video '*The Westgate Siege: Retributive Justice*' by Kataib Media.

<sup>24</sup> See *Gaidi Mtaani* Fifth Edition. Gleaned from various Twitter accounts associated with the radical and violent extremist groups based in Kenya and outside.

<sup>25</sup> The online presence of Al-Shabaab and other militant groups observed by mid-February 2015 include; VIJANA WA MASJID SHUHADAA NA MUJAHIDIN; (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/233020553568418/>) - 1540 members: MLANGO WA PAPA MOSQUE (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mlangowapapa/>) - 1239 members: VIJANA WA MASJID SHUHADAA BACK AGAIN TILL DEATH

January – March 2015 indicated that the narratives used, to a large extent, focused on revenge and retribution on the governments, Muslim collaborators and the citizens of countries contributing forces to the African Union Mission (AMISOM) contingent in Somalia.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, the narratives were increasingly becoming belligerent to local Muslim clerics who publicly oppose their militant activities, and their version of Islam through their narratives.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, the narratives appear to be expanding to intimidate Muslim clerics, and dissuade them, through threats, to not publicly oppose their militant activities and their version of Islam. By intimidation, the actions by Al-Shabaab and other militant groups in Kenya are aimed at producing a horrific effect. The threats and messages (narratives) before, during and after attacks normally mean more than the actions themselves, and their successes are measured more by their disruptive and psychological effect, and less on the body count.

### 5.0 Asymmetric Warfare and the Limits of the African States

Even with all the good strategies and intentions, the so-called ‘war on terror’ is far from being won. Since 9/11, not a single terrorist organization is known to have been vanquished or defeated. Instead, many more have surfaced. Most of these that have come into being are deadlier than those that existed in early 2000, in the 1990s or 1980s. The US is struggling to end the war in Afghanistan and take their troops back home. In 2016, the Taliban controlled more territory in Afghanistan than a decade ago. The IS and its constituent terror groups, ‘governing’ on the basis of the *wilayat* system have been, and continue to be, by far, the most organized, resourced and motivated terrorist group. Sixteen years on, after the so-called ‘war on terror’ was announced, world powers, led by the US and European countries have not been able to fully contain the old and emerging terrorist groups and threats. Even with substantial resources, professional and well-trained armies, police, para-military and intelligence agencies, most of these countries have been attacked at home by the very terrorist groups they seek to defeat thousands of miles away. Yet, recruitment of youth into these terrorist groups, and the attacks, are increasing.

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(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/352448724827111/>) - 3816 members.  
Most of these forums might have been discontinued or shut.

<sup>26</sup> Video released by Al-Shabaab on Westgate titled *The Westgate Siege: Retributive Justice* by *al Kataib* Media released in February 2015 is the latest in a series of professionally produced productions aimed at legitimization, propagation and intimidation.

<sup>27</sup>The openly belligerent and hostile narratives against local Sheikhs, *Imams and Alims* can also be found on the Twitter (once trending) hashtag.

#mombasacityofmartyrs

([https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/mombasacityofmartyrs?source=feed\\_text](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/mombasacityofmartyrs?source=feed_text)) and *Gaidi Mtaani* Magazine.

The states in Africa, mostly weak, fragile and barely struggling to feed, clothe and treat their populations, have struggled to cope and contain the terrorist groups. Unprepared for unconventional warfare—the hallmark of the new conflict taking the form of asymmetric warfare, the social and security risks downstream the ‘war on terror’ seem perilous, daunting and unclear. Defined as ‘population-centric non-traditional warfare waged between a militarily superior power and one or more inferior powers’ or non-state actors, asymmetric warfare is immensely complex and expensive. To successfully prosecute asymmetric warfare, states need to mobilize considerable amount of financial, human and technological resources for indefinite long periods of time. Fighting in this unconventional war, a state has to combine the evaluation of the asymmetric threat, conduct of asymmetric operations, understand cultural asymmetry and determine the asymmetric cost.<sup>28</sup>The asymmetric cost of waging the ‘war on terror’ is mind-boggling. Terrorist groups do not need a lot of resources to mount attacks and need to be successful only few times to remain relevant. They can stake out for months—even years, as sleeper cells. The recent lone wolf phenomenon is disturbing, due to the inability of security actors to detect and prevent most of such (lone wolf) attacks before they happen.

In a war between combatting groups whose ‘relative military power differs significantly’, or with significant different strategy, established armies of Africa find it challenging to defeat the enemy without harming the very population they seek to protect from the terrorists, as has been the case for Nigeria and Chad fighting Boko Haram. Terrorist groups leverage ‘inferior’ tactical or operational strength against the vulnerabilities of a superior opponent to achieve disproportionate effect with the aim of undermining the opponent’s will in order to achieve the asymmetric actor’s strategic objectives<sup>29</sup>in most of those cases. Harming the objective to win the ‘war on terror’ some tactics used have been counter-productive. The US noted in its 2015 Bureau of Counterterrorism that:

*“While countries worldwide worked to enact legislation and developed and implemented programs to address violent extremism, we remain concerned about counterproductive actions some governments have taken in the name of addressing terrorism – actions such as political repression and human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, which could heighten political grievances and exacerbate the terrorist threat. These actions could become conditions that terrorists themselves exploit for recruitment – for example, banning political parties or suppressing freedom of speech by imprisoning bloggers and journalists.”*<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>See Lambakis, Stephen J. Reconsidering Asymmetric Warfare. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, February 2005, pp. 102 – 108.

<sup>29</sup>See Primmerman, C.A. Thoughts on the Meaning of 'Asymmetric Threats. (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lincoln Laboratory, 2006), 1, <http://stinet.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=A444192&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

<sup>30</sup>Bureau of Counterterrorism, United States Department of Publication, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2014. June 2015.

Many countries in Africa are still relying on tourism and other service sectors prone to disruption due to terrorist attacks. They remain extremely vulnerable to attacks. With the terrorist threats ever present, more resources are redirected to security and defense, taking away the meager resources away from gainful and directly productive economic sectors.<sup>31</sup> The threats to the African states facing these kinds of asymmetric threats multiply where there are significant existing internal vulnerabilities. Soft targets that are expensive to harden and protect, lack of defenses and other internal weaknesses—hallmarks to most African countries, including tribalism, weak economies, weak or hollowed-out state institutions due to corruption, makes it more likely for such states to implode.

### **5.1 Complementing ‘Hard’ Approaches – The ‘Soft’ Approaches**

The limitations of conventional outfits in the implementation of the counter-terrorism strategies in Africa have driven most states to reconsider how the ‘war on terror’ is to be fought. Many, including Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Egypt, Tunisia and others have introduced what is now referred to as the ‘soft approaches’ to fighting terrorism. Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) efforts have been introduced to complement Counter-Terrorism strategies. Communities themselves are taking leadership in introducing community-based approaches to fighting terrorism and violent extremism. One of the examples of ‘soft’ community-based approach that has been introduced in Kenya, is the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) program.

### **5.2 Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE)**

To address the ideological aspects of radicalization, extremism and violent extremism targeting mainly the youth, a program called Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism; shortened as ‘BRAVE’ was introduced in Kenya in June 2015. The program, run by the Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) aims to generate and sustain informed public dialogue, debate and conversations that deny space for, reject and repudiate violent extremism and terrorism in Kenya. Some of the specific objectives of the BRAVE program in addressing youth radicalization include develop mentholistic counter-narrative frameworks to address violent extremists’ alleged religious foundations and to help in systematic de-construction of the extremists’ messaging.

BRAVE has developed a set of ideological push-back actions, and with them, ventured on the physical and virtual platforms to address extremists’ ideologies. BRAVE’s idea is to reclaim, take charge of, and control advantages of information asymmetries from violent extremist groups. In response to the

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<sup>31</sup>Defense and security budgets for most countries fighting the ‘war on terror’ have ballooned in recent years, redirected from social, education and health budgets, and economic planning and development of the states.

globalized character of terrorist groups messaging, BRAVE is engendering and deepening stakeholder-ship to the country by focussing on cohesion and the sense of belonging in Kenya for those groups that feel excluded, as a way of countering external forces and influences of radicalization into violent extremism.<sup>32</sup>

BRAVE strategy is systematic, centered on what its architects call the ‘two-pronged thrust – [of] Information Asymmetries claw-back and Ideological push-back’. The success of BRAVE depends on communications enabling actors winning information asymmetries by deploying a range of counter-narratives. These counter-narratives are mainly religious in nature, although others such as alternative, ideological, strategic, ethical and tactical counter-narratives also feature in the BRAVE programming. Most of the counter-narratives are developed after carefully studying the content of extremists’ propaganda materials. They are then aired on national television and local radio channels on the mainstream media, and through the social media channels, developed to reach out to the vulnerable youth.

With a specially developed manual and resource guide—the *BRAVE Training Manual and Resource Guide*, the ‘Systematic Targeted Actions against Violent Extremism’ (STARVE Actions), have been mounted, contributing to the related objectives of ideological push-back and information asymmetries claw-back. The BRAVE program has triggered, initiated and sustained a momentum for community-based actions on countering violent extremism, de-radicalization and counter-radicalization programs. Fifty-five localized committees for women, youth and *Imams*, all self-led, have been formed in hot-spot counties, where youth are especially vulnerable to recruitment to extremist groups.

The key counter-ideological tool—the BRAVE manual, is divided into eight modules. Module One (1) introduces and provides an overview of the manual, guides users on its usage and details the training methodologies to be used. Module Two (2) gives a background of the context, the problem and indicators of violent extremism in Kenya. It also focuses on the violent extremist narratives, locates the global context of those narratives as well as localization of the narratives into the Kenyan context. It then describes the ideological motivation of violent extremist groups and how to effectively tackle them.<sup>33</sup>

Module Three (3) focuses on the early warning signs that parents, teachers, religious leaders and communities should watch out for in children and youth, that might lead one on to the path of radicalization into violent extremism. Specifically named E-WARVE for the BRAVE manual, Module Three focuses

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<sup>32</sup>See Building Resilience Against Violence Extremism. (2015, November).

[Online]Retrieved from [www.braveprogram.org](http://www.braveprogram.org)

<sup>33</sup>See Ali. Mustafa Y. and Mujahid, Othman B. (2015). The BRAVE Manual and Resource Guide. Nairobi. CSCR. pp. 10 – 45.

on the criteria or signs for Identifying Vulnerable People (IVP) to violent extremism. This includes (but not limited to) cultural and/or religious isolation, family intricacies, risk taking behavior, sudden change in religious practices and other additional signs. Module Three (3) lists and describes some interventions for prevention of radicalization into violent extremism before it is too late to save a child or youth on the path of radicalization into violent extremism.

Modules Four (4) and Five (5) of the BRAVE manual focus on the narratives and counter-narratives. Module Four describes what meta-narratives, narratives and counter-narratives are, and the different types of counter-narratives. Module Five (5) offers clear counter-narratives to be adopted and adapted for a counter-narrative program. It describes the misinterpretation of Qur'an and *Abadith*<sup>34</sup> by violent extremist groups. Some elements covered in Module Five are *Jihad* in Islam, the use of the term *Jihad* by jurists, the best *Jihad* and its pre-requisites. Module Five (5) also focuses on what is an Islamic State, *Hijra* (migration) and the principles of retaliation and reconciliation—concepts always misinterpreted by the extremists. It lists and describes the commonly mis-interpreted *Surahs*<sup>35</sup> from the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet (SAW) by the violent extremist groups.

Module Six (6) focuses on the stakeholders preventing and addressing violent extremism. It illuminates on the importance of stakeholders working together and their respective roles. Module Seven (7) of the BRAVE Manual helps trainers and implementers to understand the need for effective communication, and how to become an effective communicator. It focuses on training facilitators and trainees on techniques of public speaking and the elements of persuasive speech. The module also provides examples of successful projects that address violent extremism. Module Eight (8) focuses on the praxis—the practice of implementing the BRAVE program in Kenya. It focuses on how to effectively address violent extremism, with who, through which media, what messages, and who carries the messages.

The main contents in the manual are the counter-narratives and narratives namely religious, ethical, ideological, tactical, strategic counter-narratives, and positive or alternative narratives. Sound grounding in these narratives and counter-narratives are geared towards ideological mobilization to prepare the grounds for, and execution of an ideological push-back plan. Soft approaches to addressing terrorism and violent extremism should contain deliberate sets of believable counter-messages delivered by trusted message-carriers.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>*Abadith* are the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>35</sup>*Surahs* are verses from the Holy Quran.

<sup>36</sup>Counter-narratives are never propaganda, nor psychological operations (psych-ops).



## 6.0 Conclusions

As many African countries are searching for, or strengthening their counter-terrorism strategies and operations, the new thinking of focusing on softer approaches, especially directed to the vulnerable youth and populations will be one of the key deciding factors in reducing terrorism and related incidences of violence. The current understanding of terrorism, and the prosecution of the so called 'war on terror' makes it rather difficult, if not impossible to be won. Most governments and their agencies seem to be just 'managing' the challenge of terrorism. Most arduous task is how stem the flow of youth, mainly from Africa, leaving to join terrorist groups to fight for causes they do not understand, and are dead-ended. The strategies employed to fight terror in the last 15 years have shown and taught us that it will be extremely difficult to defeat terrorism through military force alone. Other approaches might work better in reaching out to the wider pool of would-be recruits, drying-up enabling conditions, thus denying IS and other terrorist groups the foot soldiers that they cannot do without. It was argued out, and recommended that, policy makers and decision takers will need to understand clearly, the meanings of the vices they are trying to fight. They will need to understand not only the differences between radicalization, extremism, violent extremism and terrorism; but also, what strategy works best to fight each of these. Clear understanding of the patterns of recruitment and reasons for joining the terrorist groups will help address those reasons, before would-be recruits leave their countries, or contemplate a domestic terrorist attack.

Highest levels of preparedness of states includes knowing that the violent conflicts are transforming and may cause an implosion within a country. Therefore, addressing the home-grown reasons for why many youths engage and believe in the terrorist groups propaganda and narratives, will be helpful. This will contribute to helping affected African states to deal with certain manifestations of the asymmetric conflicts, especially those are ideological in nature. Crowding out or neutralizing compelling messages and narratives from groups such as Al-Shabaab, al Qaida, IS, that are appealing to many young people, requires a counter-ideological framework. The framework such as that of the BRAVE program explained in this paper, is one such desirable response. It consists of information asymmetries claw-back and ideological push-back, and can be extremely effective, to those populations that are often targeted by the terrorist groups.

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# The Role of State and Non-State Actors in Africa's Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Practice: The Case of The Horn of Africa

Adams Oloo<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The Article posits that Counter-terrorism strategies and practice in the Horn of Africa is best advanced through a holistic approach that encompasses both state and non-state actors. The argument proffered is that while states can and do broadly focus on deterring terrorist groups and their sponsors, non-state actors should and do complement states in the fight against terrorism by focusing on the root causes and risk groups as a way of eliminating or terminating potential terrorist activities before their evolution or maturity.*

*The Article further argues that a holistic approach is well suited in redressing both external and internal forces that terrorist groups thrive on. The overall thrust is that the fight against terrorism in the Horn of Africa is multi-faceted as well as multi-dimensional as it has several distinct and inter-dependent components including national, regional and the international that are all geared towards neutralizing the enabling environment that terrorists thrive on, in addition to their direct activities.*

*Likewise, the Article also demonstrates that the fight against terrorism is also largely an intelligence war and counter-terrorism strategies and practices ideally should see both state and non-state actors in the Horn of Africa sharing information, enhancing communication channels and identify a focal co-ordination point for counter-terrorism activities. The Article posits that in the end, an effective counter-terrorist strategy has to be rooted in the Rule of Law so as to win the hearts and minds of those that the strategies and practices seek to protect in the first place.*

**Key Words:** Counter-terrorism strategies, Holistic approaches, Non-state actors, Horn of Africa.

## 1.0 Introduction

Since the mid 1990's, the states in the Horn of Africa have witnessed hundreds of acts of terrorism against foreign as well as local citizens and interests. The region is accordingly considered both a breeding ground and a safe haven for terrorist organizations especially after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. Hence, the region has come under increased scrutiny in the war against terrorism. Terrorism manifests itself in the Horn of Africa states in three forms. First, there is the local terrorism, organized mainly by local groups without external or regional connections. Second is local terrorism with regional connections and third is terrorism organized by global actors with regional and local support. While Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan have been victims of the first two, Kenya and Somalia have experienced all the three forms.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Oloo is a senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Nairobi.

The fight against terrorism can be fought from national, regional and international fronts. In all these fronts the centrality of the state is constant. The summation from this is that non-state actors mainly play a complementary role to the state in the fight against terrorism.

Overly, both state and non-state actors play significant roles when it comes to countering terrorism. Traditionally both the state and non-state actors have joined forces in counter terrorism efforts. Non-state actors such as schools and religious communities have for example played central roles in instilling moral attitudes in key cleavages in the society that have helped in preventing terrorism from taking root in the first place.<sup>2</sup> This arises from the fact that non-state actors are better placed in addressing the root causes of terrorism that normally are a result of prevailing social and political conditions in a particular society.<sup>3</sup> Key non-state actors include the media, think tanks, private security, youth, social workers, teachers, NGOs, religious leaders, politicians, various authorities, mediators and ordinary people. Against this background non-state actors can for example ideally focus on risk groups most vulnerable to violent radicalization and engagement in violent extremism, for example, frustrated young men in Muslim minority populations. However, entire population groups affected by a conflict or a political and social situation that could provide fertile ground for radicalization and violent activism may also be included in the target group.<sup>4</sup>

State actors on the other hand engage mostly in deterring terrorism. Deterrence in this case involves punishment or other negative sanctions against terrorist groups. The preventive mechanism in the deterrence strategy aims to reduce the motivation of the terrorists or their supporters through threats of punishment, reprisals or other negative consequences.

As a strategy for countering terrorism, deterrence is based on both force and legal constraints. In most Western countries, the Penal Code reserves most severe prison sentences for serious acts of terrorism. The intention behind having the option of imposing such a severe sentence is that it will act as a deterrent, although retribution may also be an important aspect<sup>5</sup>.

The deterrence strategy that states in Africa can primarily use include police detectives and the criminal justice system, though military forces. Political

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<sup>2</sup>See generally Sageman, M. (2004). *Understanding terror networks*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.

<sup>3</sup>See Bjorgo, T. (2005). *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, reality and the way forward*. London: Routledge; English, R. (2009). *Terrorism: How to respond*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, pp. 123 – 127; Pedahzur, A. (Ed). (2006). *Root Causes of suicide terrorism: The globalization of Martyrdom*. London. Routledge.

<sup>4</sup>See generally Ataman Muhiltin, "The Impact of Non-State Actors on World Politics; A Challenge to Nation-States," in *Alternatives-Turkish Journal of International Relations- Vol 2. No. 1 – 2003*.

<sup>5</sup>Silke, A. (2011). *The psychology of counter-terrorism*. Abingdon: Routledge.

authorities may also play key roles, depending on the measures chosen. The target groups in this case will include people and groups engaged in acts of terrorism as well as states that sponsor or make use of terrorism as a political instrument.

This Article argues that states and non-state actors in the Horn of Africa have put in place strategic mechanisms to circumvent terrorism drawing from best practices elsewhere while taking cognizance of the peculiarities of the region and nationalities. While the strategies and practices have not, with certainty, freed the region of terrorist threats, we demonstrate how they have to a large extent countered terrorist activity and reduced the levels of threats accruing from the same. In the same vein, we demonstrate how non-state actors especially regional actors have supplemented and complemented the respective nation-states counter-terrorism strategies and practices.

## **2.0 Counter-Terrorism in Africa: From a State-Centric Approach to a Holistic Approach**

A conceptual understanding of the framework that Africa can use to counter-terrorism has been evolving and for most of the Cold War period was anchored on a state centric approach. However, in the post-Cold War period and as traditional security approach, gave way to a human security approach - counter-terrorism in the continent has to a large extent been premised on a holistic approach.<sup>6</sup>Against this background – counter-terrorism in Africa has evolved from being seen only as a reaction to terrorism but including also a process towards undermining the conditions that give rise to terrorism.

This holistic conceptual approach first appreciates the complementary role that both the state and non-state actors have to play in order to be effective in the fight against terrorism. It is therefore able to redress situations in which some states in Africa have been accused of sponsoring terrorism against their own populace where regime security takes center stage at the expense of human security. Under such extreme circumstances both regional and international counter-terrorism strategies have to be adopted. On the other hand, in the numerous cases where states are democratic – they are usually complemented by non-state actors and from the foregoing – the holistic approach encompasses the different actors and institutions cited.

Second, the approach encompasses both the external and internal variables that have to be taken into consideration, in order to put in place an effective counter-terrorism strategy. The approach in this case factors in the terrorist activities that

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<sup>6</sup>See Bjorgo, T. Counter-terrorism as crime prevention. A holistic approach, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 8:1, 25 – 44.

emanate primarily from within the territorial jurisdiction of the state and those that emanate primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the state.

Third, the approach has to have a template for information sharing between national, regional and international partners. Most terrorist organizations operate in a web of networks both internally and externally. An effective counter-terrorism strategy has therefore to develop a web of information sharing so as to effectively counter the same.

Fourth, the approach encompasses a template for harmonious co-ordination both vertically and horizontally between the agencies involved in the fight against terrorism. Under this rubric, both state and non-state actors counter-terrorism measures are encompassed.

Arising from the above conceptual holistic approach - counter-terrorism in the African continent should be premised on each African nation-states national, regional and international interests and should include the following:

First, a national strategy/policy framework that outlines the principles and guidelines that is overarching and all-encompassing on all aspects of national security including counter-terrorism. Such a framework should include but not limited to intelligence collection and analysis, information sharing, besides relevant public education and communication. Intelligence collection and analysis is at the heart of an effective counter-terrorism strategy. Likewise, different state organs must co-operate by sharing counter-terrorism information so as to effectively and efficiently prevent terrorist acts and even planning and finally a clear line of communication must be developed by the state that has an inbuilt public education component. This should include a two-track communication system in which both the state and citizens share information on terrorist activities.

Second, a strategy/policy framework including principles and guidelines, to maintain security internally within each African country. An internal counter terrorism strategy should thus include the following; the police and other law enforcement agencies of a country. To this end an effective counter-terrorism legislation should be put in place to cloth the law enforcement agencies with the necessary legal powers to counter terrorism.<sup>7</sup>

Third, a strategy/policy framework including principles and guidelines to ensure that each African country is safe from external terrorist activities. This should include measures aimed at managing the entry and exit of people and goods across and between international borders. Security at a country's points of entry is vital for countering terrorism. Agencies that deal with guarding a country's

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<sup>7</sup>See generally Whitaker, Beth Elsie, "Compliance among weak States; Africa and the Counter-Terrorism regime," in *Review of International Studies* (2010).

borders, such as customs and immigration, will thus require funding to train individuals and to purchase the necessary equipment and technology to track potential terrorists entering or exiting the country.

The foregoing three strategies driven by the state should be complemented by non-state actors. This is due to the fact that both state and non-state actors can work together to compel dis-engagement from terrorism. Such dis-engagement would include influencing individuals and groups involved in terrorism to abandon their participation in terrorist activities<sup>8</sup>.

### **3.0 The Role of the State in Counter-Terrorism in the Horn of Africa**

The reality of terrorism in the Horn of Africa has elicited a largely state institutional response. The responses for the most part have been either legislative or administrative.

#### **3.1 Terrorism in the Horn of Africa**

Most of the Horn of Africa states have either directly or indirectly been affected by an upsurge in terrorism. First, Kenya in which around 10% of the population is Muslim, was the site of the 1998 terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, the bombing of a Mombasa hotel and the missile attack on an Israeli commercial jetliner in 2002, the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 and the Garissa University attack in 2014. These acts have accentuated the fear that Kenya's Muslim dominated coastal and Somalia bordering areas may fall under fundamentalist influence and affect the state's internal structure and foreign relations as well as exacerbate latently existing social and ethnic conflicts. Kenya is wary of Somali based international terrorist groups responsible for the 1998, 2002, 2013 and 2014 attacks. The groups are perceived to have local sympathizers and supporters.

The second case is Somalia. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2001 in the U.S., Somalia came under the watchful eyes of western intelligence services and military forces. In view of Somalia's lengthy and easily penetrable sea coast as well as the prolonged absence of a functioning administration, the U.S has been worried that Al Qaeda has established training bases or uses it as a conduit of money, personnel and material for terrorist operations beyond the Horn of Africa region. Moreover, the increasing flexibility and speed of twenty first century transportation and communications mean that states have become more vulnerable against terrorist attacks. Against this background, the U.S. created a Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CTJF-HOA) with an area of responsibility covering the Horn of Africa region plus Yemen.

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<sup>8</sup>see Bjorgo, 2009, pp. 36 – 49.

Third is Djibouti which is wary of its territory being exploited by transiting or trans-locating international terrorists, especially from or to the Middle East. It is jittery of individuals or cells linked to al-QAEDA because of the existence of major Western military bases in Djibouti city. The existence of the largest Western military base in the Horn of Africa region, which is hosting America, French, Chinese and German troops, makes Djibouti an attractive target for international terrorists. The unequivocal support that Djibouti has given to the war on terrorism has marked it as a Western ally in the Horn of Africa region. Djibouti is thus vulnerable to international terrorism originating either from the Red Sea in the Middle East or across its porous border with Somalia.

Fourth is Ethiopia. In 1996 a bomb explosion ripped through a market killing innocent civilians in an act claimed by Al Ittihad al-Islamia (AIAI). In 1997, two explosions at two hotels in the city of Addis Ababa killed a number of people, an act again attributed to the AIAI.<sup>9</sup> The attempted assassination in July 1996 of the Ethiopian Transport Minister, Dr. Abdulmajid Hussein was claimed by the AIAI. Ethiopia is threatened by two groups reportedly based in Somalia. The first includes insurgent groups like OLF and ONLF as evidenced by explosions in Addis Ababa in March 2006 and the other emanates from international groups linked to al-Qaeda.

Fifth, Uganda has had to contend with terrorist atrocities committed by the Lord's Resistance Army and the Allied Democratic Forces which both were responsible for more than 48 bomb blasts in Kampala city and the direct deaths of more than 5000 people across the country. Furthermore, in July 2010 terrorist attacks killed more than 70 people who were watching the world cup in a recreational area. The terrorists were linked to the Islamic Courts Union.

Sixth, Sudan is a large and culturally diverse country. Perhaps for this reason, terrorism has manifested itself here in many forms. In February 1994, a religious extremist attacked a mosque killing 19 persons. In 1997, Takfirwal Hijra a religious extremist group attacked inhabitants of Kambo Asahara. In 1997 an internationally-wanted terrorist Carlos the Jackal was arrested in Sudan and extradited to France. The killings in Darfur have also an inkling of terrorism. Sudan has to contend with the crisis in Darfur. The reaction of the West to the crisis in Darfur attracted religious extremists further exacerbating the situation. The perception that Western countries were using Darfur to destabilize another Muslim country only increased the number of religious extremists heading towards Darfur from other parts of the world.

Seventh, although Eritrea is on record that it does not support international terrorism, claims that it offers tacit recognition to the OLF, which it does not

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<sup>9</sup>See International Crisis Group, 2005, *Somalia's Islamists*, Africa Report No 100, 12 December.



consider having terrorist links or to be terrorist despite their designation as such by Ethiopia, has put it on the radar as a state sympathetic to some terror groups.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.2 Strategic Responses to State Terrorism in Africa

There are several avenues through which states can respond to the terrorist threat in Africa.

First, states in Africa can counter terrorism by disrupting planned terrorist attacks. The preventive mechanism in disruption is to stop terrorists from carrying out their attacks by discovering and exposing preparations for attack in advance, and through various means prevent the actions from being carried out. The principal actors in the disruption strategy should be the security and intelligence services and the police, though the general public can also play an important role by providing information about suspicious activities and people.

Second, states in Africa should also play the role of incapacitation by neutralizing the capacity of potential terrorists to cause harm. The modes and mechanisms of incapacitation should be geared towards reducing or eliminating the ability of terrorists to cause harm. Possible measures in an incapacitation strategy may range from arresting and incarcerating (potential) violent perpetrators, so as to take away their access to weapons or funding, to the more radical measures of neutralizing those considered a threat, beyond reasonable doubt. Stopping an ongoing terrorist massacre by shooting or arresting the perpetrator(s) is an obvious example of crime prevention by incapacitation. The most important state actors in this strategy are the military, the police and the prison authorities. However, other authorities and control bodies can also play important roles in reducing the capacity of terrorists by regulating access to the means required for carrying out terrorist attacks, such as guns, explosives or financial resources. The target group for the measures is primarily those who are directly involved in carrying out terrorism.

Third, states in Africa can also play the role of reducing the harmful consequences of terrorist attacks. If an act of terrorism has not been successfully stopped by some of the preceding strategies, the next step in the prevention chain is to reduce the negative consequences and adverse effects as much as possible. The objectives of this sub-strategy are to save lives, alleviate suffering, reduce fear, restore social functions and infrastructure, and maintain confidence in institutions and authorities. The preventive mechanism lies in reducing the harmful effects and consequences of acts of terrorism through preparations, made in advance of any incident.

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<sup>10</sup>See Barno, R., 2007, "Africa's responses to the terrorism threat," in Okumu, W., and Botha, A., (ed.), *Understanding terrorism in Africa: In search of an African voice*, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria.

Fourth, states in Africa should develop a framework for counter-terrorism and crisis management. One of the main challenges after an act of terrorism is usually for states to co-ordinate the many actors that come forward to contribute to the effort to reduce the harmful consequences of the terrorist attack. Most terrorist groups usually make use of some common, basic terroristic strategies including; Communication – i.e. gaining attention and communicating a message; creating a climate of fear, overreactions or paralysis; and extortion/coercion – i.e. getting the authorities or others to give in to specific demands. Through these strategies, terrorists aim to achieve specific responses from a variety of target groups. The counter strategy that states can employ is to avoid responding as the terrorists want them to or minimizing these expected responses from the terrorists. The preventive mechanism consists of making it less attractive for (other potential) terrorists to repeat a form of action that has not provided return. The actors in this counter strategy will vary depending on what the terrorists are trying to achieve and from whom. For instance, state organs, news media and hostage negotiators may play central roles.

Fifth, states in Africa should as much as possible abide by the rule of law even when provoked to the utmost by the terrorists. One of the strategies of terrorists is to create a climate of fear and provoke over-reactions by the authorities in the form of excessive repression or the use of military force against civilians. There are numerous examples of acts of terrorism that have provoked state authorities into overreacting so brutally that they end up reducing their own legitimacy. The counter move in this case should see states strictly adhering to the rule of law in dealing with criminal acts of terrorism and not allowing themselves to be tempted into excessive use of force, surveillance or witch-hunts against minorities and oppositions. The reaction of the authorities to a terrorist threat should ideally in this case be proportional to the threat and be rooted in the criminal justice system.

### **3.3 State Practice in Counter-Terrorism in the Horn of Africa**

State anti-terrorism practices in the Horn of Africa are a mixture of internationally driven actions and home-grown solutions. Most counter-terrorism measures in the Horn of Africa are a result of global anti-terrorism efforts especially in reaction to the 11<sup>th</sup> September terrorist attacks in the U.S.A. More importantly, as a result of the requirements of United Nations Resolution 1373, African countries in the Horn of Africa embarked on enacting counter-terrorism legislations. Below we outline the measures by states in the Horn of Africa.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>See generally Barno, R., 2007, “Africa’s responses to the terrorism threat,” in Okumu, W., and Botha, A., (ed.), *Understanding terrorism in Africa: In search of an African voice*, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria and Kagwanja Peter, “Counter-

### 3.3.1 Kenya

Kenya has established a specialized anti-terrorism unit within the police force. In January 2004, Kenya established the National Counter-Terrorism Centre, under the auspices of the National Security and Intelligence Service, which is Kenya's formal security intelligence organ. The Centre provides intelligence to assist in the fight against terrorism. Arising from the same Security measures have been strengthened at airports, government institutions, foreign embassies situated in Kenya and other places considered to be vulnerable to terrorism. There are to this end various agencies in Kenya's counter-terrorism strategy.

First, is the Kenya Police Service that is domiciled in the Ministry of Interior and Co-ordination. The operational units in the Kenya Police Service that are engaged in counter-terrorism include; an air wing, port police for patrol of harbors on the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria, and a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) intelligence division. There is also a Tourism Police Unit that focuses on terrorists' threats to foreign tourists. In addition, the Kenyan Wildlife Service is a paramilitary security force with police functions as well.

Second is the General Service Unit (GSU) – this is a mobile autonomous paramilitary force for internal security. Due to the rise of terrorist threats, the GSU has been engaged in certain counter-terrorism functions that include patrolling Kenya's international airports as well as being deployed to supplement the guarding of Kenya's borders.

Third, there are the immigration officials. Border entry points are manned by immigration officials who are reinforced by security agencies, including the Administration Police. Kenya has now computerized its immigration department.

Fourth is the National Intelligence Service (NIS) which is the primary intelligence organization. The information it gathers is utilized by the Presidency in addition to all security organs.

Fifth, in 2003, the Central Bank of Kenya issued prudential regulations to all financial institutions, requiring the institutions inter alia to adopt prudent 'know your customer' measures.

Sixth, is the National Counter-Terrorism Centre that was established in 2004. In addition to coordinating all the counter- terrorism activities in the country – it is

also the focal point for co-ordination with other states in the Horn of Africa. It has within its membership the Police, Military, Intelligence, and Customs, as well as government administrators, the office of the Attorney General, and Immigration.

### **3.3.2 Djibouti**

Djibouti has also created a number of agencies and legislative frameworks to counter-terrorism.

First, Djibouti has an Anti-Money Laundering Act to criminalize the financing of terrorism.

Second, Djibouti has created a high-powered National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC), chaired by the Minister of Justice and with membership comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank Governor, the Chief of Security and the Head of the Army. Divided into three committees concerned with legislation, security and terrorist financing, the committee provides policy and administrative guidance for the country's counter-terrorism efforts.

Third, Djibouti has also created a National Security Monitoring Agency (NSMA) to give technical advice to the NCTC.

### **3.3.3 Ethiopia**

Ethiopia also has an infrastructure for counter-terrorism.

First, counter-terrorism falls under the general guidance of the Council of Ministers, which is advised by technical experts in a coordinating body comprising of experts from the National Bank of Ethiopia, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue (customs), Ministry of Infrastructure (aviation security), Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Federal Affairs (Police and intelligence).

Second, the National Intelligence and Security Service is the lead agency that is tasked with the implementation of counter-terrorism efforts. The agency has multiple functions that include intelligence collection, border and migration control and investigations.

Third, Ethiopia has created a Financial Intelligence Unit under the National Bank of Ethiopia.

### 3.3.4 Sudan

In Sudan the counter-terrorism framework includes the following:

First, counter-terrorism falls under the general guidance of the Council of Ministers, which is advised by technical experts through a coordinating body comprising of experts from the National Bank of Ethiopia, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue (customs), Ministry of Infrastructure (aviation security), Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Federal Affairs (Police and intelligence).

Second, Sudan has an anti-money laundering law that criminalizes the financing of terrorism and which also led to the creation of the Banking Financial Information Unit.

Third, Sudan has amended the Passport and Immigration Act 1993 to give the immigration minister powers to deport undesirable foreigners.

Fourth, Sudan has a counter-terrorism focal point named the National Counter Terrorism Coordinating Committee (NCTCC). It incorporates the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior Ministry, Department of Defence, National Intelligence and Security Service, and Bank of Sudan as members and acts as the national focal point against terrorism.

### 3.4.5 Uganda

Uganda just like her other Horn of Africa counterparts has also created a framework to counter-terrorism.

First, Uganda has created joint security deployments at border points under the leadership of the Police to ensure proper co-ordination at border points and also established an inter-ministerial refugee eligibility committee to vet refugees.

Second, in the year 2002, the Bank of Uganda issued guidelines to financial institutions against money laundering.

Third, Uganda created a highly operational coordinating body and named it the Joint Anti-Terrorism (JAT) task force under the leadership of Military Intelligence. Its members are the Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Police Special Branch, Internal Security Organization and External Security Organization.

In summary, states in the Horn of Africa namely-Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti have employed PISCES, an electronic border management database system, at major border points and hope to implement the system at all border points while Eritrea has had its ministry of transport issue an airport security manual.

#### **4.0 The Role of Non-State Actors in Counter-Terrorism in the Horn of Africa**

The role of non-state actors in counter-terrorism in Africa is just as significant as that of states. The role of such actors varies from the international arena, the continental arena, regional arena and national arena. On the international arena a major element of counter-terrorism is international cooperation. Arising from this premise - counter-terrorism activities in Africa have received high attention in line with the requirements of United Nations Resolution 1373. When it adopted Resolution 1373, the Security Council of the UN established the Counter-Terrorism Committee which comprises of 15 members to monitor the implementation by member countries of the resolution, by providing technical assistance to those countries that need it in order to comply with the resolution. Against this background most African countries have enacted counter-terrorism legislation while others are in the process of doing so.

#### **4.1 Non-State Actors and Counter-Terrorism in Africa - A Continental Perspective**

The AU's fight against terrorism in Africa is anchored on the new strategic thinking in the continent.<sup>12</sup> This is embedded in the Constitutive Act of the AU that provides a basis for preventing and combating terrorism. Article 4 calls for "respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities", which is underscored in the preamble as the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of Africa's development agenda.

The Africa Union has developed a legislative framework to counter terrorism in the African Continent. The first activity of the AU Commission in this regard and in response to 9/11, was to recruit an anti-terrorism officer in December 2002 to serve as a focal point within the AU Commission on counter-terrorism efforts. The focal point served as a baseline towards the establishment of an anti-terrorism unit within the commission that provides a technical capacity to counter terrorism in a structured manner.

Second, in conformity with paragraphs 19 to 21 of the AU Plan of Action, the AU Commission officially launched the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), headquartered in Algiers, Algeria in October 2014.

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<sup>12</sup>See generally Ewi M & Kwesi A, "Assessing the role of the African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa," in African Security Review 15.3, ISS.

Third - the AU Commission's Action Plan on Security has specific guidelines on counter-terrorism that include the following;<sup>13</sup>

- (a) the provision of technical assistance on legal and law enforcement matters, including matters related to combating the financing of terrorism;
- (b) the preparation of model laws and guidelines to help member states formulate legislation and related measures for preventing and combating terrorism; and
- (c) follow-up with member states and with regional mechanisms on the implementation of decisions taken by the PSC and other organs of the AU on terrorism-related matters.

Furthermore - the PSC Protocol refers to RECs as part of the overall security architecture of the AU. Article 6 of the Protocol to the Algiers Convention outlines the role of RECs in implementing the AU counter-terrorism programme. It stipulates, among other things, that RECs shall;

- (a) harmonize and coordinate national measures to prevent and combat terrorism in their respective regions;
- (b) establish modalities for information sharing; and
- (c) assist member states to implement regional, continental and international instruments for preventing and combating terrorism.

#### **4.2 Non-State Actors and Counter-Terrorism in Africa – A Regional Perspective**

Beyond the AU – the non-state actors' role in countering terrorism is anchored on regional mechanisms. The counter-terrorism framework and actions in the Horn of Africa demonstrates a determination to neutralize terrorism in the region that is anchored on IGAD as outlined below.

First, this determination has seen the creation by IGAD of a regional counter-terrorism programme namely the IGAD Capacity Building Programme Against Terrorism (ICPAT), which is based in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia.

Second, in March 2005, the IGAD Council of Ministers approved the IGAD counter-terrorism programme (which emanated from the implementation plan and vulnerability study). ICPAT was launched in June 2006 during the first steering committee meeting of the programme in Addis Ababa, where the programme is based.

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<sup>13</sup>See Botha Anneli, "Challenges in Understanding Terrorism in Africa," in Okumu, W., and Botha, A., (ed.) 2008, Understanding terrorism in Africa. Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps.

Third, is the institutionalization of legal and judicial mechanisms. This component aims at supporting IGAD countries to identify, ratify and domesticate international counter-terrorism conventions and international counter-terrorism requirements. The end result is geared towards enabling IGAD countries to build the capacity of its judicial personnel, including investigators, judges and prosecutors, to handle counter-terrorism cases. The universe of counter-terrorism legislation includes laws relating to terrorism, money laundering, organized crime, corruption, drugs, and arms trafficking.

Fourth is co-operation and co-ordination. This aims at the proper use of counter-terrorism resources by identifying the current national actors in counter-terrorism and gauging their perception of their relationship and coordination with other actors. Ultimately, it should lead to information sharing and coordination units where these do not exist. The long-term goal is to have the coordination units to be focal points for regional coordination.

Fifth is improved border control. This component aims at improving border management by improving inter-departmental cooperation at border points. It seeks to inculcate regional thinking in border management as a long-term goal.

Sixth, is a mechanism for information sharing. This aims at developing and managing a uniform, generic, comprehensive counter-terrorism course of action for the region and adoption of best practices and standards in all aspects of counter-terrorism that is shared across member countries.

However, in spite of the foregoing IGAD is a regional body in flux partly due to its expanded mandate overtime and competing national interests of member states. IGAD now has a program unit established to handle issues of security. This unit is called the IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP). The ISSP replaced ICPAT and is mandated to enhance, *“the Capacity of IGAD member states to combat terrorism; to address maritime security threats; contain the intensity and impact of organized crime and provide security efficiently and effectively through security sector reforms with capacity building as an overarching component.”*

The foregoing expanded mandate on the security front has however come with its challenges;

First, there is lack of trust among particular member states in the Horn of Africa that has seen partner states hosting each other’s rebel groups that have created tension and mutual mistrust.

Second, is the weak integration of broader legal and policy frameworks that has been coupled with a lack of financial capacity that has rendered the bodies political will/interest weak.



Third, is a largely un-coordinated intelligence analysis and policy making capabilities and framework that at times has seen member states working at cross purposes. The withdrawal of Eritrea from the body is a case in point.

Fourth, IGAD has been over-relying on hard power and external assistance in its fight against terrorism. While this has its advantages, it has its weaknesses too as it has undermined attention on issues of political marginalization and polarization; social and economic inequality; endemic poverty; pervasive corruption; bad governance and extremist ideologies that all converge as breeding points for terrorist activities<sup>14</sup>

#### **4.3 Non-State Actors and Counter-Terrorism in the Horn of Africa: A Trans-National Perspective**

The transnational counter-terrorism strategies in the Horn of Africa are anchored on the UN resolution 1373 that requires all member states to enact counter-terrorism legislation. In addition, a number of the UN bodies support efforts geared towards implementing the UN counter-terrorism mandate. These include the counter-terrorism executive directorate under the UN Security Council; the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The transnational counter-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa encompass both country-led actors as well as multi-lateral missions by diverse countries.

One of the country led efforts in the Horn of Africa from a power house country is the USA sponsored – Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). It was designed to combat terrorism in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen as well as the entire Indian Ocean and the waters of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Eden. The CJTF-HOA has focused on training with allied forces and the troops of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. The task-force has also facilitated the sharing of intelligence with regional countries.<sup>15</sup>

A good example of multi-lateral counter-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa is the one being steered by the European Union (EU). The EU has adopted a very broad approach to co-operation with Africa. Most EU diplomatic and policy interventions in Africa are undertaken within the framework of Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the Africa – EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (2007). The EU has funded Counter-Terrorism in the Horn through IGAD. The IGAD Capacity Building Program against Terrorism (ICPAT) was established in 2006 and is based in Addis Ababa. The EU has also been a strong supporter of

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<sup>14</sup>See generally, Memar Demeke & Gebru Solomon, “The Role of Regional Economic Communities in fighting Terrorism in Africa- The Case of IGAD,” in European Scientific Journal, September 2014/ Special Edition Vol. 2.

<sup>15</sup>See generally, “Counter-Terrorism in the Hon of Africa; New Security Frontiers-Old Strategies. Africa Policy Brief: Issue No. 7, March 2016.

the peace and state building process in Somalia as part of a holistic approach to counter terrorism through improved governance of societies.

In general, transnational counter-terrorism has a triple agenda that encompasses defense, diplomacy and development efforts. The foregoing in turn include strengthening of regional counter-terrorism capabilities; enhancing and institutionalizing co-operation among partner states regimes security forces; promoting democratic governance; discrediting terrorist ideology and reinforcing bilateral military ties.<sup>16</sup>

Overall, the Horn of Africa states have also developed counter-terrorism frameworks with specific regional bodies. Eritrea has established information-sharing channels with Interpol and the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs' Conference (EAPCCO) as well as being involved in the IGAD counter-terrorism initiative. Kenya and Uganda are also members of EAPCCO and Interpol. In summary all the countries in the Horn of Africa have together with other counter-terrorism actors signed up for a regional fusion centre, an information-sharing clearing house for countering terrorism and transnational crime.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that an effective counter-terrorism strategy has to be multi-faceted both in strategy and practice. It has also shown that the strategy has to be holistic such that it incorporates both states and non-state actors. The starting point of preventing a terrorist from succeeding in his or her mission is to fight the enabling circumstances: These include neutralizing circumstances that lead to poverty, diseases, ignorance, injustices and marginalization. The bottom line is to deny the enabling environment that will give rise to would be terrorists. Against this background, we have demonstrated that counter-terrorism efforts should be geared towards winning the hearts and minds of passive sympathizers of terrorism.

We have also demonstrated that terrorism is to a big extent an intelligence war. Against this background we have argued that both in strategy and practice states in the Horn of Africa have sought to create a counter-terrorism framework that is efficient and effective. To this end, states in the Horn of Africa and regional bodies have taken measures to enhance communication technologies while at the same time striving to maintain reliable data to effectively fight the threat. The sharing of intelligence and coordination of covert actions against terrorist groups in combating the menace has also been enhanced.

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<sup>16</sup>See generally, Reeve Richard and Pelter Zoe, "From New Frontier to New Normal; Counter-Terrorism Operations in the Sahel Sahara," – Remote Control Project, August 2014.

The article has also demonstrated that in addition to state actors, non-state actors especially the African Union and IGAD as well as the UN and other transnational bodies have developed enhanced frameworks for countering terrorism in the continent and the region. The African Union Convention on Prevention and Combating Terrorism provides standards according to which African nations should formulate their counter-terrorism efforts. Likewise, the proximity of the IGAD region to the Middle East conflict epicenter, regional state instability and the Somali state crisis has made the IGAD region exposed to terrorist acts. This prompted as already demonstrated the establishment of IGAD capacity building program against terrorism (ICPAT) based in Addis Ababa in 2006. ICPAT that subsequently transformed to ISSP has subsequently sought to build state capacity in security and judicial institutions on counter-terrorism.

Lastly, the article demonstrated that both the Horn of Africa's state and non-state actors should as much as possible peg their fight against terrorism on the rule of law. The framework in this case is the criminal justice system (police, prosecutors, courts and prison authorities), the social authorities, religious leaders and voluntary organizations which can help guide former extremists back into society.

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# African Union Peace and Security Council as an Instrument for Counter-Terrorism in Africa: An Assessment

Martin Ouma<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Due to the nature and the intensity of the recent security challenges, Africa cannot help but be drawn into some of the security debates especially the one on the global war on terrorism. Internationally-sponsored terrorist networks have struck on African soil, built local cells that could strike again in Africa or recruit for operations elsewhere, and to find sufficiently sympathetic elements within the population to provide safe haven for terrorists. There are some convergence of the counter-terrorism priorities, mandates, activities and objectives of the UN system and that which the African Union (AU) determines as its priorities in preventing and combating terrorism in the continent. These priorities cover three broad areas: counter-terrorism legislation, operational mechanisms, and capacity building. While this convergence exists, there is a gap between recognized priorities, capacities, and the resources of the AU and the member states to carry them out. The focus for this paper therefore is to examine and critique these three broad areas for general convergence in the anti-terrorism strategies as applied in Africa.*

**Key Words:** Counter-terrorism legislation, operational mechanisms, and capacity building.

## 1.0 Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has witnessed tremendous changes in the continent of Africa, and the world over. There have been regular attempts at administrative reforms and innovation among the member states, including reforming the existing institutions and starting new ones so as to adequately respond to some of the emerging issues and threats, key among them being terrorism. Further, besides persistent problems due to the emerging security concerns, the continent has witnessed in succeeding decades, acceleration in the process of degeneration in the socio-economic, political and administrative scenarios.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was active in combating mercenaries and other problems of subversion on the continent, but it was not until the beginning of the 1990s that terrorism was put on the agenda of the OAU. The bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 and the tragic terrorist attacks on America on 11 September 2001 (or what has been captioned 9/11) were vicious illustrations of the magnitude of the threat that the continent and the world at large had to deal with in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martin Ouma is a lecturer at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.

<sup>2</sup> Makinda S, Global Governance and Terrorism, *Global Change*, 15(1), 2003.

Due to the nature and the intensity of the recent security challenges, Africa cannot help but be drawn into some of the security debates especially the one on the global war on terrorism. Internationally sponsored terrorist networks have struck at American and Israeli targets on African soil, built local cells that could strike again in Africa or recruit for operations elsewhere, and to find sufficiently sympathetic elements within the population to provide safe haven for terrorists.

Over a period of several decades, the United Nations, UN functional organizations, a number of inter-governmental regional and sub-regional organizations, groups of States, and a number of individual States responded in various ways to the challenges posed by the terrorism phenomenon. However, the level of response varied significantly from country to country and region to region, and, in most cases, had been targeted at specific criminal acts, many of which were defined in international instruments as acts of terrorism.

According to Ewi and Kwesi<sup>3</sup>, a systemic viewpoint conceptualizes the fight against terrorism at four levels: national, regional, international and global. However, the primacy of the state remains unchallenged and, indeed, central in combating terrorism at all the four levels. Therefore, whatever role intergovernmental organizations play in the fight against terrorism, it is what has been relegated to them by states based on the calculus of comparative advantage. This has become one major impediment to the fight against terrorism in Africa, and in other regions in the world.

There is some overall convergence of the counter-terrorism priorities, mandates, activities and objectives of the UN system and that which the African Union determines as its priorities in preventing and combating terrorism in the continent. These priorities cover three broad areas: counter-terrorism legislation, operational mechanisms, and capacity building. While this convergence exists, there is a gap between recognized priorities, capacities, and the resources of the UN system and the AU institutions and member states to carry them out<sup>4</sup>. The focus for this paper therefore is to examine and critique these three broad areas for general convergence in the anti-terrorism strategies as applied in Africa.

The occurrence of deadly terrorist activities on the continent itself and increasing evidence of radicalization of African young men and women demonstrate clearly that terrorism is as much Africa's problem as it is anyone else's. The commitments given by all UN Member States to the imperatives of the UN Strategy apply across the board. However, implementing the UN Strategy in Africa remains a daunting task for the UN system and for African States and

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<sup>3</sup>Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning, "Assessing the Role of the African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa," *African Security Review*, vol. 15 no 3, 1 October 2006, pg. 33.

<sup>4</sup>United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Africa and International Counter-terrorism Imperatives, The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA).

African inter-governmental organizations and institutions due to the concept of sovereignty, political will and lack of requisite capacity as discussed in this paper.

## 2.0 African Union Peace and Security Council and Counter-Terrorism

Organizations are formed with the purpose of achieving goals that one member cannot accomplish individually. To realize these goals, organizations create inner order and relations among its parts that can be described as organizational structure. Structure therefore is a means of getting people to work towards common goals thus acting as facilitator in pursuit of organizational agenda. African Union Peace and Security council was principally conceived on this continuum.

The transformation of the OAU into the AU ushered in substantive normative and institutional changes that were totally unthinkable during the Cold War. In normative terms, the shift from strict adherence to the principle of noninterference to the right of the AU to intervene or what some have called the principle of non-indifference was indeed a radical shift from previous policies. Four spheres therefore influenced the creation and evolution of APSC: a) the evolution of the international political context; b) the liberal peace complex agenda; c) internal dynamics in Africa; and, lastly d) the experience gained in post-conflict contexts<sup>5</sup>.

In 1992, a Resolution on the Strengthening of Cooperation and Coordination among African States was adopted in which OAU pledged to fight the phenomena of crime, extremism and terrorism<sup>6</sup>. This effort culminated in the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism while in September 2002 AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism was adopted<sup>7</sup>. Thus, pursuant to Article 7(i) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC); AUPSC is mandated to “ensure the implementation of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and other relevant international, continental and regional conventions and instruments and harmonize and coordinate efforts at regional and continental levels to combat international terrorism.” Established and officially inaugurated in 2004, AUPSC has been active in countering terrorism in various ways.

The OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (Algiers Convention) was adopted by African heads of state in Algiers in July 1999 and came into force in December 2002 after being ratified by member states. This

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<sup>5</sup>Ben Kioko ‘The right of intervention under the African Union’s Constitutive Act: From non-interference to non-intervention’ (85 *International Review of the Red Cross*, 2003) 807.

<sup>6</sup>AUPSC, 2013. “The African Union Counter Terrorism Framework,” Accessed on 16/04/2016; from <http://www.peaceau>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

was a major breakthrough in the fight against terrorism in Africa since it provided the first African instrument on preventing and combating terrorism. It also provided an African definition of terrorism. The definition contained in the convention enabled African parties to create criminal offences in national law on the basis of a shared, internationally negotiated and accepted definition. The Algiers Convention is consistent with and complementary to the international legal regime and to the Arab Convention.<sup>8</sup>

Through the scaling up of domestic counter-terrorism efforts, the African Union has therefore continued to support counter-terrorism both through the various plans and protocols associated with its Counter-Terrorism Framework and through the deployment of African Union peacekeeping forces, such as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). There has also been substantial bilateral and multilateral support for counter-terrorism efforts by the wider international community, most notably the USA<sup>9</sup>. These factors have defined the continental approach to the counter-terrorism strategy.

In spite of all these strategies, most prominent terrorist groups have thrived in Africa, with *Boko Haram* resurgent even after a large-scale assault on the group by Nigerian security forces succeeded in killing its leader and around 800 of its members in 2009<sup>10</sup>, and with the attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi illustrating only too well that *Al Shabaab* also still has the capability to strike beyond the borders of Somalia. All these terrorist attacks on the continent and more specifically the attack in Nairobi revealed shocking revelations on the lack of capacity within the continent for appropriate response as experts were to be flown in from other regions like Israel so as to help contain the incident.

All these paints a gloomy picture on the operational aspects of the AU Commission's counter-terrorism activities, including the facilitation and delivery of counter-terrorism technical assistance to AU member States, delegated to the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism which is sited in Algiers, Algeria. The mandate of the ACSRT which includes: providing expertise in matters relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa; and strengthening the capacity of AU member States, including full implementation of the international anti-terrorism instruments<sup>11</sup>, is clearly not making very meaningful impact on the continent. The organization is envisaged to provide the AU with the necessary expertise for realizing the AU's counter-terrorism objectives, as well as translating the continental and international commitments

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<sup>8</sup> Ford Jolyon African counter-terrorism legal frameworks a decade after 2001 Institute for Security Studies Monograph 177 March 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Stupart J. (2013) The US Africa Command's Continental Shift: Five years on: East Africa - issue in focus. *Africa Conflict Monthly Monitor*. 39 – 42.

<sup>10</sup> Agbiboa DE. (2013) Peace at Daggers Drawn? Boko Haram and the state of emergency in Nigeria. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37: 41 – 67.

<sup>11</sup> African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), Strategic Plan of Activities, 2010 – 2013, pg. 2.



of member States into concrete actions.

The mission and mandate of ACSRT includes the development and maintenance of a database on a range of issues related to the prevention and combating of terrorism, particularly information on, and assessments and analyses of terrorist groups and their activities in Africa to better inform AU member States and international partners on the threats and need for, and availability of experts and technical assistance to address the counter-terrorism needs of AU member States. However, the organization has not lived to its full mandate. This could be revealed from the ineffective response that has been witnessed on the continent.

### 3.0 APSC and Counter-Terrorism Legislative Framework

Internationally accepted definition of terrorism can never be agreed upon; after all, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.<sup>12</sup> The question of who a terrorist is, according to this school of thought depends entirely on the subjective outlook of the definer; and in any case, such a subjective definition has no impact on the international fight against terrorism. In this view, what looks like a terrorist, sounds like a terrorist, and behaves like a terrorist, is a terrorist.

The need for a separate legislation and punishment for terrorism stems from the enormous danger that terrorism, due to its political dimension, as opposed to crime, poses to society and its values, to the government in power, and to the public at large. For any meaningful gain in the fight against terrorism, counter-terrorism legislations and punishment (the criminal justice system) must therefore clearly define and distinguish terrorism from ordinary crime, even when they might actually be identical in practice. This will guide in setting minimum sentences for terrorists or confiscating their financial resources and supplies. Without an accepted definition, this legislation has no value<sup>13</sup>. The key limitation here has been that Africa Peace and Security Council derived its counter-terrorism mandate from that of the United Nations, which to an extent has been quite limiting, considering varied demographic characteristics of the continent.

Given the various developments and challenges, the AU's fight against terrorism in Africa should not be viewed in isolation from the new strategic orientation taking place on the continent. The Constitutive Act of the AU provides a basis for preventing and combating terrorism. Article 4(o) calls for "respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities", which is underscored in the preamble as the need to promote peace, security and stability as a

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<sup>12</sup>Laqueur, Walter (1987). *The Age of Terrorism*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

<sup>13</sup>Boaz Ganor, *Defining Terrorism: Is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter?* *police Practice and Research*, 2002, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 287 – 304.

prerequisite for the implementation of Africa's development agenda. Other aspects of an emerging peace and security architecture on the continent, particularly the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU, including the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact and the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP), have identified terrorism as one of the common threats to Africa.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.1 The African Model Law on Counter-Terrorism

Moving towards the implementation of the 2002 AU Plan of Action on the prevention and combating terrorism, which places the responsibility on the commission to advise on matters pertaining to counter-terrorism action including preparation of model legislation and guidelines to assist member states, the African model law on counter-terrorism was presented to the member states' experts in a meeting held in Algiers from 15-16<sup>th</sup> December 2010. The model law was endorsed, and later adopted on July 2011<sup>15</sup>, with the main purpose being to promote national and international implementation of the coordinated instruments for the prevention and combating of terrorism. The law serves as a template to guide member states in developing, strengthening and/or updating their existing national laws to meet the international and regional obligations.

While the AU's legal instruments create a relatively comprehensive and progressive counter-terrorism framework, it is yet to have any noticeable impact in combating terrorism on the continent. If anything, terrorism in Africa is now a more serious threat than ever before. This is mostly to do with the difficulties in implementing the framework, both at the state level and within the AU's own institutions, a shortcoming of which the AU itself is well aware. At a special meeting on terrorism in September 2014, it was noted in final communiqué that, 'despite the progress made in developing a comprehensive normative and operational counter-terrorism framework, serious gaps continue to exist in terms of implementation and follow-up, thus undermining the effectiveness of Africa's response to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>16</sup> The most obvious indicator of this is the slow pace at which the Protocol was ratified. Adopted in 2004, the AU's anti-terrorism protocol required 15 states to ratify it before entering into force. It only achieved this milestone a decade later, in February 2014. In addition to that, key state actors in the fight against terrorism in Africa

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<sup>14</sup>See paragraph 9(d) of the Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted by the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU held in Sirte, Libya, in February 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Bamidele, O. "Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism- An Albatross to National Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria" *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol 14, No. 1, 2012.

<sup>16</sup>Communiqué of the Peace and security Council, 455<sup>th</sup> meeting at the level of heads of state and government, Nairobi, 2 November 2014, [www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-455-comm-terrorism-nairobi-2-09-2014pdf.pdf](http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-455-comm-terrorism-nairobi-2-09-2014pdf.pdf)

including Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda are yet to ratify it.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, only about one-third of AU member states have introduced specific counter-terrorism legislation as recommended by the AU, so much for closing those loopholes. There are sound reasons for this, of course. Individual states have different relationships with terrorism. For some, it is an immediate and existential threat that must be addressed urgently, while for others it is a more abstract concept with little direct impact (for now, at least). In other words, terrorism is not a pressing priority for all leaders. Even when it is a priority, many countries simply lack sufficient resources to implement the recommended counter-terrorism measures<sup>18</sup>.

#### 4.0 The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

The ACSRT, established as a structure of the AU Commission and the Peace and Security Council, is the technical arm of the Union on matters relating to terrorism and the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism program. The mandate of the Centre is to centralize information, studies of and analyses of terrorism and terrorist groups, as well as to initiate research and develop training programmes by organizing training schedules, meetings and symposia with the assistance of international partners, with the view to raise maximum awareness, prevent and eliminate the threat of terrorism to the continent.

As a centre of excellence, ACSRT was conceived to provide the AU with the necessary technical expertise for realizing its counter-terrorism objectives, as well as translating the continental and international commitments of member states into concrete actions<sup>19</sup>. However, what has been provided so far by this organization towards continental counter-terrorism measures remains largely to be translated into action, as it is yet to fully establish its own *modus operandi* due to its resource capacity. This again puts to serious doubt the commitment by the member states to fight against terrorism in the continent, as some members are either reluctant or less committed to honoring their obligations to supporting the organization.

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<sup>17</sup>African Union, List of countries which have signed/ratified/acceded to the Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, January 2014, [www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Protocol%20on%20terrorism.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Protocol%20on%20terrorism.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>Martin Ewi, Counter-terrorism and pan-Africanism: from non-action to non-indifference, manuscript, 2014, 57.

<sup>19</sup> see the Modalities for the Functioning of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), adopted in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, <[www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity\\_to\\_union/pdfs/au/sirtejuo5/ACSRT.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/au/sirtejuo5/ACSRT.pdf)> (1 June 2016).

## 5.0 Key Challenges to the Fight Against Terrorism in Africa

Africa has been dogged with myriad of challenges that must be addressed to counter the recent challenges of the acts of terrorism. The prevalence and persistence of insecurity challenges in Africa questions the viability of 'African solutions to African problems' as has been the slogan of most of the African leaders. It was hoped that the AU would be the one to find solutions under its much-cherished notion of 'African solutions to African problems'. However, the organization has sometimes taken half-hearted measures, and suffered from internal divisions among its members on how to respond to the crises and their consequences. This has rendered the notion of 'African solutions to African problems' moot.<sup>20</sup>

While terrorism has existed in one type or another for centuries (if not millennia), no international and comprehensive definition has been accepted. Scholars and political organizations pose various definitions of terrorism. The difficulty encountered when trying to define terrorism is connected directly to the source of the definition<sup>21</sup>. In other words, the group or organization defining terrorism will normally determine its meaning. This poses a great challenge to the anti-terrorism initiatives in Africa, considering that the continent has population from very diverse demographic orientation. Jonathan White proposes that terrorism must be examined through the contextual elements of history, conflict, political power, repression, media, crime, religion, and specific forms of terrorism.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the presence of a regional legal framework with adoption of the OAU Convention and the Plan of Action, the capacities of AU member States to implement counter-terrorism measures remain outside the scope of the financial and human resources of most of the countries in the continent. Also, terrorism is still not seen as a priority for many African States facing other pressing problems, such as poverty and underdevelopment, social and political instability, diseases, and conflict situations. Thus, ratification of the AU convention and other international anti-terrorism instruments and implementation of their provisions have not kept pace with the UN's post-9/11 agenda for action against terrorism.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Kasaija Phillip Apuuli 'The African Union's notion of 'African solutions to African problems' and the crises in Côte d'Ivoire (2010–2011) and Libya (2011).

<sup>21</sup>Mahdi Mohammad Nia, *From Old to New Terrorism: The changing Nature of International Security- Issue 18*, 1 June 2010.

<sup>22</sup>Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism 2002 Update. Global Studies Journal*, 2003:5-7.

<sup>23</sup>United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and International Counter-terrorism Imperatives <http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/reports/new-reports/OSAA-TerrorismPaper-12Nov2010.pdf>

## 6.0 Conclusion

One thing is predictable, whatever role the AU plays in the coming years, its strength and weaknesses will be based on its resource capacity. Due to the concept of sovereignty, lack of capacity, and political will, AU has not done much in influencing national legislations on Counter-terrorism. Therefore, there is need to translate into action what has been provided so far in the continental counter-terrorism instruments. Unfortunately, African Union is yet to fully establish its own *modus operandi*, which is very key as far as counter-terrorism measures in the continent is concerned, owing to the unique nature of the African demographic characteristics.

## 7.0 Recommendations

Terrorism is a long-term challenge, therefore sustainable support for long-term solutions are required to address it. The challenge in combating terrorism in Africa must balance a legitimate program of security improvements with a continuing and sustained attack on poor governance, poverty, and deprivation of human rights. Getting the balance right is particularly acute because the democracies in Africa are fragile, and any crackdown on terrorist activity has to be carried out with great sensitivity to the historic grievances of marginalized groups, the incipient struggle for human rights, and the relatively weak civilian oversight of the military and security institutions.

Regional actors such as Intergovernmental Authority on Development have comparative advantages in contributing towards counter-terrorism in their specific regions. They have at their disposal knowledge and expertise of local issues that makes them well suited to develop approaches that take into account cultural and other contextual issues to undertake region or sub region-specific initiatives that complement and build upon global counter-terrorism objectives. One of the key factors in implementing Counter-terrorism initiatives in Africa is the need to increasing a sense of local ownership of global initiatives, fostering interest and maintaining momentum on the ground.

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# Countering Violent Extremism in the Age of the Islamic State: Lessons from Northern Nigeria

Winnie Rugutt<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The manifestation of violent extremism has evolved greatly in Nigeria. The culture of poor governance, corruption and negative ethno-religious differences has led to a breeding ground for extremist groups. In the past 10 years, the Nigerian government has worked round the clock to try and counter the threat of Boko Haram. A series of attacks have been launched against the terror organization by the Nigerian army with support from foreign allies. Boko Haram has however continued to expand its activities, therefore endangering the lives of citizens living in parts of northern Nigeria. There is yet to be a consensus on which methods will best deal with the threat of Boko Haram. There is a clear division between those who support subtler or non-coercive responses vis-à-vis those who believe that terror can only be countered with terror. This article seeks to shed light into the current counter terrorism activities being implemented in Nigeria. It comes on the backdrop of an ever-increasing threat of violent extremist groups in Africa swearing allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a terrorist organization based in the Middle East. The rise and rise of ISIS in large territories in parts of Syria and Iraq has led to the group being declared the most dangerous extremist group in the world. The new-found partnership between Boko Haram and ISIS is greatly affecting the influence the terror organization has on northern Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Countering Terrorism, Boko Haram, ISIS, Nigeria

## 1.0 Introduction

In recent years there has been a flurry of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists connected to Al-Qaida and most recently ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). In African countries, different Islamic extremist groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have declared their allegiance to these groups.<sup>2</sup> As this wave of Islamic extremism in Africa intensifies, the question of African States capacity to contain the threat is now an important area of discussion. The need to protect its citizens from imminent terror attacks, has motivated governments over the past few decades to redefine their approach and strategy as the nature of these threats evolve over time. This has prompted an increase in political participation and public perception on how best to counter the attacks<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Winnie Rugutt is a Tutorial Fellow at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.

<sup>2</sup> Ray, N. 'Growing Threat of Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Boko Haram,' *Indian Council of World Affairs*, Issue Brief Feb. 2016, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Kenelly, A. S. 'Terror of the Talk: A New Framework for Countering Terrorism within the Institutionalization of the Terrorism Industry,' *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol.7, No.3, (2014), 458.



According to a report on the Global Terrorism Index, Iraq and Nigeria accounted for more than half of all deaths from extremist violence in 2014. Boko Haram, an Islamist terrorist group based in northern Nigeria, pledged allegiance to ISIL on March 2015 and changed its name to the Islamic States of West Africa Province (ISWAP). The group has been declared one of the deadliest violent extremist groups in the world accounting for more than 6,000 deaths in 2014. Terror attacks are believed to be much more lethal in Nigeria than in any other country in the world<sup>4</sup>.

Boko Haram's main objective is to build a strict Islamic state in the north of Nigeria. It believes this would address the ills of society that are as a result of bad governance. The sect's core beliefs are founded on a strict adherence to the Quran<sup>5</sup>. Northern Nigerian states have so far been the target of most Boko Haram activities consisting of small-scale insurgent hit and run attacks on mostly government forces. In recent years, the group has begun targeting civilian population in areas such as markets and schools. Boko Haram has proven to be an extraordinary threat to not only Nigeria but the international community at large. Neighboring countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon have equally experienced terror attacks led by the group as it tries to expand its influence in the West African region. To counter the threat, Nigerian government has been using retaliatory attacks which normally involve military deployments of security forces, extensive lockdowns, house to house hunts, and frenzied large-scale arrests<sup>6</sup>.

In the development of policy to counter terrorism, the need to have an array of options to pick on is important. A number of publications on counter terrorism in Nigeria has emerged over the last few years. They, however, lack analysis on the kinds of policies and strategies being applied and how they converge and differ from one another. This article attempts to present the different categories of both domestic and international intervention policies in the bid to counter Boko Haram activities. Content analysis of existing information on the subject will be the source of data for this study. This analysis comes at a time when Boko Haram continues to evolve and gain more power by associating itself with stronger militant groups such as ISIS in the Middle East. This new link with ISIS further complicates the Nigerian government efforts in countering Boko Haram, as it now has another foreign ally other than Al-Qaeda, which it can rely on for financial and military support. From the Nigerian experience, it is hoped that this paper will help to identifying how best to counter religious extremism in the ever-evolving political environment of African States. The next section will touch on

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<sup>4</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and understanding the Impact of Terrorism*, (2015), 22.

<sup>5</sup> International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, Africa Report, No.216, (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2014), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Serrano, R. and Z. Pieri, 'By the Numbers: The Nigerian State's Effort to Counter Boko Haram,' in M. Perouse de Montdos (ed.) *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. (Leiden: African Studies Center, 2014), 192.

the problem of Boko Haram in the Nigerian socio-political context. This will be followed by a third section that provides a discussion on the various strategies used to respond to the danger of Boko Haram by the local and international community. The paper will finally conclude by discussing practical implications of the findings on the war against terror in Africa.

## 2.0 The Conflict Environment in Northern Nigeria

Boko Haram's alleged links to Al Qaeda and more recently ISIS, has got the attention of the international community. U.S state officials have noted that the group has aspirations to carry out broader levels of attacks not only in Africa but also in Western Countries<sup>7</sup>. The group seeks to use its links with Al Qaeda and ISIS to achieve its greater goals. Boko Haram has now borrowed several tactics from these Middle Eastern groups such as kidnappings and the targeting of civilians to pass their message across.

Started as a radical Islamist youth wing in the 1990s, Boko Haram has evolved over the years to become one of the deadliest terror groups in the world. The founding leader of the group, Mohammed Yusuf was a charismatic leader who gave literal interpretation of the Quran based on his anti-western understanding. He argued against western education which he believed was the root cause of the problems facing the Nigerian society<sup>8</sup>. From the days of Yusuf to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the group's dynamics has changed and so has its target. Today, different sects of the groups have emerged such as Ansuru, a group that appears to propagate a more anti-Western rhetoric and seems to prioritize the kidnapping and killing of Western targets.<sup>9</sup>

In July 2009, Mohammed Yusuf, leader of Boko Haram, was killed in police custody. His death was expected to weaken the group, but while it was definitely a turning point, the opposite occurred<sup>10</sup>. The group's attacks increased in sophistication after the death of their leader. Boko Haram's Jihadi violence reached its peak after a video recording was released showing the brutal nature of Yusuf's killing. This violence resulted in the deaths of hundreds of security officials and civilians. The video has continued to be used by the group to spread propaganda that illustrate the oppression of Muslims and therefore urges viewers to support the military struggle against their cause<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>Asfura-Heim, P. and J. McQuaid, *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivation and Institutional Resilience in North East Nigeria*. (Arlington: CAN Analysis & Solutions, Jan. 2015).

<sup>8</sup>*Op cit*, International Crisis Group, 7.

<sup>9</sup>*Op cit*, Asfura-Heim, P. and J. McQuaid, 2.

<sup>10</sup>*Op cit*, Asfura-Heim and J. McQuaid, 3.

<sup>11</sup>Anzalone, C. (2012) *Nigeria and Boko Haram in Jihad Media Discourse*. Available from: [www.opendemocracy.net/christopher-anzalone/nigeria-and-boko-haram-in-jihadi-media-discourse](http://www.opendemocracy.net/christopher-anzalone/nigeria-and-boko-haram-in-jihadi-media-discourse)- Accessed on 5th March 2012.

The extra-judicial killings of Yusuf led to the emergence a new evolution to the movement led by Abubakar Shekau. Unlike his predecessor, Shekau led more coordinated and sophisticated missions, largely focusing on law enforcement agents, the army, prison wardens, religious leaders, and politicians. In August 2011, the group for the first time shifted its target by attacking the United Nations Building in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. This marked a departure from its traditional governmental target set<sup>12</sup>. Since 2011, the group through the leadership of Shekau has killed more than 20,000 people and caused the displacement of more than 2.1 million northern Nigerians. According to a report by Amnesty International, Boko Haram since 2014 has abducted about 2,000 girls and boys with many used as sex slaves, fighters, and suicide bombers. The cases of kidnapping have brought international attention to the group after it abducted 216 girls from a government high school in April 2014. These girls have come to be known as the 'Chibok girls'<sup>13</sup>. The group has been using these girls as a pawn while negotiating with the Nigerian government to release members of the group who have been arrested. In August 2016, Boko Haram announced the new leader and successor of Abubakar Shekau called Abu Musab al-Barnawi. The group has continued to fight against what they believe to be the Western influence of the Nigerian society.

There are various explanations for the ascendancy of Boko Haram in Nigeria. A broader radical Islamist agenda that has existed since the formation of the *Sokoto Caliphate*<sup>14</sup> has made it easy for Boko Haram leaders to manipulate an already radicalized population. This is why it was so easy for a young man like Mohammed Yusuf- in his thirties- to be able to attract such a large following in the early days of Boko Haram's formation. The socio- economic grievances equally made the recruitment of large number of citizens from the northern states easy<sup>15</sup>. These socio-economic grievances in combination with various other factors, have contributed to the relative success of the group in Nigeria. In addition, porous borders, the lack of accountable governance structure and the presence of a series of other factors have led to the quick spread of Boko Haram in Nigeria<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>Onuoha, C. F. *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect*. (Doha: Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2012), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International, *Our Job is To Shoot, Slaughter and Kill: Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North East Nigeria*. (London: Amnesty International Ltd, 2015).

<sup>14</sup>Sokoto Caliphate is an Islamic caliphate that was established in the West African Region during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It was created after the Fulani War of 1809 by Usman Dan Fodio. The caliphate was ended by the British when they colonized parts of West Africa. Sokoto Caliphate was then made part of Northern Nigeria.

<sup>15</sup>*Op cit*, Ray, 7 – 8.

<sup>16</sup>Ray, N. 'Growing Threat of Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Boko Haram,' *Indian Council of World Affairs*, Issue Brief Feb. 2016, 2.

The financial strength of Boko Haram is another factor that has aided its growth. Sources of funding for the group's activities are numerous from non-violent organizations who share the same ideology and organized crime like drug trafficking, fraud, smuggling and theft. Former ambassadors, legislative representative and influential businessmen have also been linked to the group. However, there have been few arrests and persecution of these individuals due to lack of evidence. The group's link to Al-Qaeda and ISIS has equally opened up more funding opportunities as foreign terror groups forge alliances to carry out attacks at an international level. Boko Haram is no longer a small sect based in Nigeria it is now a terrorist organization with an international network<sup>17</sup>.

The Nigerian government has identified that Boko Haram has been receiving support from foreigners who have settled in northern Nigerian for work and business. These nationals from Chad, Niger and Cameroon have been accused of facilitating the agenda of the terror organization. In response, Nigerian State officials have carried out the deportation of more than 4,000 foreign nationals. Many foot soldiers of Boko Haram are foreign nationals who have assisted in propagating the activities of the organization<sup>18</sup>. According to Akpomera *et al.*, Chad and Niger have over 300 schools which propagate a radical Islamic Salafist ideology that is shared by Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda. The porous borders between Nigeria and these countries have made it easy for radicalized foreigners to penetrate northern Nigeria. Coupled with lack of jobs and poverty, many foreigners have joined the group bringing with them arms and weapons. The migration of armed guerilla fighters that escaped from Libya during the 2014 civil war to parts of West Africa, have found refuge in northern Nigeria. Moreover, the proliferation of Small Arms and Light weapons in the country has increased as weapons from the Maghreb region finds its way to West Africa<sup>19</sup>. The fact that Nigeria lacks adequate resources and technical capacity to protect its borders has made the country vulnerable to the influx of religious extremists from other countries.

### 3.0 Northern Nigeria Governance and Extremism

There are certain realities that enable radicalization of the masses in Nigeria. The country is marred in corruption that has been pervasive in society for decades. Observers have noted that a great number of the problems Nigeria faces such as lack of infrastructure, poor health and education facilities, is as a result of the deep-rooted corruption culture in the country. The success of Boko Haram is

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<sup>17</sup>Okemi, M. E. 'Boko Haram: A Religious Sect or Terrorist Organization,' *Global Journal of Politics and Law* Research, Vol. 1, No.1, (2013), 6.

<sup>18</sup>Akpomera, E. and K. Omoyibi, 'Boko Haram in Nigeria: The Paradox and Challenges of Big Brother Foreign Policy,' *An international Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Serial 5, (2013), 94.

<sup>19</sup>Akpomera, *et al.*, 102 – 103.

believed to be aided by the weaknesses of the governance structures combined with the harsh brutality released by the Nigerian security forces that has further alienated the locals of northern Nigeria<sup>20</sup>.

The elected leaders of northern Nigeria have been accused of not delivering public goods and services due to mismanagement of funds. In many cases politicians have been known to revert to violence to achieve their aims<sup>21</sup>. The use of extra-judicial methods to stay in power, like using militia groups that threaten and kill anyone who is against their reign has been another reason for the radicalization of the youth. It is therefore not surprising that youths join militia groups such as Boko Haram to fight a system they believe has disenfranchised their communities<sup>22</sup>.

The political elite in the northern-part of Nigeria also contribute to the insurgency as a result of bad governance. According to an empirical study conducted by Afolabi in northern Nigeria, he noted that a majority of the respondents to his study strongly agreed that political elites and influential businessmen are behind Boko Haram activities<sup>23</sup>. The influence of religious leaders has also been pointed out as few of them encourage the activities of extremist groups.

It is in this environment of various conflicting factors that Boko Haram emerged. The group believes that the problems facing Nigeria, can only be reversed through the establishment of an Islamic state with a strict following of Sharia law and the abandonment of western societal elements<sup>24</sup>. Through a series of targeted attacks, the group seeks to coerce the Nigerian government to give up its foothold on a large part of northern Nigeria, as it seeks to establish an Islamic Caliphate in the region.

The impact of Boko Haram's activities has been felt throughout Nigeria. The group has engaged in several ferocious acts including kidnapping, suicide bombings and trafficking of persons<sup>25</sup>. The series of kidnapping carried out by the group have largely targeted women. There is evidence that gender is now an

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<sup>20</sup>Sharan, A. 'Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgency from Al-Shabaab, Ansaru and Boko Haram,' *Africa Review*, Vol.8, No.2, (2016), 191.

<sup>21</sup>*Op cit*, International Crisis Group.

<sup>22</sup>*Op cit*, Asfura-Heim *et al.*, 15.

<sup>23</sup>Afolabi, A. 'The Insurgence and Socio-Political Economy in Nigeria,' *International Journal of Development and Economics Sustainability*, Vol. 3, No.5, (2015), 71.

<sup>24</sup>*Op Cit*, International Crisis Group.

<sup>25</sup>Durotoye, A. 'Economic Consequences and Management of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria,' *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, Vol. 3, Issue 6, (2015), pp. 1247 – 1270.

increasingly significant component of Boko Haram's tactics, messaging, and violence<sup>26</sup>. The abduction of women by Boko Haram has mainly been as a response to similar tactics conducted by the Nigerian government towards the family members of key sect leaders. The violent attacks linked to Boko Haram is now forcing people to abandon their homes and businesses as they flee the northern parts of Nigeria. Businesses are closing down, most residents are living on the money they had stashed away, and there is a ban on the use of motorbikes which has previously been the main means of transportation in the region<sup>27</sup>. Motorbikes have continued to be used by Boko Haram members to carry out terror attacks like the launching of hand grenades in public places.

The slowdown in socio-economic activities is already affecting the citizens living in northern Nigeria. It has been noted that the economy in the region before the terrorist activities, used to be thriving and successful but now is grounded to a halt. The region has always been renowned for its agricultural activities. However, the agricultural output has reduced drastically as farmers from states like Kaduna and Sokoto no longer visit their farms. The northern economy has been crippled by Boko Haram<sup>28</sup>. Politically, federal governments have been forced to divert resources to dealing with the terror threat instead of focusing on development projects. The terror group has seriously threatened the adequate, efficient and effective implementation of the transformational agenda<sup>29</sup>.

The government of Nigeria through assistance from the international community, has attempted to use both 'carrot' and 'stick' approaches to countering Boko Haram attacks. The next section will try to analyze the use of these two methods by the Nigerian government and the implications of each.

#### 4.0 The Use of Terror to Counter Terror

The escalation of attacks by Boko Haram after the death of Mohammed Yusuf found the Nigerian government unprepared to face the new threats. Sustained attacks however forced security officials to come up with counter strategies to deal with the movement. In 2011, the Nigerian legislative arm passed the Terrorism (Prevention) Act as one of the first legislative step towards persecuting Boko Haram suspects. In 2013 the act was amended to give the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) power to co-ordinate anti-terrorism activities in the country<sup>30</sup>. The Act now allows relevant law enforcement officials to detain

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<sup>26</sup>Zenn, J. and E. Pearson, 'Women, Gender and The Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram,' *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, (2014), 46.

<sup>27</sup>Chukwurah, D.C., E. Okechukwu and O.E. Nmire, 'Implication of Boko Haram Terrorism on Northern Nigeria,' *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, Vol.6, No.3, (2015), 372.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid*, Chukwurah, *et al.*, 376.

<sup>29</sup>*Op cit*, Afolabi, 71.

<sup>30</sup>*Op cit*, International Crisis Group, 30.

any terrorist suspect without having access to any person or medical official. It also allows law enforces to confiscate property without any warrant of arrest<sup>31</sup>. In effect the capacity of the military and other security agencies has been boosted. Through this act the launch of military offensives against the insurgents has been heightened as the government tries to respond to the attacks.

In June 2011, a special military force consisting of the Nigerian police and armed forces was formed to mitigate the threat of violent extremism. The force is known as the 'Joint Task Force' (JTF)<sup>32</sup>. This task force is responsible for the mitigation of the Boko Haram threat and the liberation of the towns captured by the group. The Joint Task Forces has received assistance from the 'Civilian Joint Task Force' (CJFT) and a small contingent of Chadian and Nigerian Forces known as 'Joint Multinational Task Force' (JMTF). The creation of these powers to some level has weakened the operative capabilities of Boko Haram 'to conduct harmonized terror campaigns<sup>33</sup>. The CJFT has in some way greatly contributed to the pushing back of Boko Haram to rural areas as the members have local knowledge of individuals of their communities who might be linked to Islamic extremism. The military forces have however been accused of engaging in a costly battle that has claimed lives and property. The task force has been known for its heavy handedness when carrying out its operations in northern Nigeria. The alleged excesses carried out by the task force have undermined public support for the military operations. Public support, especially from those who reside in areas where Boko Haram activity is rampant can help in providing tip offs on group members and their hideouts<sup>34</sup>.

According to a research done by Serrano *et al.*, to investigate the effects of the military response by Nigerian officials to counter Boko Haram, it has been noted that the security forces have provided a platform in which the group can further agitate for their local grievances. The terror group has now attracted civilians who are bitter about the unfair extra-judicial killings on the rise, especially those targeting Muslims. The group now has support from outside its main home base in North-East Nigeria<sup>35</sup>. The research shows that 62% of the casualties of the Boko Haram crisis are civilians, 25% of the victims are Boko Haram activist and 13% are military personnel. This shows that the indeed, civilians have been the most affected by the crisis reinforcing the idea that in modern conflict it is non-combatants that suffer the most<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Terrorism (Prevention) Act of Nigeria, 2011.

<sup>32</sup>Olefumi, M. 'Countering Violent Extremism: The Nigerian Experience,' *United States Institute of Peace Insights*, Issue 1, (Spring 2014), 4.

<sup>33</sup>Agibiboa, D. E. and B. Maiangwa, 'Nigerian United in Grief; Divided in Response: Religious Terrorism, Boko Haram, and the Dynamics of State Response,' *Africa Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2014), 82.

<sup>34</sup>*Op cit*, Serrano, *et al.*, 175.

<sup>35</sup>*Op cit*, Serrano, *et al.*, 194.

<sup>36</sup>*Op cit*, Serrano *et al.*, 234.

The use of local vigilante groups by the Joint Task Force is a rather recent strategy to deal with the threat of Boko Haram. The JTF is enlisting unexperienced and undisciplined youths armed with crude weapons such as machetes to wage war on Boko Haram in their respective villages and communities. The battle between Boko Haram and these groups has already seen casualties. Many youths have been needlessly killed as they try to protect their territories. Security observers in the region have also noted that these groups could easily transform into new militia factions, if their activities are not closely monitored and supervised by the Nigerian security forces<sup>37</sup>.

The Boko Haram attacks, the excessive use of force by security agencies and inter community violence puts the citizens of northern Nigeria at the risk of crimes against humanity being committed against them<sup>38</sup>. Already, the presence of refugees pouring into neighboring countries from bordering states of northern Nigeria is a clear indication that the Boko Haram Crisis is yet to be solved through military means.

## 5.0 The Use of Soft Power

Studies by scholars such as Aghedo *et al.*, have noted that military brutality has been ineffective in managing the terror threats in Nigeria<sup>39</sup>. The Nigerian government is learning, although belatedly, that force is not necessarily the only solution to the Boko Haram problem. Most recently, the appointment of an established psychologist to head the Directorate of Behavioral Analysis and Strategic Communication under the National Security Adviser office, has led to the designing of a programme aimed at de-radicalizing and rehabilitating militants, thus preventing others from being radicalized. The Directorate has also been working on a robust communication strategy to counter the Boko Haram narrative. Equally, the syllabus of the Nigerian Defense Academy has been modified to give cadets training in counter terrorism<sup>40</sup>.

In September 2011, the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to mediate an agreement between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram. This move was followed by an offer of reprieve in October 2011 by the government and a proposal of further dialogue was initiated in January 2012. Unfortunately, these initiatives have had little success in quelling the violence. Absence of progress in the dialogue process has been credited to Boko Haram's

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<sup>37</sup>*Op cit*, Agibiboa, *et al.*, 84.

<sup>38</sup>*Op cit*, Agibiboa, *et al.*, 83.

<sup>39</sup>Aghedo, I. and O. Osumah, 'Bread Not Bullets: Boko Haram and Insecurity Management in Northern Nigeria,' *African Study Monographs*, Vol. 35, No. 3 & 4, (2014), 205.

<sup>40</sup>Siollun, M. 'How Boko Haram Can be Defeated,' *New African Magazine*, January 2015, Available from: <http://newafricanmagazine.com/boko-haram-can-defeated/#sthash.OHg7igqw.dpuf>, accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> Jul. 2016.



mistrust of the Nigerian government and its dishonesty in adhering to agreements. The out flow of details of the negotiations to the general public through the media has been credited as another reason for the failure of the talks<sup>41</sup>.

Despite the failures of these attempts to negotiate with Boko Haram, the government of Nigeria has created a number of committees such as the Usman Gaji Committee, established in 2011 to find out both the remote and immediate cause of insecurity and to recommend solutions. Equally a presidential amnesty Committee was formed to identify ways of convincing Boko Haram to embrace an amnesty agreement. Through these committees, Boko Haram members have been approached to make their grievances known and to embrace dialogue and negotiations. Despite the conciliatory approaches by various stakeholders, Boko Haram has continued to expand its influence in northern Nigeria. The government on the other hand continues to use excessive force when quelling terror threats in the region. Its frequent calls for negotiation and its over-reliance on oppressive campaigns are generally seen as self-contradictory<sup>42</sup>.

## 6.0 International Perspective

The Nigerian government has also incorporated collective arrangements with foreign states and international organizations to improve the country's capacity to deal with the threat of Boko Haram. States such as the US, France, South Korea, Israel and organizations such as the UN and EU have worked closely with the security forces to ensure that terrorist organizations do not establish strong footholds in Nigeria<sup>43</sup>. From technical support in terms of surveillance equipment to high-tech intelligence gathering and capacity building, these partners have been working with the Nigerian government since Boko Haram begun being viewed as a terror group.<sup>44</sup>

In collaboration with global governance institutions such as the UN, the Nigerian government has implemented various projects geared towards building the resilience of the communities most affected by terror attacks. In January 2012, the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force unveiled projects under the Integrated Assistance for Counter-Terrorism initiative to support Nigerian efforts in combating the scourge of extremism<sup>45</sup>. The initiative was designed to build community resilience against terrorism, enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies and strengthen judicial institutions. The project equally

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<sup>41</sup>Udounwa, E. *Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria*, Masters' Thesis, The US Army War College, 2013.

<sup>42</sup>*Op cit*, Aghedo *et al.*, 223.

<sup>43</sup>*Op cit*, Serrano *et al.*, 176.

<sup>44</sup>*Op cit*, Akpomera *et al.*, 105 – 106.

<sup>45</sup>*Op cit*, Olefumi, 4.

focuses on inter-agency coordination and information sharing among the Nigerian law enforcement agencies. The lack of proper intelligence gathering, and dissemination has been a weakness of the Nigerian security forces<sup>46</sup>.

The idea that African problems can be solved by Africans has motivated regional bodies to take action against the group in collaboration with the government. The African Union (AU) has approved a multinational force, with support from the UN Security Council, to respond to the threat posed by the group. The Economic Community for West African States agreed to commit 50 billion CFA francs (over \$86 million) to an emergency fund, partly in response to increasingly frequent Boko Haram incursions into Chad, Cameroon and Niger<sup>47</sup>. The Africa response has however been noted to be largely inadequate. Some scholars have argued that regional agreements of sharing intelligence and contribution of troops has hardly been implemented<sup>48</sup>.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The Nigerian people have had to live with the reality that violent extremist groups like Boko Haram could attack them at any time and destabilize their livelihoods. The group thrives on fear and continues to expand its influence on neighboring countries like Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Despite the various measures taken by the Nigerian government to reduce the group's ability, Boko Haram continues to demonstrate resilience. Since its formation in the 1990s, the group has evolved to a decentralized organization that has proved to be flexible and dynamic. Debates on its ability to remain a strong group despite the various incursions by security forces have continued to emerge over the past decades<sup>49</sup>. In a bid to spread its influence, the group has been reaching out to other Islamic extremist groups not only in the region but also in the Middle East. The instability in Libya is a potential security threat to the region as terror groups like ISIS establish their presence in the country. The new link with ISIS has however been seen as a propaganda strategy used by both parties to increase their popularity in their respective territories. It is yet to be seen how the new collaboration with ISIS has influenced Boko Haram's recent activities. Despite this, it is clear that the threat of ISIS in northern Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Boko Haram continues to wield great power thanks to its victories in different parts of northern Nigeria and remains a formidable force that should be keenly followed.

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<sup>46</sup> U.N. Counter- Terrorism Implementation Task Force, 'CTITF Launches Counter Terrorism Projects in Nigeria,' *The Beam*, Vol. 5, (Jan – May 2012), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Pantucci, R. and S. Jespersen, *From Boko Haram to Asura: The Evolution of Nigerian Jihad*. (London: Royal United Services Institute, Occasional Paper, 2015), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Guitta, O. and R. Simcox, *Terrorism in Nigeria: The Threat from Boko Haram and Ansaru*. (London: The Henry Jackson Society, 2014), 14 – 15.

<sup>49</sup> *Op cit*, Serrano *et al.*, 176.

The presence of Boko Haram in Nigeria is as a result of decades of poor governance, economic inequality and a society driven by elitism. Regardless of the role played by extremist Islamic faith in the insurrection, terrorism and its security threats in northern Nigeria are more of a result of a governance crisis. Issues of good governance and credible leadership should be at the fore front in the fight against terror in Nigeria<sup>50</sup>.

The Nigerian government has attempted to use both a ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approach to countering the terror group, however it is clear the use of the ‘stick’ is more pronounced. Programs by the government to address problems in northern Nigeria related to socio-economic aspects, have been implemented but they have been overshadowed by the use of state security forces who have mounted aggressive crackdowns. A special Joint Task Force has been established to coordinate the counter terrorism activities of the Nigerian government. It has received some accolade especially in the effective use of military checkpoints, however, it has received criticism for the extensive use of force on civilians and the damage to property<sup>51</sup>. It is clear that military action alone cannot solve the threat of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Need exist to equally focus on political and economic actions if there is to be a true solution to the crisis. There is no one-size-fit-all solution to violent extremism. The Nigerian government and relevant stakeholders should work on a series of measures that will work best to quell the terror group and return normalcy to northern Nigeria.

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<sup>50</sup>Okoro, R. E. ‘Terrorism and Governance Crisis: The Boko Haram Experience in Nigeria,’ *Africa Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 14, Issue 2, (2014), 103.

<sup>51</sup>*Op Cit*, Onuoha, 5.

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