

A Report of the Seminar on
Familiarization of the Complexities of Violent Extremism and Radicalization in Kenya
held on 31st August 2017 at the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies



Prepared by:

CSCR Secretariat

SEMINAR ON FAMILIARIZATION OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM



(From left-right) Sh Ramadhan Aula, Dr Mustafa Y Ali and Dr Khannenje during the seminar.

Introduction

The Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) together with the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies held a seminar on *Familiarization of the Complexities of Violent Extremism and Radicalization in Kenya* on 31st August 2017. The purpose of this seminar was to apprise the friends of Horn Institute, religious groups, government officials, partners and CVE organizations on subtleties of Violent Extremism and Radicalization in the Horn of Africa, as well as the approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE) as employed by the HORN's affiliate Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) in Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) program. Thirty participants took part in the seminar that was held at the Horn Institute's Boardroom.

The HORN Institute is an applied research and policy think tank headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. The institute seeks to mainstream evidence based research in public policy processes. Key thematic areas include; defence and security; diplomacy and foreign relations; conflict resolution and peace-building; governance and statecraft; strategic communication, terrorism, radicalization, and religious extremism.

The seminar sought to educate participants on:

- i) The changing operational and youth recruitment tactics of al-Shabaab
- ii) Drivers of violent extremism and radicalization in the Horn of Africa.



Sh. Ramadhan Aula debunking the concept of Jihad

iii) Narratives and counter narratives of violent Extremists.

Presentations were made by Dr Mustafa Ali on the *Typologies of Terrorism*, Sh Ramadhan Aula on *Islamic Terminologies and concepts in Violent Extremism*, Sh Ibrahim Lethome on *Narratives of Countering Violent Extremism* and Dr Mujahid Othman on *Early Warning Signs of Radicalization and De-Radicalization Strategies*.

The Seminar was held at the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies and Dr. Hassan Kanneje, the

Institute's director and the moderator, welcomed guests and gave the profiles of the presenters of the day; Dr. Mustafa Ali, Sh. Ramadhan Aula, Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, and Dr. Othman Mujahid. Thereafter, participants had self-introductions before the first presenter was invited to the floor.

Presentations

1. Typology of Terrorism by Dr. Mustafa Ali

The first presenter was Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali who made a presentation on *Typology of Terrorism*.

They include:

- International Terrorism
- Domestic Terrorism
- Ideological Terrorism
- Political Terrorism
- Psychotic Terrorism

After his presentation, a few questions were asked. These include:

- i) Where do you place other typologies such as domestic terrorism, transnational terrorism?
- ii) Are there other cases of pathological terrorism?



Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali explicating the Typologies of Terrorism

2. Islamic terminologies and concepts in violent Extremism by Sh. Ramadhan Aula

Dr. Mustafa's presentation was followed by Sh. Ramadhan Aula's presentation on *Islamic Terminologies and Concepts in Violent Extremism*. In his presentation, he explained the meanings of commonly misused Islamic/Arabic terms by Violent Extremist Groups. Examples include words like *Jihad*, *kafir*, *murtad* and *shaheed*. He also explained the Islamic guidelines and rules of war. Specifically, he delved into the concept of Jihad stating that it is a misunderstood concept

from Islam and many violent extremist organizations are taking advantage of the vacuum to mete out violence. He clearly outlined the conditions for combative Jihad.

3. Drivers of Violent Extremism and Narratives of Countering Violent Extremism By Sh. Ibrahim Lethome

The next presentation was by Sh. Lethome on *Drivers of Violent Extremism and Narratives of*



Sh. Lethome Explaining the Narratives of Countering Violent Extremism

Countering Violent Extremism. He explained the push and pull factors that drive the youth to join Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). Some of these factors are, poverty, marginalization, historical injustices, cultural profiling, among others. In his presentation, Sh. Lethome explained the need for partnerships in the war against Violent Extremism since the driving factors are not specific to one challenge and therefore cannot be addressed by one group. He urged the universities, schools, government agencies and other security personnel to get involved in the fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalization.

4. Early warning signs of radicalization into Violent Extremism (EWARVE) by Dr. Othman Mujahid

In the afternoon, Dr. Othman Mujahid, made a presentation on Early Warning Signs of Radicalization into Violent Extremism. He gave a summary on some of the signs that manifest in the early stages of radicalization, transition stage and when someone is fully radicalized. He emphasized on the need for parents and the society at large to be on the lookout for some of these signs among the youth. He brought to the attention of participants that the early warning signs depend on the type of radicalization. For example, if one is being radicalized through religion, then they will show changes in matters to do



Dr. Othman Mujahid explaining the signs of radicalization (EWARVE)

with religion. His final presentation was on the strategies of de-radicalization.

Plenary Session

During the plenary session, Dr. Mujahid expounded on the early warnings signs of radicalization. He went ahead to explain how changes take place in a radicalized person and some of the signs to look out for including; social isolation, risk-taking behavior, violent rhetoric, criminality, negative peer influence among others. He urged parents to interact with their children more often and know what is going on in their lives and give them guidance. He also explained on the need for security agencies, organizations that are involved in countering violent extremism and other partners to be more creative when dealing with issues of countering violent extremism, since most violent extremist organizations are usually a step ahead.

There was a challenge posed to all the BRAVE presenters by some of the participants when asked if it was possible for BRAVE to do a re-run of the TVCs played during the seminar on national television because they are resourceful. Sh. Ramadhan responded by saying that the BRAVE TVCs were earlier on played on national televisions. He said airing TVCs is costly but they can be aired again when BRAVE gets finances for that.

Another participant challenged the HORN Institute and BRAVE to initiate a dialogue that would contribute to addressing issues of historical injustices as one of the factors that lead to radicalization. One of the participants sought to understand the source of radicalization. Sh. Ramadhan responded to this question by saying that it is self-radicalization because of lack of information or having half-baked information. Additionally, he stated that in the process of internalizing what they have, they get astray. Second, there are religious leaders with bad motives unknown to their followers, so they follow him thoughtlessly. Dr. Mujahid added that research



A section of the audience

shows that 'radicalizers' are not radicalized themselves; they are doing business. Otherwise if they truly believed that is the way to go to paradise why aren't they committing suicide to show example.

Another participant challenged BRAVE and HORN Institute to conduct a familiarization seminar for journalists reporting on security since some of the journalists misuse CVE terminologies. These security journalists keep repeating the statements that glorify terrorists which mislead the viewers. Dr.

Mustafa responded by saying that indeed the terrorist groups feel that the gullible Kenyan media

is one of their best supporters. He affirmed that these groups of journalists need to be sensitized on the reportage of terrorists' incidences.

The HORN Institute was requested to share the presentations with all the participants in the seminar so that they can use them to mentor other people in their places of work. It was also requested that more time should be allocated in the future trainings since the time was too short to cover all the topics adequately. It was also asked if some of the presenters can appear on mainstream media and debunk some of the ideologies and narratives which are used by the radicalizers and violent extremist groups. Sh. Ramadhan replied by saying that this was only an introduction but the whole training would normally take at least five to ten days. He also said there is need to add more voices in the media. Another participant sought to understand why Islam is the 'only' religion that is being used to perpetrate violence. Dr. Mujahid and Sh. Ramadhan answered by saying historically every century has its own type of terrorism. They said that there is no religion that has not been used to perpetrate violence. In the past, Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, and Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda have used Christianity to perpetrate violence, while Tamil Tiger in Sri Lanka used Hinduism to mete out violence. There is an ongoing violence in Burma and they are using Buddhism to commit what is seen as ethnic cleansing.

Another participant sought clarification on the 34 *sujud* (prostration) and whether they are done in one sitting. This was a reaction on an earlier presentation where Sh. Ramadhan explained why Muslims would have a mark on their foreheads. Sh. Ramadhan simplified it by explaining that how Muslim prayers are spread in twenty-hours and which culminate to 34 *sujud*.

Conclusion

As a routine, the Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies has monthly activities in various topics and themes. This month (August 2017) the Institute organized this seminar through its Center for Study of Terrorism, Extremism, Violent Extremism and Radicalization on **Familiarization of the Complexities of Violent Extremism and Radicalization in Kenya**. The Center invited experts of CVE from its sister organization the Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) to facilitate the training. The Horn Institute will work with its partner to ensure implementation of recommendations arising from the seminar. The Institute will hold a symposium on political intricacies in the next month activity.

Recommendations

At the end of the seminar, various recommendations were made by participants:

1. BRAVE should organize training for the security journalists specifically for them to have better understanding especially on the correct use of terminologies of radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism.
2. The seminar was too short and very loaded. There was need for more time in order to comprehensively cover the topics adequately for the course to be more beneficial. Other training should be organized with sufficient time for maximum benefit
3. The consultants were asked to appear on mainstream media to debunk what the society thinks of Violent Extremism and radicalization, as well as the push and pull factors.

4. The BRAVE clips should be aired on public TV many more times
5. The HORN Institute and BRAVE to initiate a dialogue that would contribute in addressing issues of historical injustices as one of the factors that lead to radicalization.