

The

Volume I | Issue I | May-June 2018

# HORN

## Bulletin

The HORN Bulletin is a bi-monthly publication by the HORN Institute. It contains thematic articles mainly on issues affecting the Horn of Africa region.

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### About the HORN Institute

The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies is an independent, applied research, and policy think tank based in Nairobi (Kenya). Its mission is to contribute to informed, objective, home-grown, definitive research and analytical inquiry that shape national, regional, and international policies, primarily in the greater Horn of Africa region. Its vision is a progressive Horn of Africa region served by informed, objective, and domestically produced, evidence-based policy research and analysis that positively inform scholarship, policy, and practice, regionally and globally.

## The Ecology of Al-Shabaab's Terrorism: Understanding Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

By Edmond John Pamba

### Introduction

Terrorism is oiled by factors surrounding the social environments in which terrorist groups operate that in turn constitute the ecology of terrorism (Boyd, 2014). Terrorism in the Horn of Africa, especially by al-Shabaab can be attributed to factors existent in the region that have helped the group to radicalize, recruit and sustain itself. The Horn of Africa region comprises of Kenya, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan (IGAD, 2018). Such factors as ideology, political oppression, sectarianism, financial and military support, technology and ungoverned spaces form the ecology of al-Shabaab's terrorism in the Horn of Africa that is experienced in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. This article therefore, seeks to create understanding of the interconnectedness of these factors and the nexus with terrorism in the region. It also seeks to advance proposals for counter-terrorism in the region that essentially involve significant disturbance of the ecology of al-Shabaab's terrorism.

### Ideology

Many terrorist groups are guided and inspired by sets of principles, values, beliefs and interests captured in an ideology (Stewart, 2017). The ideology fundamentally seeks social or political change through a new order based on new sets of values and principles. This ideology could be religious, political, economic or socio-cultural.

In the Horn of Africa, al-Shabaab submits to the ideology of *Salafism* and *Wahhabism* supporting *Takfir*; ex-communication of apostates (*Kuffar*) and

## Perceived or real political oppression stimulates all manner of civil unrest. It leads to political agitation, emergence of social justice movements or rebellion. It also inspires the desire to punish the regime or change the regime

establishment therefore of a fundamentalist Islamic State (Jones *et al.*, 2016). This ideology is expressed in the group's 2010 offensive in Mogadishu dubbed *Nahayaty Muxtadiin*, or *The End of the Apostates* (Hansen, 2013). Al-Shabaab thus wants to create an Islamic State in the Horn of Africa (Counter Extremism Project, 2018) to be constituted by Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia under strict sharia regime. This ideology is therefore, foundational and an end per se for al-Shabaab. It is rhetorically used by the group for recruitment of fighters and followers to help spread and sustain the group's influence across affected countries.

### Political Oppression

Perceived or real political oppression provokes all manner of civil unrest. It leads to political agitation, emergence of social justice movements or rebellion. It also inspires the desire to punish the regime or change it. This leads to formation of national, anti-colonial, liberation and opposition movements in dictatorial systems and defensive associations to protect group privileges (Jongman & Schmid, 1988). Terrorist groups therefore exploit political grievances of groups and the disconnect between such groups and governments in their radicalization and recruitment as al-Shabaab has done in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

The perception of historical marginalization in regions where al-Shabaab is active in Kenya such as the North Eastern and Coast regions by the national government has greatly predisposed Kenya to youth radicalization. The radicalized Kenyan youth then join al-Shabaab further strengthening the group. These regions have also experienced extreme political violence from the Kenyan government in the past as seen in the *Bulla Karatasi*, *Wagalla* and *Marsabit* massacres committed in the North Eastern region of Kenya (Kenya Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2013). At the Kenyan Coast, the native communities have suffered historical marginalization that pushed them to clamour for secession from Kenya from around 2008 through Mombasa Republican Council (Dabbs, 2012). The killings

of Muslim clerics in Mombasa was also interpreted by part of the coastal Muslims as political oppression by the Kenyan government and was exploited even more by al-Shabaab in its recruitment from the region ("Muslim martyr," 2014).

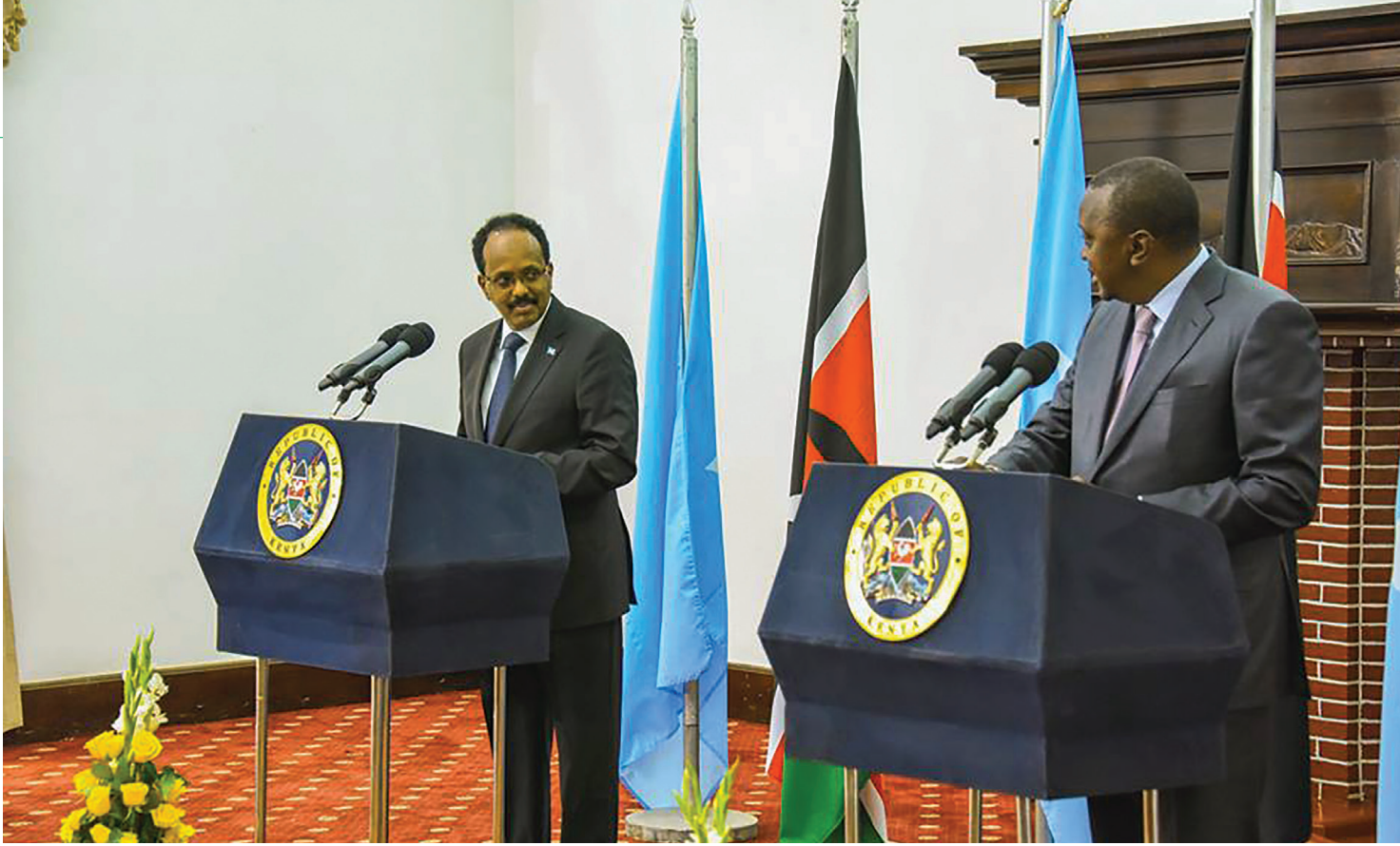
In 2006, the Ethiopian army invaded and occupied Mogadishu until 2008 driving out the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the parent organization to al-Shabaab, from the capital southwards. However, during the same period, al-Shabaab numbers grew from hundreds to thousands as it mobilized forces and nationalist sympathy to end Ethiopian occupation while accusing Ethiopia of political oppression (Counter Extremism Project, 2018).

In Somalia, al-Shabaab, in its nascent stage, started as a rebel movement against the government of Siad Barre in 1990 whose oppression and misrule the group resented. After the fall of Barre's regime and the subsequent civil war, al-Shabaab emerged to contest for control and authority in Somalia through Islamist crusades (Hansen, 2013).

### Sectarianism (Ethnicity/Tribe and Religion)

Somali ethnic group exists in Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia, where al-Shabaab has been more active (Stapleton, 2011). There has been historical irredentist designs by Somali groups especially in Kenya and Ethiopia sponsored by Somalia. The *Shifta War* (1963-67) involved the Kenyan military and Somali militias in the North Eastern Province in which the ethnic Somali was fighting to secede from Kenya to join Somalia. It was clandestinely sponsored by Somalia (Kenya Truth Justice and Reconciliation Report, 2013).

Ethiopia and Somalia have also been in long running conflicts over Ogaden region of Ethiopia which is predominantly Somali. The *Ogaden War* of 1977-78 was sparked by Somalia's invasion of Ogaden region of Ethiopia on a revisionist campaign. The Ethiopian Somali cooperated with Somalia against Ethiopia in the war (CIA, 2011).



*President Kenyatta of Kenya and President Farmajo of Somalia when they opened a new charter of cooperation in March 2017 (Photo: <http://www.mygov.go.ke>)*

When Siad Barre took power through a coup in Somalia in 1969, he aspired to create "Greater Somalia" which is basically bringing all Somali people within one country (Stapleton, 2011). This dream did not die with Barre, it is still pursued by al-Shabaab (Counter Extremism Project, 2018) who use it to appeal to the Somali people in Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia to join its cause. This explains why al-Shabaab is predominantly Somali and by March 2016, out of between 6,000 - 12,000 al-Shabaab personnel, only a handful are ethnic non-Somali (Hitchens & Ainte, 2016).

On the other side of sectarian factor is religion (Islam) as a tool for mobilization and recruitment into al-Shabaab. The group rallies the Muslim constituency in the Horn of Africa and beyond behind its cause and terrorist

activities carried out in the Horn of Africa. Its ideology is rooted in fundamentalist Islam. Through social media, mosques (clerics) and publications, al-Shabaab spreads Islamist messages across the region. These messages are specifically targeted at Muslims in the region and this explains why most of its recruits outside Somalia are Muslims from Mombasa (or Kenya's Coastal region), and North Eastern in Kenya where Islam is predominant. Other tacit radicalization regions are in Ogaden region of Ethiopia and in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. However, the rallying call goes up to the United States and Western Europe targeting Muslims.

### **Youth Unemployment and Economic Alienation**

*Al-Shabaab* means "the youth" in Arabic. The group therefore, targets the youth for recruitment into its ranks. Youth unemployment in Kenya is high; 75% are unemployed (Moore, 2013). This seriously undermines their role in the society and dreams of self-actualization making them desperate and despondent. This compounds youth poverty levels which predispose youth to joining al-Shabaab that offers hope and pay. The militant group through Muslim Youth Center embarked on providing healthcare and social welfare services in Kenya and recruiting youth to join *Jihad* in Somalia and abroad (Counter Extremism Project, 2018). In Somalia,

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## Technology

Technology has generally complicated things for counter-terrorism as terrorist groups have become sophisticated. With internet, social media, and other communication technologies, terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab have been spreading their propaganda and creed. al-Shabaab operate various twitter accounts and develop Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and military grade ammunitions. It has also enhanced their offensive capabilities amid tougher counter-terrorism measures. With innovative bomb designs, e-cell timers, barometric switches, digital watches, cell phones, and laptops, terrorists have devised ways of beating checkpoints at airports and roads (Stewart, 2017).

## Financial and Military Assistance

While still under Islamic Courts Union, the group received diverse military aid and training from governments of Iran, Libya, Djibouti, Eritrea, Uganda, Kazakhstan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and others. This boosted military capabilities of the group that has sustained its offensive campaigns (Monitoring Group on Somalia, 2006).

Al-Shabaab also gets funding from Somali diaspora, locals, sponsors, and through proselytizing. They also deal in charcoal (Counter Extremism Project, 2018) and sugar trade through the port of Kismayu with charcoal trade alone netting about \$35-50 million annually. The group also imposes tax on locals, humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses and at points of entry. The taxes amount to about \$100 million annually. It also receives funding from governments of Iran, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, and Yemen (Stanford University, 2016; Monitoring Group on Somalia, 2012).

## Ungoverned Spaces

Places where there is weak political authority and state institutions, poor economic management and provision of social welfare, and lack of physical security may fall under ungoverned spaces. This is so due to lack of government penetration, lack of state monopoly on the use of force, lack of border controls, inadequate levels of infrastructure, high levels of external interference, presence of favourable demographics (like minded extremist/violent/armed groups) inter alia (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2015).

Al-Shabaab emerged in the absence of effective state authority after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. After Barre's fall, the country slipped into civil war and instability leading to emergence of many armed groups scrambling for territory and control. Al-Shabaab therefore, had fertile grounds to sprout, establish and spread its doctrine where no clear governance structures existed in Somalia (Hansen, 2013; Hesse 2013). This could also be the reason why the group radicalizes youth in Kenya's perceived marginalized regions of North Eastern and Coastal region.

Ungoverned spaces provide safe havens for terror groups to plan, indoctrinate, train, secure access to weapons and equipment, and illegal smuggling to provide for their financial needs (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2015).

## Conclusion

Terrorism experienced in the Horn of Africa from al-Shabaab terrorist group is therefore sustained by factors discussed above. These factors have laid the foundation, provided the environment to survive and operate for al-Shabaab. They even pose a challenge to counter-terrorism efforts.

However, significant efforts of counter-terrorism are underway through African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in coordination with foreign governments and agencies. Non-governmental Organizations and inter-religious

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entities are also involved in Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism in the region. For effective counter-terrorism cause in the region, conditions that provide breeding ground for al-Shabaab should be eliminated.

### Recommendations

- Regional governments have to embrace good governance that is inclusive and responsive to social, economic, and political problems of their peoples. This will reduce the sense of alienation, marginalization, and oppression.
- Sources of finance to al-Shabaab should be frozen. Military assistance to the group should also be identified and cut. This will significantly damage the group's operational and offensive capabilities.
- Soft strategies should also be adopted and made inter-operable with hard power strategies. Such soft strategies may include ideological pushback campaigns, inter-religious dialogues, promoting counter-narratives, and adopting preventive strategies. This addresses radicalization which is the stem cell of violent extremism.
- Contrary to current move to cut funds to AMISOM and have its mandate concluded by 2020, AMISOM's mandate should be funded even more, extended and expanded. The proposal to wind the mandate up in 2020 is rather unrealistic in terms of the purpose of the mission as it may be premature thus reversing the gains made. AMISOM should last long enough to ensure Al-Shabaab has no control and influence in Somalia as a terrorist group. AMISOM should also be tasked with stabilization so as to sustainably eliminate the group and end the general instability in Somalia.
- United Nations through the Security Council, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP and other agencies should assume a more active role in the security and stabilization of Somalia.
- Global linkage between the Horn of Africa and conflicts and terrorism in Middle East should be re-evaluated. Stability in Middle East means stability in the Horn of Africa and therefore more efforts should also be devoted to Middle East conflicts.

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# Counter-Terrorism Strategy: The Soft Approach

By Brig Gen (Rtd) George G Kabugi

## Terrorism: an Enigma?

Terrorists have always seemed to be one step ahead of all countermeasures. They seem to have the time and space to plan and execute attacks in a manner and time of their choice. They also seem to have an endless source of recruits. Many a times, responses by States and institutions dealing with counterterrorism come after the terrorists have caused harm. Counter-terrorism-tactics are usually brutal and unilateral, and cause heavy collateral damage. Collateral damage becomes counterproductive as it creates conditions for disfranchisement in communities and in effect increases exposure to recruitment. Since terrorists mainly operate among the good people, the battlefield cannot be clearly defined and hence the use of force becomes a tactical and operational quagmire for the military and security agents in the counter terrorism operations. Additionally, religiously radicalized individuals consider death in such circumstances as a reward and hence killing them is rather a fulfilment of a higher calling, and therefore, achieves no deterrence. Additionally, military operations only target already radicalized persons who are at the tail end of the process but do not address the process itself.

Across a range of governments, think tanks, and media reports, experts expressed general agreement on several elements of effective Counter-terrorism strategy, including denying terrorists safe haven, drying up and closing their funding channels, preventing them from accessing weapons of mass destruction, establishing multiple layers of maritime and border security, undermining terrorists' recruiting messages, and bolstering perceptions of state legitimacy to encourage the cooperation of bystander communities. All these efforts have been breached through technology, compromised security institutions, porous borders, and failed states that cannot enforce laws, and corruption. The changing dynamics of terrorism and violent extremism have shown that terrorists' are continually designing ways of breaching advanced security measures. For example, to beat the thorough and improving security checks in airports and other ports of entry into target countries, coupled with extended intelligence networks, terrorist organizations seek to recruit and radicalize youths from within the vicinity of their targets and allow them to choose targets and means of executing the attacks.

## Fissures in Select Counter-Terrorism Approaches

At the military operational and tactical levels, counter-terrorism has been dogged by controversies of morality, legality and human rights issues concerning methods of deterrence, detection, interrogation, and neutralization of suspected agents. The means of destroying terrorist regimes further complicate the fight against terrorists due to the resultant heavy collateral damage. While the use of force seeks to achieve neutralization, dislocation, disintegration, decentralization, dispersion and disorganization of terrorist groups, it leads to creation of smaller groups and more radicalized individuals. It also creates favourable conditions for recruiting sympathizers

Counter-terrorism tactics, are usually brutal and unilateral, and cause heavy collateral damage



*A section of Kenya Defence Forces on a mission in Somalia (Photo: Shmuel Yosef Agnon)*

outside the target area of operation. Examples can be drawn from the attack on the Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan after the 911 attack. It led to the dispersion of smaller cells to many other countries and failed states, and became difficult to defeat.

On the use of force by the State, Ignatieff (2005) argues that we must not shrink from the use of violence that far from undermining liberal democracy, force can be necessary for its survival. But its use must be measured, not a program of torture and revenge. And we must not fool ourselves that whatever we do in the name of freedom and democracy is good. We may need to kill to fight the greater evil of terrorism, but we must never pretend that doing so is anything better than a lesser evil. Ignatieff concludes that liberal states consistently overreact and too readily curtail freedoms. He ends by eloquently arguing that a liberal democracy can survive the age of terror only if it takes seriously the political context within which terrorism thrives, that is, by engaging, persuading, and championing social justice.

Pre-emption as a counter-terrorism strategy is defined as the anticipatory use of force in the face of an imminent

attack. It has long been accepted as legitimate and appropriate under international law. The use of force in International Law and Practice however, create a big dilemma for pre-emption. The United Nations Charter governs the legality of the use of force under international law. Article 2(4), prohibits all uses of force, regardless of purpose, except for two narrow categories; specific authorization by the Security Council under Chapter VII, Article 42, or, actions of self-defence under Article 51 in response to attacks on the territory of a member state. Faced with this dilemma, nations result to prevention, which is rather reactive. Prevention are measures taken to defend against imminent attacks with no known specific time or place of attack. This makes CT vague and expensive. To broaden the pre-emption strategy, it is important to include actions that seek to eliminate or reduce the chances of recruitment and radicalization through non-violent means mainly applying socio-cultural, religious, and educational approaches.

### **A Closer Look at Soft Power Strategy**

With all the lessons learned from the exclusive use of force, a combination of hard and soft power strategy

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With all the lessons learned from the exclusive use of force, a combination of hard and soft power strategy may appear to achieve prevention of radicalization and pre-emption of planned attacks before they occur





President Uhuru Kenyatta gets out of a bunker in Somalia during a visit to Kenya Defence Forces in Somalia (Photo: Government of Kenya)

may appear to achieve prevention of radicalization and pre-emption of planned attacks before they occur. According to the Liberalism Theory Joseph Nye (2011), Nye advances two types of power (soft power and hard power). Hard power denotes the 'the ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences and strategies' (Nye, 2011, p.11). This is the ability to coerce, through threats and inducements ("sticks" and "carrots"). On the contrary, soft power is the ability to get 'others to want the outcomes that you want' (Nye, 2004a, p.5), and more particularly 'the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion' (ibid. x). Although this theory mainly applies to relations between states, the entry of non-state terrorist organizations into international relations (IR) demands that such theories be

Consequently, to effectively weaken and eventually diminish the appeal of extremist ideologies, it is imperative to strategically integrate both soft and hard approaches

applied on state-terrorist relations. According to Matusitz (2013), terrorism reaches more than the immediate target victims and is also directed at targets consisting of a larger spectrum of society. It is both *mala prohibita* (i.e., crime that is made illegal by legislation) and *mala in se* (i.e., crime that is inherently immoral or wrong). The first case calls for a legal approach and law enforcement, while the second calls for a socio-cultural approach.

Subsequently, there is need to explore other non-violent, non-lethal and persuasive ways of pre-empting terrorism rather than the exclusive use of force. Use of force must, however, be kept as an alternative and complimentary measure to neutralize, deter violence, and harden potential targets. A good mix of both could serve to address the causes while destroying the already radicalized and forcing them to surrender. Joseph Nye (2012) avers that "Soft power is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than by coercion (hard power), which is using force or giving money as a means of persuasion. Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. A defining feature of soft power is that it is noncoercive; the currency of soft power is culture, political values, and foreign policies".

The soft approach should be aimed at addressing the root or conditions that ignite, sustain and promote

extremism. These include and not limited to: misunderstood ideology, societal issues (social injustice), political marginalization and poverty (perceived economic exclusion) including unemployment. Alex P. Schmid (2012) developed some 12 rules for preventing and countering terrorism: addressing underlying conflict issues exploited by the terrorists; preventing radical individuals and groups from becoming terrorist extremists; stimulate and encourage defection and conversion of free and imprisoned terrorists; deny terrorists access to arms, explosives, false identification documents, safe communication, safe travel and sanctuaries; reduce low-risk/high-gain opportunities for terrorists to strike; devise communication strategies to counter them; prepare for crisis- and consequence-management for both 'regular' and 'catastrophic' acts of terrorism; establish an Early Detection and Early Warning intelligence system against terrorism and other violent crimes; strengthen coordination of efforts against terrorism both within and between states; show solidarity with, and offer support to, victims of terrorism at home and abroad; maintain the moral high-ground and counter the ideologies, indoctrination and propaganda of secular and non-secular terrorists

### Grossman's Assessment

In her article *Combating Terrorism: soft power approaches*, in *The Strategist* on 20 July 2015, Michele Grossman argues that a decade of securitized

transnational approaches to combating terrorist activity and propaganda has shown that such approaches are ineffective on their own. Sometimes, these 'hard power' measures can actually damage efforts to roll back the appeal and participation in violent extremism. While such steps may be justified in domestic contexts where threats are critical or imminent, failure to accompany them with robust 'soft power' initiatives will prove counterproductive in the longer-term. She suggests that successful counter violent extremism need to incorporate certain key strategies. First, relevant agencies and authorities should target recruiters who are a 'lynchpin', and focal point for ISIS leaders. Their removal from circulation will starve terrorist organizations of constant supply of new recruits. Second, Grossman rejects the 'special nature' branding of violent extremism. She argues that the violent extremism should be 'stripped of its romanticised trappings' and be treated as one of the common manifestations of criminal violence. Third, trust is increasingly becoming important in "successful joint efforts between governments and communities" (para. 14) and hence a deliberate effort to ensure transparency and limpidity in counter terrorism endeavours. Other measures include re-examining the role of women as they are "...influential players—spokespeople, recruiters, enablers and, in some instances, as fighters" (para. 16). Consequently, to effectively weaken and eventually diminish the appeal of extremist ideologies, it is imperative to strategically integrate both soft and hard approaches.

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# The Reality of *Terroredia* in Kenya and Al-Shabaab's Psychological Warfare

By Daniel Iberi

## Media and terrorism

It is a mistake to discuss terrorism without involving media. Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's remark that nations "must try to find ways to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the 'oxygen of publicity' on which they depend" is prescient (Speech to American Bar Association, 1985). Terrorists' dependence on publicity is well documented, but how much or to what extent does the media "starve" the terrorists of this oxygen? Most scholars in social sciences are in agreement that terrorists use violence and death to scare and intimidate the living so as to coerce them to capitulation. As such, at its core, death is not an end in itself, rather, it is used emblematically to attain bigger objectives –religious, political, or economic. The focus of terrorists, consequently, is inflicting terror in the hearts as well as minds of those who are still alive. The only way to this end is through extensive publicity – in the mainstream and or new media.

## Terroredia

The term *terroredia* was conceived by Mahmoud Eid in 2015 to refer to the co-dependency between terrorists and the media. This relationship, symbiotic in nature, points to the excessive and desultory media coverage of terrorists' activities which directly or indirectly support their cause. Eid argues that there is an "asymmetrical co-dependency" between media and terrorists where the terrorists benefit from the widespread coverage (hence increased volume of public attention) of their activities while the media benefits through profits accrued because of increased viewership and readership. Effectively, "...in order for both to survive, terrorists seek to attract public attention while the media seek to find top-stories to sell." (Eid, 2015, p. 4). Eid only echoes thoughts of many other scholars (Weimann & Winn, 1994; Freedman & Thussu, 2011) in media and terrorism who affirm the existence of this "highly toxic relationship" that is critical for the subsistence of both parties. The spiteful cycle of violence punctuated by gruesome killings through beheadings, shootings, burnings, kidnappings, hijackings, bombings, raping, suicidal attacks among others, that power *terroredia*. A terrorist's delight rests in publicity and the media becomes the most effective tool to reach these critical numbers. Of note, their intention is to promote fear and prompt reaction from both the citizenry and governments, hence amplifying their cause and placing them at vantage point of power scare.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the media brings to the fore terrorists' propaganda through priming and framing. Media is enamoured by newsworthy items and terrorism is among them. Additionally, journalists are also likely to focus on alarming events (from an episodic perspective) rather than in depth analysis (a thematic perspective) (Iyengar, 1993). Most terrorist activities fit the criteria *if it bleeds it leads*, and the media ceremoniously cover them at the expense of equally important news. Wolfsfeld stated, "All other things being equal, journalists prefer to tell stories about conflict. News is first and foremost about conflict and disorder. Protests, violence, crime, wars, and disasters provide the most natural material for news reports" (2004, p. 15). This, in part, explains why journalists frenetically cover terror activities without forestalling the deadly implications. However, owing to cut-throat competition in an archetypal democracy, in addition to ubiquitous rivalry in the media-scape, media houses at times wilfully react to extremist propaganda.

The advent of new media has also presented terrorists with novel ways of reaching the masses directly, and in ways they prefer. Unlike traditional media which assumes the direction of 'one to many', social media is inimitable in "interactivity, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence" (Weimann, 2014, p. 2). These technologies are affordable and users can easily and rapidly share,





*A Kenyan soldier walks past Garissa University College gate after al-Shabaab attack on 2 April 2015 (Photo: Abdimalik Hajir)*

create and recreate, and discuss the content. Indeed, terror groups have effectually exploited technology careening towards new media, away from recorded amateur videos portraying the spokesperson claiming responsibility of acts of terror to strategically edited materials and high quality videos of martyrdom oaths in addition to live updates on Facebook and Twitter.

### **Media Coverage of Terror Attacks in Kenya**

Like the rest of the world, Africa has not been spared by the spate of terrorism. Nigeria and Somalia, in particular, have borne the brunt of terror leading to thousands of fatalities, destruction of property, and trauma for survivors and relatives. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2017, deaths resulting from direct terror activities have declined, but not wiped out. With a GTI score of 7.65 GTI, Somalia is ranked 7 out of 163 in the 2017 Global Terrorism Index. The reverberating effects of terror perpetrated by al-Shabaab in Somalia have been devastating, not only in Somalia, but in Kenya too.

Al-Shabaab emerged as an outgrowth of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) as well as al Itihaad al Islamiya (AIAI) in 2006 with about 9,000 fighters in its ranks. Ethiopian efforts to rout out al-Shabaab in 2006 led to “deep-seated Somali hostility towards Ethiopia” (Agbiboa, 2014, p. 28). Ethiopia managed to repress the terror group to a lesser

extent and her exit from Somalia and her replacement by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) created room for the outfit to grow mainly through propaganda. Al-Shabaab has since carried out attacks on perceived outposts of the West, Ethiopian embassy, AMISOM, Uganda, and Kenya. Nevertheless, it is Kenya’s incursion to Somalia on 16 October 2011 (codenamed *Operation Linda Nchi*, Swahili phrase for ‘Protect the Country’) that marked a watershed moment for the beginning of deadly attacks on Kenya by the outfit. For this paper, I will focus on two recent high-profile terror attacks on Kenya by the al-Shabaab: Nairobi’s Westgate Shopping Mall (2013) and Garissa University College (2015).

The Westgate Shopping Mall attack by al-Shabaab in 2013 is one of the most shocking terror attacks in Nairobi. The attackers massacred an estimated 67 people.

Media scholars and practitioners need not assume that extremists control the mass media; they only endeavour to exploit them for their own objectives



## Terrorists' dependence on publicity is well documented, but how much or to what extent does the media "starve" the terrorists of this oxygen?

Whereas the media did an estimable task in covering the attack (and constantly updating the public on the same), it is virtually impossible to overlook the 'idolization' of the terror group, albeit inadvertently. The media gave al-Shabaab princely coverage with follow-up features on leading newspapers and television stations. For instance, KTN's *THE INSIDE STORY; Wolves at Westgate* [The news behind the news of 2013 terror attack in Westgate] and K24's *K24 Investigates: Westgate Siege Unravalled* documentaries are testaments of manifestations of terroredia – media and terrorism dotting relations.

In the morning of 2 April 2015, suspected al-Shabaab fighters gained entry into Garissa University College and opened fire killing about 147 students. KTN's *Jitimai ya Ugaidi: Jinsi shambulizi la kigaidi lilivyotekelezwa katika chuo kikuu cha Garissa* (loosely translated as 'Grief of Terrorism: How terror attack was carried out in Garissa university') documentary also circuitously elevates al-Shabaab. It shows images of the injured and shell-shocked survivors, against the ethics of conflict reporting. It also shows people alleged to be al-Shabaab fighters in complete gear comprising of rappelling belts and rounds

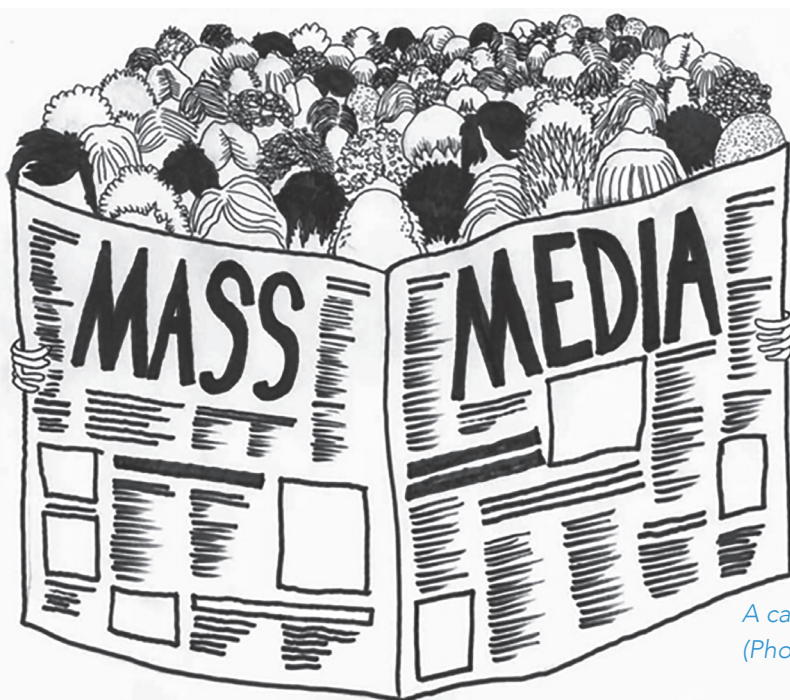
of bullets, AK-47 and G3 guns, but more tragically, it showed Kenya security agencies in subdued positions.

These documentaries were laden with gory images and videos of the attack creating an atmosphere of panic and fear among viewers. Like in horror films, the documentaries were designed to elicit horror-like physiological reaction such as faster heartbeat, repulsions, and nightmares. They also underreported security structures' efforts, further emboldening the al-Shabaab propaganda – triumph over infidels. More importantly, it put the military under immense pressure to make decisions vis a vis the terror attacks. The coverage may have also vitalized the sympathisers of al-Shabaab having seen the extensive damage done to the corporeal and mind of the targets.

### Best Practices

It is imperative to note, the media may not be in complicit in perpetrating terror, but through its reportage and 'news value analyses', it may exacerbate the gravity of terror attacks – effectively handing terrorists the much needed 'oxygen.' Media scholars and practitioners need not

assume that extremists control the mass media; they only endeavour to exploit them for their own objectives. In fact, in most democracies, media coverage of terrorism is an essential constituent of democratic life, and it might seem incongruous, particularly where terror poses great danger and the media does not report. Consequently, limiting the freedom of expression, as suggested by some scholars, might not be a panacea for highly toxic relationship between the media and terrorism and subsequent consequences.



A cartoon showing people immersed in mass media (Photo: Odessa Magafas)

## Wittingly or unwittingly, the media brings to the fore terrorists' propaganda through priming and framing

The role of mass media today transcends the traditional function of informing and shaping public opinion. Journalists play a political role in terror reporting and thus should avoid 'facilitating the psychological processes that intensify the public's fears and apprehension' (Breckenridge & Zimbardo, 2007, p. 116) as revealed

in Garissa University, Westgate Shopping Mall attacks and numerous other small-scale, but equally significant, attacks in Kenya. Some documentaries and news media in the case of al-Shabaab attacks on Kenya have revealed a disturbing trend. By focusing on the improved securitization of state responses to terrorism, the media would have shifted the power from the terrorists to governments starving terrorists of publicity. This means that the media should rationally and responsibly report terrorism by striking a balance between economic and ethical considerations. Using the game-theoretical model, where the media would have the capacity to handle information ingeniously in favour of public's interest; providing valuable information to the public instead of distorting, exaggerating, and or even informing, inadvertently propping terrorists' propaganda.

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# Politics of Succession in Africa: The Quest for Democratic Peace

By Sh Ramadhan Aula and Edmond John Pamba

## Abstract

Succession in post-independence African politics has been one of the major sources of conflict in Africa. This problem stems from both political party and systemic levels. Political parties serve as the main instruments of mass mobilization for political participation and democratization. However, many African political parties suffer democratic deficiencies just like the State that make succession politics conflictive. The conflict ensuing from succession politics acquires ethnic, class and elitist nature as it degenerates into violence. This violence and systemic disturbance due to succession conflicts ultimately threaten the peace and stability of African countries. This paper explores factors that make succession politics in Africa conflictive and proposes more democratization, constitutionalism, limitation of presidential terms, peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms and free, fair and credible elections as sustainable solutions to the problem.

## Introduction

Dahrendorf (1959) posits that social conflict arises if: (i) one group holds exclusive power, (ii) there is no chance for other groups to access authority or power and (iii) if groups are allowed to freely form political parties.

These conditions for conflict exist in many African states, especially in the context of succession politics. The cycle of succession conflicts is, therefore, due in part to low levels of democratization that do not espouse free and fair political competition, and structured democratic transitions systemically and within political parties. African political practice has developed an illiberal nature that has given absolute power to governments which then abuse the power and state machinery against ideals of democratization. Political parties have sadly percolated this culture within their structures betraying their noble *raison d'être* for democratization. Multiparty democracy has also been overstretched by formation of too many weak, ill-organized and parochial political parties.

This paper argues for more democratization as a way of ending succession conflicts and crises in Africa. Democratic transition improves legitimacy of government, institutionalizes predictability and thus builds polity stability (and peace) over time. Many have argued for democracy and democratization as peace promoting and politically stabilizing (Kant, 1795; Hegre et al., 2001; Oneal & Russett, 2001). Political practice in many post-independence African countries has been characterized by the following realities that have contributed to succession conflicts if not escalated them as the next section shows.

## Personality Cult

Many political parties in Africa, in practice, centrally consolidate power in the person of the party leader (and/or chairman). This entity is always on the political frontline and uses this position to personalize power and

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Many political parties in Africa, in practice, centrally consolidate power in the person of the party leader (and/or chairman). This entity is always on the political frontline and uses this position to personalize power and party



*President Museveni's supporters hold up his poster during one of the political rallies in 2011 (Photo: Getty Images)*

party. Political parties have instead turned instruments of arbitrary abuse by party leaders if not sinews of total power for party leaders. They are, therefore, driven by interests of party leaders and not founding values, principles, and ideologies thereby losing their institutional character (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006).

Party leaders have unbridled influence on the political parties to the extent that party membership, delegates and officials only play a cheerleading role that builds party leaders into powerful political totems. This helps them to develop loyalty structures from the party down to the local support bases. Party leaders become unquestionable and those who contend with party leaders' positions and style are perceived enemies of the party and, in case of the ruling party, enemies of government. This almost politically deifies party leaders and absolves them from internal party competition that necessitates espousal of political succession principles.

President Jomo Kenyatta enjoyed massive party support due to his charisma and liberation legacy during his chairmanship of Kenya African National Union (KANU) (Mwaura, 1997). The question of his succession in the party was thus, muted until his death. This led to factionalism that embarked on vicious power struggle to replace Kenyatta within the party arousing tensions across the country and among political elites (Mwaura, 1997). In Uganda, National Resistance Movement (NRM) has been under President Yoweri Museveni's total influence since

1986. Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was under total influence of President Robert Mugabe since the country's independence in 1980 until his military-aided ouster in 2017. Tanzania's Chama cha Mapinduzi was under President Julius Nyerere from 1961 until 1985 when he retired. During their hold onto power within their respective political parties, the question of succession was and is not tolerated (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006).

Lack of internal party democracy arouses resentment and splintering which then clutters democratic space with a multitude of parties. For example, in 2004, in Malawi, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) broke away from United Democratic Front (UDF), Republican Party broke away from Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and three more new parties emerged, giving the ruling party victory in the presidential poll over many splinter parties (Chiroro, 2006). This failed basic standards of democratic competition and goals. This proliferation of political parties obfuscates political discourse, detaching many political parties from the society they seek to represent (Chiroro, 2006). This can lead to political entropy. Most of these parties are ethno-regional which perpetuates ethnic conflict around resource and power distribution in African countries. Regional and ethnic mobilization of these parties also disintegrates African nations into ethnic enclaves, further Balkanizing a country.



The tendency of ruling parties with centralized power to abuse state machinery and resources for party politics is rampant in Africa

## One Party rule

Many post-independence African ruling political parties through tact and might consolidated power ultimately creating single-party states across Africa. Mali, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya among others became single party states (Chiroro, 2006). The ruling elites justified though never adequately, the development, as rooted in African political philosophy (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006).

Ruling parties centralized power and even banned other political parties, as happened in Kenya in 1969 when Kenya People's Union (KPU) was banned and Kenya was made a one party (KANU) state by law in 1982 (Mwaura, 1997). They fused party structures and manifestos with government machinery (and decisions) with public policy blurring the line between party and government (Chiroro, 2006; Mwaura, 1997; Peter & Kopsieker, 2006). This ensured that they wielded total power. This wielding of total power and lock-down on other political parties created more political conflicts across Africa, as elites fought off one party tyranny. In Kenya, politics turned tumultuous since the banning of other parties in 1969 and even more turbulent since 1982, as opposition elites led the clamour for multi-party democracy against a repressive regime (Mwaura, 1997).

However, single party rule has been sustained by patterns of patron-client relationship that ruling parties form with politicians and the population (Mwaura, 1997; Peter & Kopsieker, 2006). Politicians sell their loyalty for trappings of power to the ruling party while the population pledges their allegiance to the same in exchange for 'development.' Rebel politicians and regions are, therefore, treated to marginalization, deprivation, and coercion till they oblige to structured clientelism (Mwaura, 1997). Meanwhile, inequitable distribution of resources would provoke the struggle for equity by deprived regions.

The tendency of ruling parties with centralized power to abuse state machinery and resources for party politics is rampant in Africa. This can be seen in rigged elections, arbitrary arrest and prosecution of opposition leaders, crackdown on media and civil society, and limitation of civil liberties and freedoms. Currently, for example, Ethiopia is facing unrests due to repressive Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front's rule which imposed a second State of Emergency a few months apart.

## Constitutional Failures

Constitutional failures happen at both political party and systemic levels.

### (a) Political Party Level

Political parties in post-independence Africa adopted good constitutions, but gradual consolidation of power in the person of the party leader eroded this democratic achievement. Political parties, their membership and executive bodies could no longer check the powers, excesses, and arbitrariness of the party leader. Other political parties, especially opposition parties, were small and weak with ad hoc structures leaving party leaders as the lifeline of those parties.

However, some political parties had prohibitive clauses in their constitutions that protected the party leader from competition. In Kenya, in 2013, this prohibitive clause led to the break-up of Orange Democratic Movement when the deputy party leader, Musalia Mudavadi, vainly complained against the clause protecting Raila Odinga's position as the party leader and his automatic candidacy in presidential elections (Momanyi, 2012). Till now, Raila Odinga is the party leader and has been since its formation sometime in 2005 and the question of succession is silent in the party.

Party leaders have, by virtue of their immense influence on their parties, by-passed party procedures and constitutions to appoint or anoint successors. This creates political disputes within parties and tension among supporters. In Kenya, in 2002, when KANU's party leader and chairman, outgoing president Moi anointed Uhuru Kenyatta his successor, factions grew in the party leading to mass exodus of politicians who joined the opposition (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006). The party lost the elections of 2002 and has since been relegated in Kenyan politics. In February 2018, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)'s party leader Morgan Tsvangirai passed on. He had, however,

## Shortly after independence in Kenya, KANU embarked on power consolidation through constitutional amendments in a way that centralized power in the presidency

anointed Nelson Chamisa to take over as party leader by-passing party procedures and constitution. This created a big storm in Zimbabwe's main opposition party, threatening its very existence or continuity, as factions opposed to Chamisa strongly emerged. A faction led by Thokozani Khupe has, for example, propped her claim to the party's leadership by virtue of her election as vice party leader by relevant party body before the party leader's demise (Muckraker, 2018). This may cost the party next elections (if it survives the crisis), given the crisis is untimely as elections are due in July of 2018. There is also possibility of splintering into several political parties.

### (b) Systemic Level

Here, constitutional failures happen due to (i) hostile constitutional amendments, (ii) amendment attempts to extend term limits for incumbents, (iii) constitutional lacunae that fails to limit presidential terms and, (iv) amendments (or provisions) that give absolute power to incumbents.

In Togo, President Eyadema died in office in 2005, having been the longest serving African president at the time. The military imposed his son Faure as the successor citing a dangerous power vacuum. Later, parliament amended the constitution to cement his position. This has taken Togo through political conflict among elites, ethnic conflict and unrests that threaten its stability (Banjo, 2005). In Kenya, the parliament passed a law that made the country a one party State, outlawing formation of other political parties. This lasted from 1982 till 1991, having given the incumbent of the ruling party undue advantage over his competitors. This, however, spawned clamour for multiparty democracy led by civil society and politicians, receiving repressive regime reaction (Mwaura, 1997).

There has also been disruptive attempts by some African parliaments to extend the term limits of incumbent presidents. These have led to serious political conflict and even popular rebellion against parliament and the president, as seen in Burkina Faso. President Campaore was overthrown by the people and parliament burnt

down when he sought to lift term limits through parliament. Yoweri Museveni of Uganda is currently seeking another term through parliamentary amendment of the constitution, a matter that is causing unrest in the country.

Lack of term limits among other reasons inspired armed resistance to Milton Obote-led government by Yoweri Museveni when it was clear Obote was staying in power. The permanence of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia's tenure also inspired rebellion against him in 1974. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania wished to resign of his own accord in 1980, but CCM and the people urged him not to, citing unavailability of a suitable successor and non-existence of succession formula (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006).

Shortly after independence in Kenya, KANU embarked on power consolidation through constitutional amendments in a way that centralized power in the presidency. The issue of succession could, therefore, not be definite in the existence of the vice president because he was not permanent and could be sacked by the president anytime. The Chief Justice could not, constitutionally, determine the president's incapacity and/or recommend his impeachment because he/she is a political appointee. On the other hand, parliament could not successfully move a motion-of-no-confidence and proceed to impeach the president, because he was protected by his parliamentary majority (Mwaura, 1997; Peter & Kopsieker 2006).

This left the question of succession at the discretion of the president, which was obviously unpredictable and caused political tension. An aggressive move led by Njoroge Mungai's 'Change-the-Constitution' team to have the Speaker of the National Assembly take over *ad interim* in the event of interregnum was also successfully fought by President Kenyatta and an opposing faction led by Kibaki-Njonjo-Moi in 1976. Kenyatta died in office leaving Moi as the heir to the throne with serious legitimacy challenges, leading to his authoritarian style that took Kenya through turbulent 24 years of liberation struggle, from 1978 to 2002 (Mwaura, 1997).





*Kenya chief opposition leader, Raila Odinga, addresses his supporters in July, 2017 (Photo: Pulselive)*

## Electoral Failures

Elections (regular, free, and fair) serve as means of selection for the replacement or succession of political elites in democratic countries. However, many elections in Africa are characterized by malpractices such as rigging, intimidation of both voters and opponents and voter bribery. This has led to high electoral and presidential petitions triggering politico-ethnic violence causing instability especially around election cycles. This again happens at both political party (party primaries) and systemic levels (general elections).

At political party level, 2017 primaries in Kenya, were marred by violence amid malpractice claims and clashes between selected party favourites and popular candidates across many political parties (Otondi, 2017). This was but part of a pattern of electoral violence in Kenya.

At the highest level (general elections), the announcement of Mwai Kibaki as winner of presidential elections, in 2017, led to ethnic clashes that claimed more than 1,100 people, displaced more than 600,000 people, and caused massive destruction of property. This was due to alleged rigging of the elections by the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki ("Kenya since post-election violence," 2017).

Many of Kenyan elections have faced credibility questions and led to violence almost every election cycle. In August 2017, the opposition led by Raila Odinga filed a petition against the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta which resulted in nullification of the election on grounds of electoral irregularities, illegalities, and unconstitutionality (De Freytas-tamura, 2017).

In 2016, President Museveni of Uganda was controversially re-elected causing violence as a result of allegations of electoral fraud ("Uganda's Museveni re-elected," 2016). The same happened in Zimbabwe, in 2008, pitting incumbent President Robert Mugabe against Morgan Tsvangirai. Many other African countries have had electoral failures leading to violent conflicts and instability.

## Emerging Trends

There have been efforts to democratize Africa in a bid to sustainably resolve politico-economic crises and social unrests through pressure groups, political parties, and the intervention of the international community. However, some countries have tried to stabilize their democracies by developing internal democratic

## There have been efforts to democratize Africa in a bid to sustainably resolve politico-economic crises and social unrests through pressure groups, political parties, and the intervention of the international community

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safeguards and more conscious political cultures. These countries include South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, and Botswana where presidents resigned to allow democratic transitioning (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006). In November 2017, Zimbabwe's long serving president Robert Mugabe resigned following military intervention.

In early 2018, Jacob Zuma of South Africa resigned hours before Ethiopia's Prime Minister who resigned following long violent unrests. Some of these resignations were out of will, such as Tanzania's Julius Nyerere in 1985 who even pushed for a law to limit presidential terms (Peter & Kopsieker, 2006), and South Africa's Nelson Mandela in 1999.

However, some of these resignations may be democratically cosmetic since illiberal systems have not changed much to allow full democratization, as in the case of Ethiopia. Is this, another wave of democratization or political expediency?

### Conclusion

Politics of succession create disputes, struggles for power due to perceived or real power vacuum, and unrests that threaten the stability of African countries. National and regional security is also undermined by politics of succession which have always been problematic in Africa. For Africa to stabilize and ensure the right environment for development and growth, democracy has to be practised: promote freedom, fairness, and justice.

Democratization will also institutionalize predictability in succession politics thereby laying stable foundation of continuity.

### Recommendations

- African governments, political parties, and civil societies should be on the lead on democratization of political space to limit conflict.
- Constitutionalism should be promoted and observed by all institutions of governance in African countries.
- Presidential terms should be limited and succession procedures made clear in party constitutions and constitutions of African republics.
- Institutional reforms touching on separation of powers, institutional independence, and competence should be embraced. Political practice should also be liberally institutionalized at political party and systemic levels.
- Peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms should be institutionalized and promoted in dispute resolution in Africa.
- Free, fair, and credible elections should be promoted so as to build trust in democratic processes and stabilize transitions.

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## Recent Activities

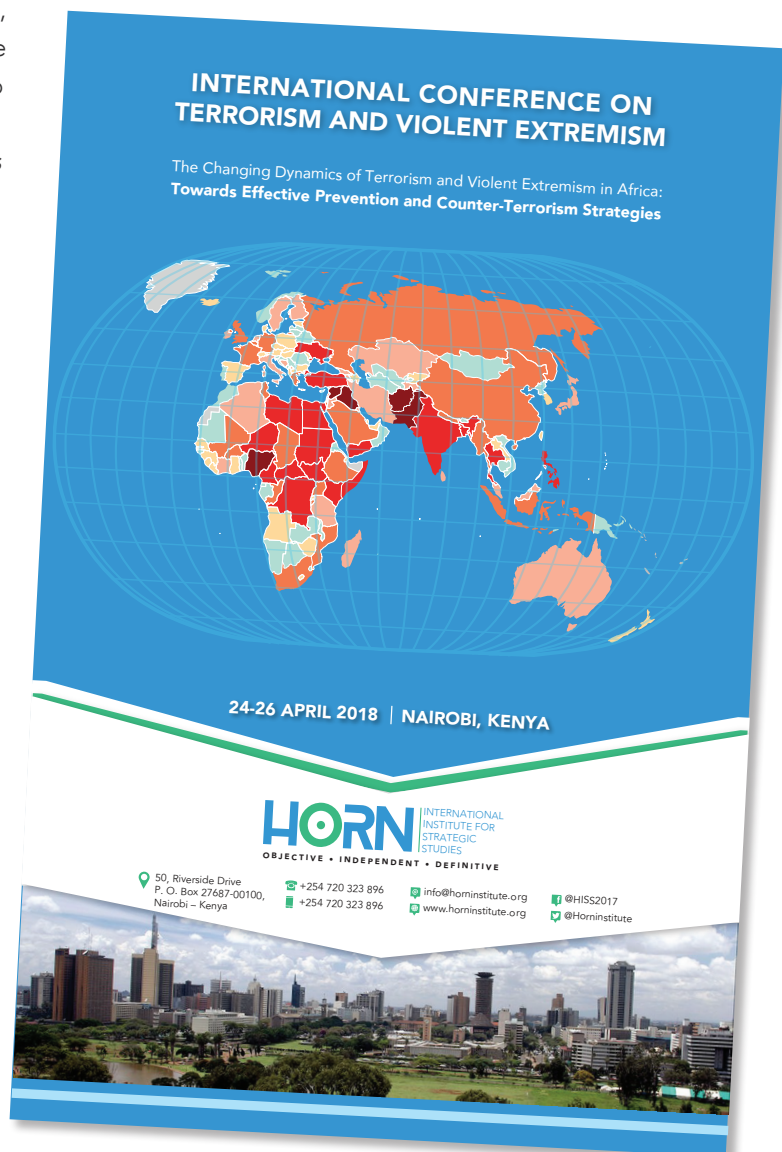
### About the International Conference on Terrorism and Violent Extremism

The gravity of the current threat to our collective peace and security cannot be overemphasized. While this may be common knowledge, the dynamism of terrorism and terrorist groups, their ability to evolve and adapt due to foreign policy adjustments, technological advances, globalization, migration, and internal political divisions within affected countries have made this threat deadlier, with catastrophic consequences.

The HORN Institute organized a conference, which was held on 24-26 April 2018, at the Windsor Golf Hotel and Country Club in Nairobi (Kenya). The theme of the conference was ***The Changing Dynamics of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa: Towards Effective Prevention and Counter-Terrorism Strategies.*** The conference brought together researchers, practitioners, public policy makers, scholars, government officials, and terrorism and counter-terrorism officials from over 25 countries to exchange information, ideas, and experiences in combating the scourge of terror.

The conference recognized the need to define the concept of terrorism properly - conceptually and operationally - as it will help get the policies right. The conversation on terrorism should also be expanded to cover a wider range of issues including military, intelligence, violent extremism, ethnic identity and their linkages to extremism among others. The use of religious narratives by extremists was also widely cited, and thus the need for a religious response as well, in addition to economic, cultural, and political counter-terrorism approaches.

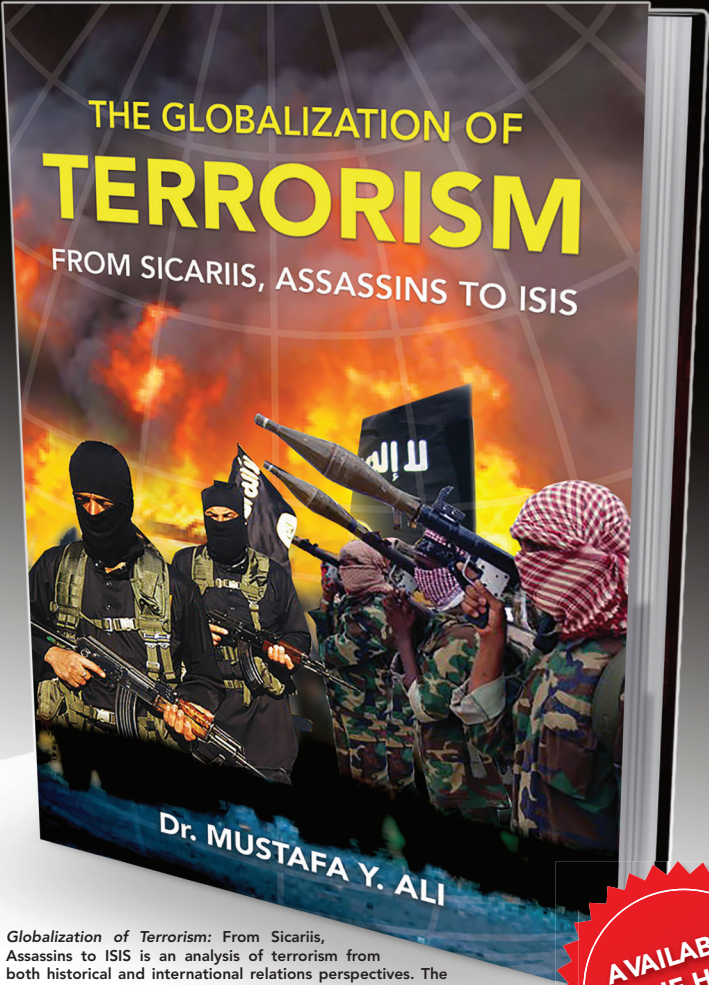
The Institute will publish two book volumes that will contain papers presented at the conference. The papers will deepen the critical knowledge on terrorism and violent extremism as well as promote enlightened discussion on these areas for effective policy making.



## Upcoming Activities

The HORN Institute Editorial Board is working on two book volumes that will highlight the various thematic areas discussed during the International Conference on Terrorism and Violent Extremism held on 24 - 26 April, 2018. They will be an invaluable compendium of conference papers and presentations.

### Book on Sale



**NEW RELEASE**

**THE GLOBALIZATION OF TERRORISM**  
FROM SICARIIS, ASSASSINS TO ISIS

**Dr. MUSTAFA Y. ALI**

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