

The

Volume II | Issue VI | November-December 2019

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.

INSIDE

Virtual War: Fighting Al Shabab Terrorism in Cyberspaces	1
Understanding Ethnic Tensions in Ethiopia	11
The Sea and Global Security: The Case of Piracy and Terrorism	19
Safeguarding Kenya's Economic Security Through the Blue Economy	28

About the HORN Institute

The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies is a non-profit, applied research, and policy think-do tank based in Nairobi, Kenya. Its mission is to contribute to informed, objective, definitive research and analytical inquiry that positively informs policies of governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and spaces. Its vision is a progressive Horn of Africa served by informed, evidence-based and problem-solving policy research and analysis.

Virtual War: Fighting Al Shabab Terrorism in Cyberspaces

By Anne Speckhard, Ph.D. and Ardian Shajkovci, Ph.D.

Abstract

Despite significant military victories on the ground, groups like ISIS and al Shabab remain active and intractable online. In an effort to disrupt the appeal of such groups online, the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE), has to date, conducted over 140 counter-narrative campaigns on Facebook, targeting both general populations and those exhibiting vulnerability to violent extremist content. This article reports on ICSVE-initiated campaigns aimed at Facebook users in Kenya and Somalia. The campaigns targeted general Facebook profiles and those that suggested an increased risk of being exposed to ISIS or al Shabab related radicalization materials or rhetoric. In some campaigns, a reach of over one million was achieved and close to 1.5 million video views. Metrics used to analyze the effectiveness of the campaigns suggest positive outcomes in initiating important discussions on the dangers emanating from groups like al Shabab, as well changes in attitudes and online behaviors or a positive impact on negative online behavior.

Introduction

Despite significant territorial defeats on the ground, groups like ISIS and al Shabab continue to use the internet and social media platforms as part of their wider recruitment strategies. It is in such platforms that they hope to attract recruits, regain influence, garner legitimacy, and render unrealistic any prospects of defeating them militarily. As some authors have noted, they engage in political marketing to "create and sustain reciprocal relationships between



A Facebook sign in an undisclosed location. Facebook says that it has taken measures to help combat terrorism (Photo Credit: Facebook)

themselves and enemies based upon fear and despair, and with recruits and allies based upon expectation of justice, belonging, and/or a sense of meaning or purpose in life” (Simons, 2018, p. 347).

In an effort to upscale their information warfare, terrorist groups influence thinking among their followers through careful selection and manipulation of information—intermingling both truths and falsehoods—through targeting of multiple audiences, and deployment of a multitude of different narratives to communicate their message. In particular, al Shabab’s propaganda and persuasive communication strategy rooted in Somali nationalism and the narrative of foreign occupation of Somalia persists (UNSOM, 2017). This promotes the Islamic dream of a Caliphate alongside narratives that exploit local structural grievances, anti-Muslim rhetoric and racial injustices globally (Reuters, 2016). Even though such groups have increasingly shifted their recruitment activities to other private platforms and channels (such as Telegram) due to major shutdowns on mainstream social media platforms, they nevertheless continue to outflank the governments and social media companies’ efforts to shut them down on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. In partnership with Kenya’s National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE) has to date conducted 16 interviews with al Shabab recruits, returnees, defectors, and imprisoned

cadres, including one focusing on an imprisoned ISIS recruit, in Kenya. The interviews are being used to create counter-narrative videos for prevention and intervention purposes. ICSVE researchers have also completed a total of 12 counter-narrative videos relying on such interviews, which are currently either subtitled or in the process of being subtitled in English, Swahili, and Somali, with many more in the production stage (See Table 1).

This study reports on ICSVE’s efforts to fight the appeal of al Shabab on Facebook by using ICSVE-produced counter narratives. More specifically, between August 2018 and June 2019, ICSVE researchers initiated five Facebook campaigns that targeted Kenya and Somalia. The purpose of the campaigns was to continue to raise awareness and challenge narratives of violent extremists and terrorist groups like al Shabab. The campaigns targeted both general Facebook users and smaller samples determined by initial analysis as vulnerable to violent extremists’ content. While violent extremist groups’ influences online should also be understood in relation to other offline influences – family, friends, religious leaders, for instance b – (Mkutu & Opondo, 2019; Speckhard & Shajkovci, 2019a), this study adds significant contribution to the debate over the need to target violent extremist propaganda online and understand online attitudes and behaviors toward violent extremism in Africa in general (RAND, 2018), and Kenyans and Somalis in particular.

Scope of the Campaign

ICSVE have to date interviewed over 180 ISIS and al Shabab returnees, defectors, and prisoners globally. The in-depth interviews, most of them captured on video, showcase their pathways into and out of terrorism, their motivations for joining, their experiences inside the group, reasons for leaving, if they defected, and their current feelings about the group. Based on such interviews, ICSVE researchers have produced over 150 short counter narratives video clips featuring such individuals. Most of them extensively discussed their experiences inside the terrorist group and denounced it for its utterly un-Islamic, corrupt and brutal nature, while also warning others not to join them. In partnership with Facebook, ICSVE researchers distribute these counter narratives, subtitled in the many languages that groups like ISIS and al Shabab recruits use, on Facebook, in both general awareness-raising and prevention campaigns and targeting of accounts that suggest an increased risk of being exposed to ISIS or al Shabab-related radicalization materials or rhetoric.

In the last two years, the ICSVE researchers have launched 144 campaigns on Facebook utilizing ICSVE produced counter narratives. Between August 2018 and June 11, 2019, the researchers initiated four campaigns in Kenya, specifically relying on Facebook's "location targeting" option that helped them narrow down their focus on Kenya and target audiences between ages 13 and 65. In addition, the researchers also launched one campaign in Somalia. For instance, between August 14 – September 14, 2019 (See Table 1) the campaign had the following reach distribution in regions in Kenya: Central (3 per cent), Coast region (10 per cent), Eastern (2 per cent), Nairobi (67 per cent), North Eastern (1.5 per cent), Nyanza (4 per cent), Rift Valley (11 per cent), and Western (1.5 per cent). Moreover, in the same campaign, a majority of the people reached were male (80 per cent). Most represented age categories were 18-24 (81,728 male versus 25,856 female), 25-34 (124,800 male versus 25,408 female), and 45-54 (15,744 male versus 2,304 female). The campaign will continue focusing on Kenya and Somalia (See Table 2 for a breakdown).

Table 1: ICSVE produced counter narratives based on Kenya interviews

Video		Video Link
1	Seeking work in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR1vLrMw9jU&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=139
2	Establishing an Islamic State in Somalia	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkUTg9WshFQ&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=133
3	Studying the art of war in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUGpTPcSYZ8&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=120
4	If you come to al Shabab, your sins will be forgiven	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3h-5lr_ht8&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=119
5	Marriage in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLq_2pEu14A&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=107
6	Rewards from the white widow of al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2Ms7HN-wKo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=106
7	Applying shariah law in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1bf_x3nlCQ&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=105
8	Learning warfare in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41wrs-iTSQU&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=102
9	Seeking an Islamic life in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-9DN4iSHLo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=101
10	The lioness and the lion—traveling to jannah together	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUYk_1J1cJ4&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=76

Video		Video Link
11	Jihad is our way	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaPrzURtE7E&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=75
12	Should I join al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlxCvLxOYUo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=61

Campaign Objectives and Methodology

Internet-based campaigns aimed at raising general awareness about the dangers emanating from violent extremist groups, especially those targeting individuals who are vulnerable to terrorist propaganda and rhetoric, remain crucial for several reasons. First, they help experts and scholars understand how individuals may become radicalized and mobilized to violence. Secondly, they help in identifying avenues and accounts where interventions are needed to take preventative actions,

including attempting to dissuade them from believing terrorist lies. Lastly, they allow individuals to not only identify and directly engage with accounts that exhibit support for violent extremist cause, but also monitor and analyze online behavior. They allow also individuals to discern prospective shifts in online attitude and behaviors and positive impact on online behaviors (Helmus & Klein, 2018).

Table 2: Campaign Details by Target Platform, Language, and Counter Narrative Used

Date	Country	Target Platform	Language	Video Title	Video Link
June 11-July 11, 2019	Kenya	Facebook	Swahili	Should I join al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlxCvLxOYUo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=61
June 6-July 6, 2019	Kenya	Facebook	Swahili	Learning warfare in al Shabaab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41wrs-iTSQU&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=102
August 14 - September 14, 2018	Kenya	Facebook	Swahili	The lioness and the lion—traveling to jannah together	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUYk_1J1cJ4&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=76
August 9 - September 10, 2018	Kenya	Facebook	Swahili	The lioness and the lion—traveling to jannah together	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUYk_1J1cJ4&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=76
June 11-July 11, 2019	Somalia	Facebook	Somali	Should I join al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlxCvLxOYUo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=61

From a methodological standpoint, the campaigns in Kenya and Somalia were optimized to engage in video views or drive traffic to ICSVE's *Therealjihad.org* website, where they would sequentially be invited to view all the other counter narrative videos, including those in their language category. This was done specifically by

utilizing "Consideration" as the Facebook Advertising Objective. This type of campaign optimization is crucial to introducing and familiarizing the target audiences with counter narratives and then targeting in a manner that invites them to seek more information on the project in general – ICSVE's real *jihad* writings and counter

narratives. The 'traffic' objective encourages and gives an opportunity to the target audience to visit (depending on how the campaign is set up) either *TheRealJihad.org*

website or YouTube channel and further engage with the correct counter narratives and Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) content.

Table 3: Campaign Details by Objective and Target Audience

Date	Video Title	Video Link	Objective & Target Audience
June 11-July 11, 2019	Should I join al Shabab?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlxCvLxOYUo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective optimized for "Traffic," so that visitors click on "Watch More" and land on ICSVE's TheRealJihad.org website Target: General Facebook audience
June 6-July 6, 2019	Learning warfare in al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41wrs-iTSQU&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=102	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective optimized for "Video Views" to get the most plays of counter-narrative. Also optimized to "Watch More" also to drive traffic to ICSVE's TheRealJihad.org Target: General Facebook audience
August 14-September 14, 2018	The lioness and the lion—traveling to <i>jannah</i> together	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUYk_1J1cJ4&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective optimized for "Traffic," so that visitors click on "Watch More" and land on ICSVE TheRealJihad.org website Target: Facebook account users selected based on signals that gave evidence that they were at risk of exposure to those distributing ISIS materials or who had referenced a direct support for ISIS on Facebook, hence deemed a population vulnerable to terrorist recruitment and exposure
August 9-September 10, 2018	The lioness and the lion—traveling to <i>jannah</i> together	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUYk_1J1cJ4&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective optimized for "Traffic," so that visitors click on "Watch More" and land on ICSVE's TheRealJihad.org Target: General Facebook audience
June 11-July 11, 2019	Should I join al Shabab	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlxCvLxOYUo&list=PLqpy96DXqN-dK01K_FikteDoSxScG_OT0&index=61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective optimized for "Video Views" to get the most plays of our counter-narrative. Also optimized to "Watch More" to drive traffic to ICSVE's TheRealJihad.org Target: General Facebook audience

The research and targeting initiatives by researchers on Facebook also included testing one or more variables related to ICSVE counter narratives through Facebook's

A/B split test method, an approach the organization is exploring to better optimize the targeting strategy. The testing allows for setting and testing of 'creative'



Burundian African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers stand next to an armored personnel carrier on February 28, 2019 (Photo Credit: Feisal Omar/Reuters)

aspects of their counter narratives (for instance, testing the appeal of male versus female ISIS speakers, different texts, different headlines, among others).

Short clips ‘teaser’ are also used to test whether they could lead to more landing page views (for instance, to the *RealJihad.org* or the ICSVE YouTube channel) versus the longer length counter narratives. These tests pave way for better optimization of future delivery campaigns. Additionally, Facebook optimizes the targeting pool and ensures that there is a large audience enough to support our A/B split tests; avoid delivery issues; and possible contamination of the results. A breakdown by campaign objectives targeting Kenya and Somalia is contained in Table 3.

Discussion

Nature of the Campaigns

The primary objective of the ICSVE-initiated campaigns in Kenya and Somalia was to raise awareness among general populations on Facebook against militant *jihadi* groups like ISIS, al Qaida, and al Shabab. The campaigns were also aimed at challenging their extremists’ narratives by using ICSVE-produced counter narratives that feature insider stories to denounce such groups and their ideologies. In collaboration with Facebook, the campaigns also targeted smaller datasets of Facebook

account holders who are exposed to propaganda distributed by sympathizers or those directly supporting Islamist-driven violent extremist groups such as ISIS and al Shabab, on Facebook (See Table 3). While it is difficult to discern offline impact of the direct online targeting initiatives, the campaign continues to apply a combination of awareness, engagement, and impact analysis metrics to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign.

As reflected in Table 4, the campaigns generated a reach of close to 2.3 million. *Reach* is a Facebook metric that gives a measure of the number of the people who may have potentially been exposed to the posted content (in this case, counter narratives). In other words, it reflects the number of individuals who may have potentially been reached, depending on *ad* placement and targeting criteria used. The metric is not an estimate of the number of people who actually watched the counter narratives, but rather the number of the people who were shown the counter-narrative, and thus had the possibility of exposure to it. Moreover, those reached may not always click on an *ad*, although a good reach metric, as was the case in many of our campaigns, increases the likelihood of more individuals engaging with the counter narratives once they see it.

The campaigns led to over 2.3 million video views at 3, 10, 25, 50, 75, 95, and 100 per cent video views. In some

campaigns, such as June 6 2019 – July 6, 2019 campaign in Kenya, there were a total of 213,969 at 75, 95, and 100 per cent video views. Similarly, over 10 per cent of the video watches in two other campaigns were at 75, 95, and 100 per cent video views (See Table 3). These are significant numbers as they suggest engagement with the counter narratives. The low video counts and views in certain campaigns may be explained by the fact that the researchers also optimized ‘traffic’ to *Thereal Jihad.org* website as an objective. Put differently, some visitors may have migrated to *Thereal Jihad.org* website after initial engagement with the campaign’s ad on Facebook page (See Table 4, under “Landing Page/Link Clicks”). Furthermore, the August 14-September 14, 2019 campaign targeted audiences that already ‘likely exposed to’ and ‘inclined to’ follow violent extremist group propaganda. In this regard, they may have stopped watching counter narratives after realizing they served to denounce the terrorist group.

Measurement metrics also included ‘link clicks’ and ‘landing page views.’ *Link clicks* refer to clicks on the campaign’s Facebook ad that led the target audience to an external website or to a material hosted by another website. In this case, ICSVE’s *Thereal Jihad.org* website. Comparatively, *landing page views* measure the number of times a user clicked on the campaign Facebook ad and successfully landed on a desired destination page – which is ICSVE’s *Thereal Jihad.org*. This metric is a good indicator of quality clicks that led target audience to the desired destination page (that is, ICSVE’s *Thereal Jihad.org*), which also fulfilled the secondary objective of redirecting the target audience to the website for further engagement.

The five campaigns led to a total of 16,494 post reactions, page likes, page saves, page shares, and comments, which reflect the significant engagement across all the five campaigns. June 6-July 6, 2019, August 9-September 10, and June 11-July 11, 2019 campaigns represent campaigns with the most engagements (See Table 4). August 14-September 14, 2018 campaign generated least engagements. Although a low count, the number remains significant as the campaign managed to elicit engagement from individuals deemed vulnerable to terrorist recruitment and exposure. Moreover, some may have opted not to comment and click on the link to the external website instead (See Table 4 under “Landing page views”).

Key Reflections from the Campaigns

Comments collected and analyzed remain important in generating and understanding certain messaging themes that could inform future campaign directions. In the case of Kenya and Somalia, as measured by comments, much criticism is directed against those featured in the counter narratives (that is, the al Shabab defectors themselves, for having joined al Shabab in the first place). There are also anti-US and anti-Kenyan government sentiments. Some of the comments are pro-al Shabab, which demonstrate that the campaigns are reaching the target audience – those who are still attracted to or support groups like al Shabab. A sampling of some comments shown below demonstrate some of these sentiments:

“XXX: Hakuna kitu ameeleza. What was the purpose of interviewing her!?!?”

“XXX: Msilaumu hawa watu wenye wanajiunga na hili kundi halamu sikupenda kwao ni matatizo ya ukosefu wa ujira hapa Kenya na kupanda kwa ngara ya maisha. Kila Kila nafasi yoyote ya kazi hapa Kenya huwezikupata bila kutoa hongo ambapo zile hongo ni za hali ya juu zaidi ambapo hawa watu wa chini kupata ni ngumu.serikali kukandamiza wanyonge Kila Mara kufukuza na hawker ambaye anakula jasho yake, kubomoa vibanda vya wanyonge mkitudanganya nmataka kupanua barabara ilhali wateja wahamie kwa hiteli za hawa wafisadi. mnyonge atapata uhuru lini? Ni nini itazuia vijana kujiunga na hili kundi halamu kama maisha itakuwa ngumu hivi?”

Translation: “Do not blame these people who join this illicit group for them are the problems of unemployment in Kenya and the rising cost of living. You cannot get any occupation in Kenya without giving a bribe where the bribes are too high that those in low class cannot afford. The government also oppresses the poor, chasing hawkers who are striving and destroying their shelters so that customers can go to corrupt people’s hotels. When will the weak get free? What would stop young people from joining this illegal group if life is so complicated?”

“XXX Commented: How can I join it plz inbox me”

“XXX Commented: I thing [think] maybe the couse [cause] of many Kenyan to join alshapap [al Shabab] is lacking job opportunity and alshapap [al Shabab] can’t need a certificate but let pray for God to help us to finish those guys.”

*“XXX Commented: America wants what????
Wherever America come with a “democracy” & “
fake peace” you can see result yourself. May God
help.”*

*“XXX Commented: This thing is far away from religion.
I want to join al shabab because Kenya has no
place for the young”*

Interpreting post reactions, likes, shares, and comments is important as it serves as an indicator of success, given that viewers also took time to comment, argue and discuss about the counter narratives. That said, focusing on comments alone can be misleading as they represent a minority of users in the total Kenyan and Somali sample. In other words, in analyzing the output, the vast majority

of the sampled participants who do not comment are also considered. With this in mind, it was necessary to also observe effects that are not necessarily observable in the comments section, but may possibly suggest changes in attitudes and behavior online or a positive impact on negative behavior online (See “Landing page/Link Clicks on Table 4). For example, share posts and link clicks to our *Therealjihad.org* (“Learn More”) suggest engagement and indicate a positive impact on targeting audience behavior online. The retention rate is also considered in watching and engaging with the counter narratives (See Table 4). It is important to note that “reach” and other testing variables are impacted by Facebook’s optimization strategy and budget allocated to each campaign, among others.

Table 4: Engagement, Awareness, and Impact Analysis

Date	Video	Reach	Video Watches at 3, 10, 25, 50, 75, 95 and 100 per cent	Video Watches at 75, 95, and 100 per cent	Landing Pages (Therealjihad.org)	Post reactions, post saves, page likes, comments and share
June 11-July 11, 2019	Should I join al Shabab	214, 976	176, 779	21, 775	29, 160	669
June 6-July 6, 2019	Learning warfare in al Shabab	1, 048, 321	1, 557, 577	213, 969	28, 396	9, 738
August 14-September 14, 2018	The lioness and the lion—traveling to <i>jannah</i> together	1, 065	3, 614	249	233	53
August 9-September 10, 2018	The lioness and the lion—traveling to <i>jannah</i> together	350, 976	243, 040	22, 774	75, 712	2, 365
June 11-July 11, 2019	Should I join al Shabab	606, 336	942, 185	53, 653	13, 221	3,669

The primary objective of the ICSVE-initiated campaigns in Kenya and Somalia was to raise awareness among general populations on Facebook against militant *jihadi* groups like ISIS, al Qaida, and al Shabab



*A photo of a section of Mombasa city. The city was one of the numerous place targeted by ICSVE campaigns
(Photo Credit: ArchiDatum)*

Al Shabab Propaganda and Rhetoric Online

Propaganda and rhetoric of groups like al Shabab continues to attract supporters, both local and international. Their online presence and methods of engagement remain powerful even in the face of recent robust takedowns and automated, sophisticated detection systems instituted by governments and social media companies. In 2018, for instance, Facebook voluntarily removed 14.3 million pieces of violent content extremist content (Fishman, 2018). Yet, violent extremist groups continue to hop from one social media platform to the other, while constantly alerting and redirecting their network of followers whenever social media platforms become hostile towards them. Some critics argue that efforts that rely on artificial intelligence (AI) alone to detect and remove extremist content online are doomed to failure (Birnbaum, 2018). In fact, in the course of a 30-day campaign on Facebook, researchers identified over 500 Facebook accounts in English, Turkish, Albanian, and Arabic that openly discussed and shared ISIS propaganda rhetoric and materials (Speckhard & Shajkovci, 2019b).

Public and private sector efforts reflect the need to remain proactive in monitoring and removing violent extremist content online. Despite considerable debate on the effectiveness of counter narratives, namely as an alternative to fighting violent extremist narrative and “sophisticated media capabilities and dissemination of

slick media content [designed] to accelerate recruitment,” (Rosand & Winterbotham, 2019), counter narratives remain essential in the fight against the appeal of violent extremist groups like al Shabab nevertheless.

Counter Narratives

In creating and deploying counter narratives, one must consider messenger credibility, insights gained from interactive counter-messaging techniques, and extremist content that impacts recruitment prospects among both general and vulnerable populations. More importantly, as researchers and policymakers debate the ‘ideal’ content to counter extremists’ narratives to increase their reach and impact, scholars and experts must continue to gain a better understanding of psychological, physical, emotional, and financial rewards that compel individuals to join violent extremist groups like ISIS and al Shabab (Speckhard & Shajkovci, 2019a, Speckhard & Shajkovci 2019c).

In addition to online campaigns discussed above, the ICSVE counter narratives are also focus-tested on the ground with both general and vulnerable populations (Speckhard, Shajkovci & Ahmed, 2019). For instance, the ICSVE researchers have focus-tested several counter narratives, featuring Kenyan returnees, defectors, and imprisoned cadres from interviews in Kenya, and with

Somali-American community members in San Diego, CA (Speckhard, Shajkovci, Ahmed 2018). In this regard, such initiatives need to be combined with other locally

initiated counter violent extremism initiatives (Badurdeen & Goldsmith, 2018) to collectively target the appeal of violent and terrorist groups like al Shabab.

References

- Badurdeen, A. F., & Goldsmith, P. (2018). Initiatives and perceptions to counter violent extremism in the coastal region of Kenya. *Journal for Deradicalization*, 16, 70-102.
- Birnbaum, E. (2019). Artificial intelligence can't solve online extremism issue, experts tell house panel. *The Hill*. Retrieved from <https://thehill.com/policy/technology/450246-artificial-intelligence-cant-solve-online-extremism-issue-experts-tell>.
- Cox, K., Marcellino, W., Bellasio, J., Ward, A., Galai, K., Meranto, A. S., & Persi Paoli, G. (2018). Social media in Africa. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/external_publications/EP67728.html
- Fishman, B. (2019). Crossroads: Counterterrorism and the Internet. *Texas National Security Review* 2 (2), 83-100.
- Helmus, C. T., & Klein, K. (2018). Assessing outcomes of online campaigns countering violent extremism. *RAND*. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2813.html
- Reuters (2016). Somali al Shabaab militants use Donald Trump in recruiting film. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-trump/somali-al-shabaab-militants-use-donald-trump-in-recruiting-film-idUSKBN0UG02U20160102>
- Rosand, E., & Winterbotham, E. (2019). Do counter narratives actually reduce violent extremism? *Brookings*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/20/do-counter-narratives-actually-reduce-violent-extremism/>
- Simons, G. (2018). Brand ISIS: Interactions of the tangible and intangible environments. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 17(4), 322-353.
- Speckhard, A., & Shajkovci, A. (2019a). The jihad in Kenya: Understanding al-Shabaab recruitment and terrorist activity inside Kenya—in their own words. *Journal of African Security*, 12(1), 3-61.
- Speckhard, A., & Shajkovci, A. (2019b). Al Shabaab continues attacks, can disillusioned terrorists help fight the group? *Homeland Security Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/as-al-shabaab-continues-attacks-can-disillusioned-terrorists-help-fight-the-group/>
- Speckhard, A., & Shajkovci, A. (2019). Is ISIS still alive and well on the Internet? *Homeland Security Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/is-isis-still-alive-and-well-on-the-internet/>
- Speckhard, A., Shajkovci, A., & Ahmed, M. (2018). Focus testing the Breaking the ISIS Brand counter narrative videos in American-Somali focus group settings. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Speckhard, A., Shajkovci, A., & Ahmed, M. (2019). Intervening in and preventing Somali-American radicalization with counter narratives: Testing the Breaking the ISIS Brand counter narrative videos in American- Somali focus group settings. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 11 (4), 32-71.
- UNSOM. (2017). *Countering al Shabaab propaganda and recruitment mechanisms in South Central Somalia*. Retrieved from https://unsom.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/countering_al-shabaab_propaganda_and_recruitment_mechanisms_report_final_-_14_august_2017.pdf

Understanding Ethnic Tensions in Ethiopia

By Jules Swinkels

Abstract

Since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April 2018, Ethiopia has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda, opening up the country to foreign investment, allowing more political freedom, and making peace with neighboring Eritrea after a twenty-year 'cold war'. However, Ethiopia's transformation has not been without setbacks. Over the last couple of months, Ethiopia has been mired in ethnic tensions and violence. This article analyses the interplay between the impact of Ethiopia's ethnic federal model and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's radical reform agenda. It argues that Abiy's reforms expose the inherent incapability of the current federal model to harmonize demands for more regional autonomy and democracy, as well as the existence of a strong federal government, in a multi-ethnic state. Ethiopia's high-speed transition is thus at risk of becoming a mismatch between a desired immediate future and a realistic reform schedule, aspirations for democratic freedom and reforms without strengthening and improving the security and legislative sectors, as well as crucial judiciary and democratic institutions.

Background

Ethiopia's ethnic federalist model is enshrined in its 1994 Constitution, which realized a multiparty democratic centralist model with nine semi-autonomous regions, and, crucially, allowed for the creation of other semi-autonomous states. According to the federal constitution (Article 39) "all nations, nationalities and peoples have a right to self-determination, which includes the right to territorial self-rule and even secession" (Van der Beken, 2018). Despite its constitution, widely heralded as an example of federalist and democratic success, and its extensive constitutional devolution of power, the ruling government (Ethiopia People's Democratic Revolutionary Front, EPRDF) holds a firm grip on political affairs. In fact, spectators (Aalen, 2006; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2009; Van der Beken, 2018) argue that regional and local autonomy is significantly undermined by the EPRDF, which has proven notoriously unwilling to share power or allow claims of self-determination.

Examples of the above are abundant. During the rule of Prime Ministers Meles Zenawi and Hailemariam Desalegn, several ethnic groups, specifically the Oromo and Amhara, claimed more autonomy and political power in the central federal government. The EPRDF responded with widespread and harsh security crackdowns, leading to several states of emergency, the latest of which (in 2015) lasted for almost three years and resulted in Desalegn

stepping down, paving way for Abiy Ahmed (an ethnic Oromo) to take his place.

In June 2019, a regional coup attempt in Amhara province signalled a resurgence of Amharic nationalism. On June 22, 2019, an attempted coup in Ethiopia's largest regional state, Amhara, and a related attack in the capital, Addis Ababa, left five senior political and military officials dead, including the regional president Ambachew Mekonnen and the army chief of staff, General Seare Mekonnen, both loyal to Abiy. The Amhara, who long were the most influential ethnic group in Ethiopia, were relegated to normalcy after the EPRDF took power in the 1990s. Repression by the EPRDF, increasing marginalization from the political centrum, and a growing perception of ethnic discrimination have contributed to an increase in Amharic nationalism, culminating in the attempted coup. Before Abiy, ethnic tensions were repressed by the strong EPRDF and its regional partners, and regional hopes of secession or more autonomy were violently crushed. Abiy's more liberal stance might have opened up possibilities for regional organizations and strongmen to gain more power.

In July 2019, the Sidima ethnic group in Ethiopia's Southern Ethiopian Regional State amplified their statehood demands, claiming that the Sidima should be seen as a separate nation with its own distinct people.



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (left) meets Jawar Mohammed (right) in Minnesota in 2018. Jawar, who is also owner of Oromo Media Network (OMN), is accused of fanning ethnic tensions in Ethiopia (Photo Credit: Somaliaonline)

Tensions between the Sidama and the federal government erupted, resulting in at least 25 dead and more wounded. The demand is already two decades old, but has gained new momentum under Abiy Ahmed's reform agenda. This has created a two-pronged challenge for the central government. On the one hand, cracking down and refusing the Sidama a referendum would create significant tensions, potentially escalating into ethnic conflict between the Sidama and the federal government. On the other hand, if Abiy gives into the Sidama's demands, "he could signal the unravelling of Ethiopia's federal system of government" (Gedamu, 2019).

In October 2019, a mere two weeks after Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to make peace with Eritrea, violence erupted in Addis Ababa, and spread to Oromia region. Protesters aligned with controversial activist Jawar Mohammed, founder of the International Oromo Youth Association (IOYA) and former ally of Abiy Ahmed, took to the streets to protest alleged removal of Jawar's security detail by the government. The government denies this claim. Over the course of the last two weeks of October, at least 78 people died, including five police officers. There were reports that non-Oromos are being targeted, especially Amharas.

Jawar, who is also owner of Oromo Media Network (OMN), was accused of fanning ethnic tensions in Ethiopia, arguing that Abiy, himself an Oromo, was not

doing enough for Oromos. Abiy walks a delicate line between increasing political freedoms and reining in strongmen building ethnic powerbases by demanding more access to land, power, and resources for their own ethnic groups. Abiy thus faces a difficult challenge of balancing the interests of his ethnic base against the interest of the Ethiopian federal model, especially in the light of the May 2020 general elections.

Abiy Ahmed and the federal government thus find themselves at crossroads between proceeding with the reform agenda or falling back on tested methods of suppression. According to Abiy, there will be no relapse in pushing for democratic reforms, and no return to repression. Five questions arise with regards to ethnic tensions in Ethiopia, their origin, their meaning and their potential consequences for Abiy's reform agenda, the 2020 general elections, and the region. First, to what extent have ethnic tensions been present throughout Ethiopia's history? Second, what is the role of Abiy's reform agenda in these ethnic tensions, and could it, despite its obvious benefits, have contributed to them? Third, what does this situation mean for the upcoming 2020 general elections? Fourth, if tensions escalate, what could be some of the consequences for the region and how should they be addressed? Fifth, what should Abiy Ahmed do to quell tensions without resorting to oppressive behavior like his predecessors?

Analysis

Historical perspective on ethnic tensions in Ethiopia

Ethnic violence has been occurring in Ethiopia long before Abiy came to power. Under the ruling of Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, the Derg regime, and Prime Ministers Meles Zenawi and Hailemariam Desalegn's Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regimes, thousands were killed in ethnic conflicts between various ethnic groups vying for more autonomy and the central (federal) government. However, after the fall of the Derg regime, the coming to power of Meles Zenawi and the EPRDF, and the creation of an ethnic federation, things changed dramatically. With almost 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), Ethiopia ranks first in the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), before active warzones such as Syria and Somalia.

Some argue that Ethiopia's ethnic tensions have been the result of a wrongful implementation of Ethiopia's ethnic federalist model, in which a dominant central government interferes constantly in regional affairs, demonstrating clear limits of autonomy. Others argue that the ethnic federal model *de facto* pits one group against the other because of the constant competition over land, resources, and authority, and the significant role the central government plays in this regard (Gedamu, 2019). Either way, the tensions witnessed now between the Amhara and Oromo, Tigray and Amhara, between the TPLF and the federal government, the Sidima and the federal government, Jawar and Abiy, and within the Oromo, date back from before Abiy took power, but might have been catalysed by his sudden and comprehensive reforms.

The interplay between Abiy's reform agenda and Ethiopia's ethnic federal model

What is different now is the fact that in Ethiopia's changing political landscape, the unitarist camp has almost disappeared (Lefort & Davison, 2019). Traditional unitarist powers, such as the Tigray People's Liberation

Front (TPLF), have switched camp and are now arguing for more regional autonomy. Other parties, such as the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), have made the reverse journey. According to Lefort and Davison (2019), all regions rely on the federal government for as much as four-fifths of their expenditure. Calls for more autonomy have therefore been heavily connected with who controls the political centre. When the TPLF still controlled that political centre, dozens of demands for more regional authority and autonomy were crushed and ruthlessly suppressed. As part of Abiy's reform agenda, Ethiopia's security and intelligence services were put on a leash, with Abiy publicly admitting the practice of state sanctioned torture. This has allowed parties, like the Sidima, Amhara, and Tigrayans themselves, to amplify their demands for more regional authority and less federal interference.

Additionally, after the TPLF lost its iron grip on the EPRDF, its security apparatus, and Ethiopia in general, tensions among the four parties of the EPRDF escalated to fill the power vacuum. These parties are the Amhara National Democratic Movement (now the Amhara Democratic Party, ADP), the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM), and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Intra-EPRDF tensions have skyrocketed over high-level appointments, arrests of former leadership (such as TPLF's Executive Committee member and former national intelligence chief Getachew Assefa), human rights and corruption claims, and over more regional autonomy.

Finally, under Abiy's reform agenda, Ethiopia has cracked down on corruption and mismanagement of funds. This created powerful enemies in the top echelons of the EPRDF and the four main parties. The arrest of Getachew Assefa, for example, caused significant tensions between the TPLF and the federal government, of which the TPLF is a member. The replacement of high-level ADP members in Amhara's regional government with those loyal to Abiy has resulted in widespread discontent and fear among the Amhara for Oromo domination,

Tensions along the Kenya-Ethiopia border have historically been high, with groups from both countries crossing the border looking for greener pastures. Eritrea and Ethiopia's troubled history speaks for itself, and Ethiopia's federal disintegration could have a disastrous impact on Eritrea's rehabilitation from a pariah state

their erstwhile partners in breaking TPLF dominance. Weldemariam (2019) argues that this process violates states' constitutional rights.

It is not clear whether or how Abiy's reform agenda has actually caused, catalysed, or contributed to ethnic tensions, or if the problems being witnessed today are inherent to Ethiopia's ethnic federal model. That model is loved and reviled, mostly because on the one hand, ethnic federalism at its insurrection presented the 'best-of-the-worst' governance system, while on the other hand because TPLF created it to divide-and-rule in its own interest, and 'refused to allow true multinational federalism to shine through its authoritarian blanket' (Lefort & Davison, 2019). In short, the ethnic federal model is in heavy weather, facing an existential crisis on why it was erected in the first place, what its contemporary merits are, and if it should be replaced by a truly (geographic/ethnic) federal model, or another form of governance all together. Abiy's reforms expose the inherent incapability of the current model to harmonize demands for more regional autonomy and more democratic freedom, and the existence of a strong federal government in a multi-ethnic state.

Ethnic tensions, Abiy's reform agenda, and Ethiopian general elections in 2020

In August 2019, Abiy and other top EPRDF members pledged to uphold the electoral timetable, which has general elections scheduled in 2020. The elections can potentially be a tipping point for Ethiopia, both for the good and the bad. First, Abiy and his party ODP face a struggle for the Oromo vote, which is heavily divided between the ODP, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and now Jawar Mohammed (even though Jawar does not have a political party just yet). If OLF or Jawar win the Oromo vote, Abiy may lose his backyard support, be hampered in consolidating his power in Oromia, and rule merely in and from Addis Ababa. If the EPRDF, as a national front, garners enough votes for another term, but Abiy's party loses significantly, it is questionable how long he would stay in power as the EPRDF's front man.

Second, Ethiopian politics are increasingly toxic and entrenched along ethnic lines. Within opposition parties and EPRDF member parties, there are two general divisions: between the unitarist and self-determination camps; and between those that advocate soft federalism



A section of the crowd react after an explosion during a rally in support of the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa in June (Photo Credit: Quartz)

Neighboring Somalia is slowly emerging from state collapse, but is still dealing with an Islamist insurgency that could easily spread to Ethiopia's Ogaden region if the central government collapses

with strong regional governments, and those that advocate hard federalism with reinforced regions. According to Lefort and Davison (2019), this second rift divides not only hardcore ethno-nationalist movements (OLF, National Movement for Amhara (NaMa)) from centralist groups, but also "drives a wedge between the EPRDF parties, and splits factions within three of the four EPRDF members." The front is thus divided, boisterous, and lacks critically-needed unity. Abiy's promise of fully free and fair elections can significantly backfire from the EPRDF's point of view. Even if the EPRDF wins, internal disenfranchisement will not be solved through general elections. In fact, holding elections in 2020 puts Ethiopia's transition under pressure it might not yet be ready for. Time is of the essence here, and Abiy and the EPRDF have a gross lack of it.

Finally, regional ethno-nationalist movements such as OLF and NaMA are gaining popularity by riding on a wave of 'xenophobia' towards other regions. Fierce competition in the light of the 2020 elections between NaMA and ADP pushes the ADP more towards ethno-nationalism, in an effort to outbid NaMA.

Escalating tensions, Ethiopia's disintegration, and consequences for the region

One of the first and foremost consequences, albeit nationally, could be the demise of the EPRDF, which as an organization, is often accused of being no more than a vehicle for an ethnic minority to control the whole country. Abiy's opening up of the political and media landscape has allowed the long-existent tensions within the EPRDF to reach a breaking point. Senior TPLF officials have stated that the collapse of the EPRDF might mean the collapse of Ethiopia as a federation, breaking the country up in several smaller states, and/or resulting in widespread interethnic conflict.

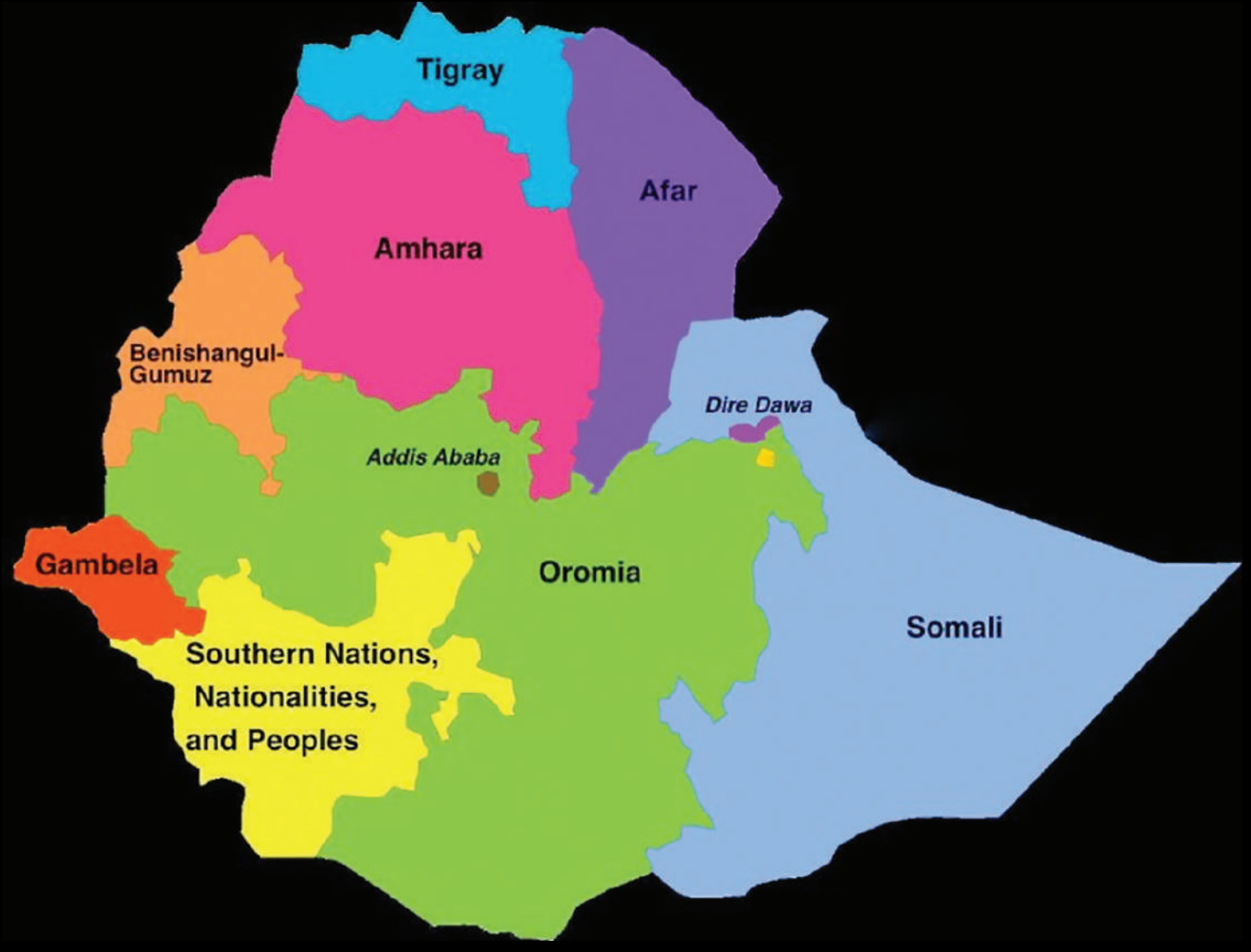
Neither scenario is welcome in the already troubled region of the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia borders six countries and plays a central role in upholding peace and security. Neighbouring Somalia is slowly emerging from state collapse, but is still dealing with an Islamist insurgency that could easily spread to Ethiopia's Ogaden region if the central government collapses. Somalia-based terror group al Shabab could jump in the power vacuum to 'protect' the interests of Ethiopian Somalis against Oromo encroachment, and 'liberate' the Ogaden from Ethiopian rule.

Sudan is just recovering from a tense period of demonstrations and subsequent government reform after the toppling of long-sitting dictator Omar al Bashir. A negotiated agreement has been reached between the dominant transitional military council and civilian opposition that allows for a transition to civilian rule. Unrest on its southern border and spill-over effects from conflict in Ethiopia would significantly threaten hard-won stability. The same goes for South Sudan, which is struggling to uphold its fragile peace agreement and whose politicians have leaned heavily on Ethiopian (and Sudanese) mediation. If both mediating parties are distracted by their own internal strife, there is a significant possibility that the conflict spirals out of control once again, having further destabilizing effects across the region, especially for Sudan.

Kenya and Eritrea could experience ethnic skirmishes in their border regions. Tensions along the Kenya-Ethiopia border have historically been high, with groups from both countries crossing the border looking for greener pastures. Eritrea and Ethiopia's troubled history speaks for itself, and Ethiopia's federal disintegration could have a disastrous impact on Eritrea's rehabilitation from a pariah state. Ethiopia plays a crucial role in the region, and its collapse or descend in to interethnic strife will have a significant and calamitous impact on peace and stability throughout the Horn of Africa.

Quelling tensions without resorting to oppressive behaviour

One of the main actions that Abiy has taken so far to quell ethnic tensions is the establishment of the Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues Commission, which will deal with reconfiguring territorial boundaries of the members of the EPRDF. Abiy rightly sees ill-defined regional borders as a main reason for ethnic strife, but according to Weldemariam (2019), the commission



A map showing the nine regional states of Ethiopia

is unconstitutional. “Internal boundaries separating the constituent parts of the federation are not just administrative. They are sovereign. Consistent with federalist theory, there is dual citizenship, sovereignty, and constitutionalism.” Regional boundary changes would thus require a constitutional amendment, as the current borders are enshrined in the 1994 Constitution. Mamdani (2019) argues that Abiy’s reforms are clashing with the Constitution and could push the country toward interethnic conflict. This would mean that future efforts to quell tensions would have to abide by the Constitution, or that the Constitution should be up for review. To that extent, a constitutional court could be erected that deals with identity issues and demands for statehood.

Weldemariam (2019) argues that “the trouble with Ethiopia’s federalism does not lie in its ethnic character, but in its praxis. It has functioned more unitarist than pluralist by virtue of EPRDF authoritarian hegemony. The challenge now is to democratize the federation, which means destabilizing the EPRDF while also ensuring the edifice the front held together does not implode.” To that extent, a nation-wide critical reflection exercise is necessary, paired with a rigorous and comprehensive

nationbuilding exercise that promotes ‘Ethiopian-hood’ above ethnic identity.

Finally, toxic ethno-nationalist policies, comments, and actions have broken the political landscape and pushed erstwhile centralist parties to the brink of ethno-nationalism, creating a complicated situation in which EPRDF members are advocating for less EPRDF interference. What is needed from politicians across the divide is more anti-ethnic identity politics, more technocratic governance, less hate speech, and good neighbourliness. To that extent, the appointment of Amhara’s new president, Temesgen Tiruneh—confidante of Abiy, and moderate with anti-ethnic identity politics—is a welcome relief. Tiruneh pledged to resolve border issues between Amhara and Tigray peacefully, promote good neighborliness, and responsible leadership. Rapprochement, not long ago a celebrated activity between Eritrea and Ethiopia, should take place among the members of the EPRDF and between the EPRDF and opposition parties. In this engagement, Ethiopia can take note of Kenya’s ‘Golden Handshake’, in which the ruling Jubilee and opposition NASA agreed to build a collective identity for the good of all Kenyans.

Conclusion

Ethiopia thus finds itself in a complicated and potentially dangerous situation. The ruling front, EPRDF, and each of its member parties, are divided over questions of: more or less regional autonomy, identity, between soft and hard federalism, and over the merits and constitutional dangers of Abiy's reform agenda. Concurrently, ethnic groups are exploring the constitutional possibility to hold a referendum and create their own semi-autonomous state. Ethno-nationalist opposition parties are gaining popularity in a heated 'ethnic' debate, where even EPRDF members such as TPLF and ADP, pushed by opposition parties snapping at their heels, are advocating for more regional authority.

Running throughout all the above complexities is one main problem: time. Abiy's envisioned democratic transition is highly commendable, but it is done in a very short time in a complex multi-ethnic country with highly competitive politics, emerging only very recently from authoritarianism. Ethiopia's high-speed transition is at risk of being a mismatch between an envisioned future and a realistic reform schedule, aiming for democratic freedom and reforms without strengthening and improving the security and legislative sectors, and crucial judiciary and democratic institutions.

Crucial in this process is a nation-wide critical reflection on the merits of the ethnic federal model in its current form, and whether the model should still be the preferred system of governance in Ethiopia, or that it should be reconfigured all together.

Recommendations

To defuse ethnic tensions while refraining from repression, continuing to open up the country, and strengthening the ethnic federal model, Prime Minister Ahmed and his government should:

- Create a constitutional court that deals with identity and nationality issues.
- Foster widespread and comprehensive nation-building exercise that emphasizes the Ethiopian identity over ethnic identity.
- Hold a nation-wide debate on the merits of the ethnic federal model. An honest and open debate

with critics and proponents to reflect on more than two decades of the ethnic federal experiment may enable Ethiopia to reconfigure and revive the ethnic federal model in a way that serves the unity of the Ethiopian state.

- Rethink the role of the EPRDF as a national front 'uniting' the main ethnic groups. Significant trust is placed in the EPRDF as the main party able to keep Ethiopia together, despite its apparent shortcomings.
- In line with the Constitution, carefully consider a Sidima referendum and refrain from sending the federal security forces to suppress their demands. Reverting to repression would endanger Abiy's reforms and discredit his promises. Additionally, a strategic roadmap needs to be developed to deal with future demands of statehood. Since the Sidima's demand, ten ethnic groups have called for their own state, posing significant risk to Ethiopia's unity.
- Conduct a feasibility study on altering the 1994 Constitution to clarify statehood demands. In the volatile situation Ethiopia finds itself in currently, it might be destabilizing to hold a referendum to change the Constitution. However, there is widespread discontent on the vagueness of the Constitution, which will need to be addressed. Additionally, changing the Constitution could also allow for legal backing for the Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues Commission, and allow for the rephrasing and specification of Article 39 to complicate and curtail multiple statehood demands.
- Prevent, publicly shame, and potentially criminalize toxic ethno-nationalist rhetoric from politicians across the divide. Promote 'Ethiopian-hood' as alternative to ethnicity through widespread and comprehensive nation building programs. Potentially, allow for the creation of a national *lingua franca* other than Amharic.

References

- Aalen, L. (2006). Ethnic Federalism and Self-Determination for Nationalities in a Semi-Authoritarian State: the Case of Ethiopia. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 13, 243 – 261.
- Gedamu, Y. (2019, August 12). Why Sidama statehood demand threatens to unravel Ethiopia's federal system. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/why-sidama-statehood-demand-threatens-to-unravel-ethiopias-federal-system-121701>.
- International Crisis Group [ICG] (2009). Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its Discontents. *Africa Report*, 153.
- Lefort, R. & Davison, W. (2019). Federalist façade for centralist front. *Ethiopia Insight*. Retrieved from https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2019/08/18/federalist-facade-for-centralist-front/?fbclid=IwAR0ItP9q0wD5z9TLy8jPc_gu_Mcb7N-wbPEHSz2X7_cAaroOyApqBLWA80U.
- Mamdani, M. (2019, January 3). The Trouble with Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/03/opinion/ethiopia-abi-ahmed-reforms-ethnic-conflict-ethnic-federalism.html>.
- Van der Beken, C. (2018). *The Challenge of Reform within Ethiopia's Constitutional Order*. Rift Valley Institute.
- Weldemariam, A. (2019, January 10). Ethiopia's federation needs reviving, not reconfiguring. *Ethiopia Insight*. Retrieved from <https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/>.

The Sea and Global Security: The Case of Piracy and Terrorism

By Prof. Wanjala S. Nasong'o, Ph.D.

Abstract

The World's seas and oceans constitute roughly 70 per cent of the world's surface area. These maritime spaces are of critical strategic importance, but they are mostly freely used for navigation and exploitation of maritime natural resources. As a common global space of highly strategic operations, the seas and oceans are emblematic of the notion of the 'tragedy of the commons.' The implications of this tragedy manifest themselves in four major global human, economic, political, and environmental security threats including piracy, terrorism, toxic waste dumping, and contested maritime boundaries. This article explores the twin security threats of piracy and terrorism with a view to mapping the current state of the world on the same. Noting that 90 per cent of global trade is carried by shipping, the article argues that the potential for a terrorism-piracy nexus could prove devastating for the global economy. Accordingly, the article concludes with some recommendations that could help forestall the eventuality of this devastating potential for terrorists and pirates to collaborate in their operations.

Introduction

Seas and oceans constitute the world's largest expanse of common space, mostly freely used for navigation, exploitation of their marine life resources, extraction of natural mineral wealth, and as a disposal area for hazardous waste from industries, domestic life, and war. As a common global space of highly strategic operations, the seas and oceans are emblematic of the notion of the 'tragedy of the commons.' The implications of this tragedy manifest themselves in four major global human, economic, political, and environmental security threats: (a) Piracy, (b) Terrorism, (c) Toxic Waste Dumping, and (d) Contested Maritime Boundaries. This article explores two of these issues – piracy and terrorism – with a view to mapping the current state of the world on the same. In doing this, the article adopts a broad conception of security, which has deepened from the traditional focus on protecting the state from external threats of mainly a military nature to include a focus on the security of individual citizens. The concept of security has also broadened from military threats to issues of human/health security, food security, economic security, environmental security, and cyber security. Accordingly, the article concludes that in view of the current global trends, the most fundamental global maritime security threat is the potential for a nexus between piracy and terrorism. To help forestall this devastating eventuality, the article proposes a number of policy measures.

Global Security Threats at Sea I: Piracy

According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, three types of piracy currently occur in global waters. The first is low level armed robbery made up of anchorage attacks mounted against ships at harbor. Such piracy exploits the relatively relaxed security procedures at many ports around the world. These are opportunistic attacks executed close to land by small high-speed vessels navigated by maritime 'muggers' usually armed with knives. They typically aim to seize cash and portable high-value personal items, their average haul value is \$5,000 to \$15,000. The second type of piracy is medium level armed robbery. This involves ransacking and robbery of ships on high seas or in territorial waters. "This style of attack, if carried out in narrow sea-lanes, has the potential to seriously disrupt maritime navigation (especially in instances where vessels run amok because the crew is kidnapped, detained, or thrown overboard)" (Chalk, 2008, p. 5). These are violent thefts involving serious injury or murder by well-organized gangs usually operating from a 'mother-ship' armed with modern weaponry. The third type of piracy comprises major criminal hijackings. These are well-resourced and meticulously planned, employing highly trained and heavily armed syndicates working in conjunction with land-based operatives and brokers. Such attacks involve the outright theft of



An armed Somali pirate along the coastline at Hobyo town in northeastern Somalia where a Greek cargo ship, MV Filitsa, is being held by pirates on January 7, 2010 (Photo Credit: AFP/Mohamed Dahir)

ships and their subsequent conversion for purposes of illegal trading, what is often referred to as the ‘phantom ship’ phenomenon (Chalk, 2008; Meldrum, 2007; Abyankar, 1997).

According to Chalk (2008, p. 6), there were 2,463 cases of actual or attempted piracy between 2000 and end of 2006 globally, averaging 352 incidents per year. This represented a substantial increase over the mean of 209 incidents per year recorded for the period 1994-1999. The years 2009, 210, and 2011 seem to have marked the decade’s peak of pirate attacks with 410, 445, and 439, attacks worldwide respectively. 2017 saw the lowest

attacks for the decade at 180 attacks, which inched up to 280 in 2018 (Statista, 2019). The greatest concentration of these pirate attacks in the 2000s was in Southeast Asia around the Indonesian archipelago which accounted for 21 percent of the attacks globally in 2006 (Chalk, 2008, p. 8). Other high-risk areas included the coasts and territorial seas around Bangladesh, Gulf of Aden/ Red Sea, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, Somalia and Tanzania, which collectively accounted for half of the attacks in 2006 (Chalk, 2008, p. 8). According to Harrington (2016), the top ten sea spaces with the highest pirate activity in 2015 were as represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Maritime Spaces with the Highest Pirate Activity in 2015

Rank	Maritime Space	Number of Pirate Activities
1	Gulf of Guinea	116
2	South China Sea	62
3	Singapore Strait	60
4	Caribbean Sea	38
5	Malacca Strait	36
6	Bay of Bengal	30
7	Java Sea	24

Rank	Maritime Space	Number of Pirate Activities
8	Arabian Sea	22
9	North Yellow Sea	16
10	Celebes Sea	14

Source: *Harrington (2016)*

Available evidence indicates that the actual figures are far greater than these numbers since up to 50 per cent of pirate attacks go unreported. Chalk (2008) cites IMB officials who assert that shipowners are reluctant to alert authorities about attacks on their vessels on account of three of reasons: first, subsequent investigations and delays result in costs (demurrage costs resulting from delays of onward journeys) that shipowners themselves must bear. Second, the fear that reporting attacks will only raise maritime insurance premiums by forcing owner-operators to acknowledge that they failed to practice basic security measures such as maintaining a regular antipiracy watch. Third, in most cases, the combined magnitude of losses associated with reporting piracy attacks greatly outweigh those resulting from a piracy attack. "In instances of low-level theft, ransacking, and hostage-taking, for example, costs tend to represent only two to ten percent of the value of the targeted boat and its cargo" (Chalk, 2008, p. 7).

Factors Accounting for Increased Piracy at Sea

As noted above, the period 1994-1999 saw an average of 209 pirate attacks per year. This increased to an average of 352 pirate attacks annually during the 2000-2006 period; while 2015 alone recorded 418 pirate attacks, constituting 19 percent increase over the annual average for the period 2000-2006 and a 50 per cent increase over the annual average for the period 1994-1999. A number of factors help account for this marked increase in piracy activity around the globe in the last two or so decades. First is the massive increase in maritime commercial traffic. By the turn of the 2010s, about 80 per cent of all global freight was transshipped by sea; 12 to 15 million containers are estimated to be on the world's oceans at any one particular moment. This, combined with the large number of ports globally, which number about 7,000 terminals currently in operation, has provided pirates with a limitless range of highly tempting, high pay-off targets.

The second factor is the increased incidence of maritime commercial traffic that passes through narrow and congested maritime chokepoints near areas of endemic maritime criminal or nonstate activity such as Hormuz

Straits, Malacca Straits, the Strait of Bab el Mandab, Panama Canal, and the Suez Canal. Ships passing through these narrow straits have to significantly reduce speed to ensure safe passage through these bottlenecks thus dramatically heightening their exposure to interception and attack.

The third factor explaining the rising levels of piracy in global waters is the proliferation of small arms, light weapons, and precision technological equipment. This has provided pirates, terrorists, and other criminal elements with enhanced means to operate on a more sophisticated and destructive level. The weaponry available range from pistols, machineguns, automatic assault rifles to anti-ship mines, handheld mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades. All of these, which are easily transportable, easy to handle, cheap, and durable, account for the growing level of violence that characterize piracy in the current maritime environment. In regard to this, Chalk (2008) quotes the then Director of the IMB's Kuala Lumpur Office, Noel Choong: "Five to six years ago [2000-2001], when pirates attacked, they used machetes, knives, and pistols. Today, they come equipped with AK-47s, M-16s, rifle grenades, and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades)" (p. 10).

The fourth factor that accounts for the rise in piracy activities is the impact of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the U.S. This development generated pressure on many governments to invest in expensive, land-based homeland security initiatives thus significantly heightening the difficulties associated with maritime surveillance. These demands have negatively impacted already limited resources available for underwriting offshore monitoring systems, resulting in a boon to pirate networks, availing them an operational environment highly conducive to their tactical and material designs (Chalk, 2008).

The fifth explanatory factor is corruption and dysfunctional systems of national criminal justice in many countries. This factor has served to encourage official complicity in high-level pirate rings which has directly impacted on the 'phantom ship' phenomenon and illicit trade. Chalk cites

IMB officials who note that China, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand, are littoral state examples where maritime criminal syndicates enjoy direct or partial access to coopted or bribed government officials. Herein, ships can be hijacked 'to order' for cash ransom of up to \$300,000. The coopted or bribed government insiders provide invaluable information about activities taking place in the maritime commercial market, and ensure that maritime criminal syndicates are kept abreast of actions the industry or law enforcement are taking to counter their activities (Chalk, 2008; IMB, 2006; Abyankar, 1997).

The sixth factor that accounts for the rise in piracy and one that is specifically relevant to Asia, is the lingering effects of the Asian financial crisis that broke out in mid-1997 with the forced devaluation of the Thai Baht. This crisis exerted a stronger 'pull effect' on piracy with more people, including members of security forces, drawn to maritime crime and other criminal activities due to falling wages, job losses, and higher food prices. It also deprived many littoral states of the revenue necessary to fund effective monitoring regimes over their coastlines. These effects were particularly felt in Indonesia, a massive archipelagic country that acutely suffered from the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis: "Indeed, since 1997, the country's territorial waters have consistently ranked as the most pirate-prone in the world" (Chalk, 2008, p. 11).

The seventh factor is lax coastal and port-side security. This is borne of lack of functioning maritime police presence, or lack of adequate staff, boats, equipment, and training for extant maritime police units. This state of affairs facilitates low-level piracy activities particularly theft of cargo from ships at harbor. This problem is particularly acute at terminals in Nigeria, off the Horn of Africa, and across South and Southeast Asia, especially Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, lax port security and frequent attacks have led to heightened consternation on the part of many shipping companies forcing them to take up the issue directly with the Bangladeshi government on several occasions.

Eighth and finally, the increase in pirate activities is also explicable in terms of the increasing tendency by most shipping companies to reduce their full staff complements to skeleton crews sometimes numbering no more than half a dozen. Whereas this reduces operational costs and increases the bottom line, it has made hijacking easier to execute (United Nations, 2019; Murphy, 2017; Boutwell, Klare, & Reed, 1995; Beckman et al, 1994; Pugh, 1993).

The Security Implications of Piracy at Sea

In view of the factors articulated above, it is no wonder that piracy continues to increase across the world's maritime spaces with complex and fundamental security implications. Piracy's dangers are multifaceted and have direct implications for economic, environmental, human, and political security. First, at the most basic level, pirate attacks constitute a direct threat to the lives and welfare of the citizens of a variety of flag states. Increasingly, attacks involve violence resulting in injury, casualties, and psychological trauma.

Second, piracy also has a direct economic impact in terms of stolen cargos, higher insurance premiums, and delayed trips, and could potentially undermine a maritime state's trading ability. Often, ship owners are required to pay their own legal fees for postattack investigations, they always bear the costs of delayed or cancelled onward journeys. In the event of hijackings, consignees have had to shoulder the entire cost of phantom ship frauds. Most importantly, prevalent piracy in a state's territorial waters and ports can damage the international standing of a country and result in a boycott of its port facilities. An example here is Hong Kong in the mid-1990s when many shipping companies threatened to boycott its port facilities because of the frequency of pirate attacks in what became dubbed "the Hainan-Luzon-Hong Kong terror triangle" (Chalk, 2008, p.12; Beckman et al, 1994; Pugh, 1993).

In the 2000s, similar problems beset ports in Bangladesh, Horn of Africa, Indonesia, and Nigeria. Overall, MIB notes that piracy costs the shipping industry between \$1 billion and \$16 billion per annum. Fortunately, "although this figure might appear unacceptable, it is generally viewed as an inevitable cost of doing business that, when measured against the annual value of maritime

The resulting discharge of petroleum could cause irreparable damage to maritime life and other offshore resources including degradation of fertile coastal lowlands, "in the opinion of the IMB, it is only a matter of time

commerce – which in 2005 totaled \$7.8 trillion – is not, in fact, prohibitively onerous” (Chalk, 2008, p. 16).

Third, at the political level, piracy can play a pivotal role in undermining and weakening regime legitimacy by encouraging corruption among elected government officials. As noted above, this is reported to have been a recurrent problem in Indonesia where many maritime organizations and shipping associations lament the complicity of government officials and members of the security forces who participate in, arrange, or otherwise facilitate both low- and high-end piracy attacks. Lack of resources impaired the capacity of the Jakarta government to effectively crack down on manifestations of state complicity in piracy (Chalk, 2008).

Fourth and finally, pirate attacks have the potential to trigger a major environmental disaster, particularly if they take place in crowded sea lanes traversed by heavily laden oil tankers (Chalk 2008, p.17). The nightmare scenario, according to Chalk (2008), is a major crash between an unmanned rogue vessel and an oil tanker (IMB, 2006;

Valencia, 2005). The resulting discharge of petroleum could cause irreparable damage to maritime life and other offshore resources including degradation of fertile coastal lowlands, “in the opinion of the IMB, it is only a matter of time before pirates trigger an environmental disaster of this sort” (Chalk, 2008, p. 17).

Global Security Threats at Sea II: Terrorism

Historically, global seas have not been a major theater for terrorist activity. This is on account of the fact that terrorist need to have some form of maritime capability to reach their targets (Asal and Hastings, 2014). According to Asal and Hastings, of the 98,000 total terrorist attacks in 40 years between 1974 and 2014, only 199 (0.2 per cent) were against maritime targets. Nevertheless, between 2000 and 2008, there was a modest yet highly discernible upswing in high-profile terrorist attacks and plots at sea. Examples include bombings of U.S. vessels sailing in Indonesian, Singaporean, and Malaysian waters;



NATO-led counter-piracy troops intercept a suspected Somali pirated vessel on January 13, 2012 (Photo Credit: UK Ministry of Defence/Kyle Heller)

... many of the vulnerabilities that have facilitated piracy also apply to the phenomenon of terrorism. These include inadequate coastal surveillance, lax port security, a profusion of targets ...

suicide strikes against Western shipping interests in the Mediterranean; small boat rammings of supertankers transiting the straits of Gibraltar; and attacks on cruise liners carrying Israeli tourists to Turkey (Chalk, 2008; Percival, 2005). This reality helped accentuate fears especially in the Western world that terrorists, particularly extremist militants connected with international jihadist networks, are moving to extend operational mandates beyond purely territorially bounded theaters (Chalk, 2008). As retired U.S. Naval Captain Jim Pelkofski noted; “indications point to an acceleration of the pace of maritime terrorism, heralding a coming campaign” (Nincic, 2012). While A former U.K. First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff deemed maritime terrorism “a clear

and present danger” that may “potentially cripple global trade and have grave knock-on effects on developed economies” (Nincic, 2012).

Why the Apparent Shift of Terrorists to Water-Based Environments?

Available evidence points to five reasons to account for the shift in terrorist focus to water-based operational environments. First, many of the vulnerabilities that have facilitated piracy also apply to the phenomenon of terrorism. These include inadequate coastal surveillance, lax port security, a profusion of targets (90 per cent of global trade is carried by sea according to the International



U.S. coast guard law enforcement detachment members assist Senegalese navy personnel to conduct a boarding of a fishing vessel as part of Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership in April 10, 2016 (Photo Credit: U.S. Coast Guard/Glen Hyzak)

Maritime Organization), overwhelming dependence of maritime commerce on passage through narrow and congested straits where vessels are vulnerable to attack, and the increased tendency to staff vessels with skeleton crew. These gaps and weaknesses provide extremists with an opportunity to move, hide, and strike in a manner that is not possible in a terrestrial environment.

The second explanation lies in the growth of commercial enterprises specializing in maritime sports and equipment. These enterprises provide terrorists with a readily accessible conduit through which to gain the requisite training and resources to operate at sea. Chalk (2008), provides the example of Jemaa Islamyya, an Indonesian based network, whose members enrolled in scuba courses run by commercial and resort companies in Southern Philippines with a view, according to security forces, of gaining the requisite skills to execute underwater attacks against oil and gas pipelines off the coast of Mindanao.

The third factor accounting for the spike in water based terrorist attacks is the fact that maritime attacks offer terrorists an effective alternate means of causing massive economic destabilization: "Disrupting the mechanics of the contemporary 'just enough, just in time' cargo freight trading system could potentially trigger vast and cascading fiscal effects, especially if the operations of a major commercial port were curtailed" (Chalk, 2008, p.13).

Fourth, sea-based terrorism constitutes a further means of inflicting mass coercive punishment on enemy audiences: "Cruise ships and passenger ferries are especially relevant in this regard because they cater to large numbers of people who are confined in a single physical space" (Chalk 2008, p. 25). This makes them, like aircraft, ideal targets for undertaking attacks aimed at maximizing civilian casualties. Moreover, ships sail according to set and publicly available schedules – providing transparency in pre-attack planning. An example is the bombing of the *Superferry 14* in Manila Bay, the Philippines in February 2014 which killed more than 116 people (the world's deadliest sea-based terrorist act so far). This attack demonstrates the ease with which mass casualties could result from a terrorist attack on a passenger liner. The attack involved only a couple of months of planning, was executed with a crude improvised explosive device – 16 sticks of dynamite hidden in a hollowed-out television set – and cost only \$400 to execute. It is noteworthy that cruise ships cater to rich, middle-class American and European tourists.

Unlike other cargo vessels that handle payloads for a single customer loaded at port, container ships deal with commodities from hundreds of companies and individuals that, in most cases, are received and transported from inland warehouses

They thus provide the type of high prestige iconic targets that would resonate with anti-Western extremist religious elements and elicit considerable media attention if effectively executed. An example here is the November 2005 attack on *Seaborne Spirit* en route from Egypt to Mombasa, Kenya, with 302 passengers and crew. This illustrated how even a small-scale terrorist attack with no serious injuries, can elicit considerable international media attention and interest. The ship was attacked with RPGs and machine gun fire while sailing 70 nautical miles off the Somali coast. The incident caught the headlines of major global news outlets even though no one was seriously hurt. Most news media focused on the fact that the vessel was carrying mostly Western tourists (Chalk, 2008; Luft & Korin, 2004).

The fifth and final factor that accounts for increased maritime terrorism is the expansive global container-shipping complex. This offers terrorists a viable logistical conduit for facilitating the covert movement of weapons and personnel in two critical respects (Greenberg et al, 2006). First, since much of the maritime trading system is designed to be as accessible and flexible as possible (to keep costs low and turnover high), there is no strong incentive to enact a stringent (and thus disruptive) regime of security measures. On account of this, only two to five percent of containers shipped globally are physically inspected at their port of arrival, "simply put, the statistical probability of smuggling a weapon or bomb is much greater than the probability of intercepting one" (Chalk 2008, p. 27). Second, the highly complex nature of the containerized supply chain combined with the ineffectiveness of point-of-origin inspections, creates a plethora of openings for terrorist infiltration by providing extremists with multiple opportunities to 'stuff' or otherwise tamper with boxed crates:

Unlike other cargo vessels that handle payloads for a single customer loaded at port, container ships deal with commodities from hundreds of companies and individuals that, in most cases, are received and transported from inland warehouses. Each point of transfer along this spectrum of movement is a potential source of vulnerability for the overall integrity of the cargo and provides extremists with numerous opportunities to 'stuff' or otherwise tamper with boxed crates" (Chalk, 2008, p. 28).

A Piracy-Terrorism Nexus at Sea?

In view of the foregoing, the global maritime security picture does not look very good. Complicating the global maritime security picture further is growing speculation that a nexus could emerge between terrorism and piracy: "One of the main concerns is that extremist groups will seek to overcome existing operational constraints in sea-based capabilities by working in conjunction with, or subcontracting out missions to maritime crime gangs and syndicates" (Chalk 2008, p. 14). This possibility has informed the perception of governments, international organizations, and major shipping interests around the world. As noted above, there have been persistent reports of political extremists boarding vessels in Southeast Asia in an effort to learn how to pilot them in order to execute a replica of 9/11 at sea. "Indeed, such a specter was a principal factor in driving the Lloyd's Joint War Council in the U.S. to briefly designate the Malacca Straits as an area of enhanced risk in 2005" (Chalk, 2008, p. 14).

A number of measures could be undertaken to forestall the eventuality of this piracy-terrorism nexus possibility. These could focus primarily on mobilizing resources, and concerted efforts with a view to:

1. boosting the coastal monitoring and interdiction capabilities of littoral states in regions of strategic maritime significance;

2. effectively supporting and strengthening the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center in Malaysia;
3. augmenting and enhancing port security management systems in the cross-section of littoral states across the globe especially ones with increased piracy/terrorist activities as indicated in Table 1;
4. closely monitoring the prevalent crisis of piracy in the Gulfs of Guinea and Aden and in South Asia shipping lanes by relevant governments, the International Chamber of Shipping, the World Shipping Council, and the International Maritime Organization to reduce the risk that commercial vessels transiting the affected regions will be attacked and successfully hijacked;
5. increasing surveillance and patrol in the most affected sea lanes to deter would-be pirates. The effectiveness of this measure was demonstrated on April 21, 2019 when suspected pirates seized a fishing dhow off the coast of Somalia, holding 23 people hostage. In a matter of hours, the European Union's counter-piracy force EU NAVFOR Somalia Operation Atalanta, responded to the attack and within two days, had detained five suspects and released 23 hostages; and
6. sponsoring research into cost-effective initiatives for better securing ships and oceanic freight especially in the world's busiest shipping lanes (Chalk, 2008; Stavridis, 2017).

Otherwise, in view of the fact that 90 per cent of global trade is carried by ships, increased piracy and terrorism at sea, particularly the potential for a piracy-terrorism nexus would prove devastating for the global economy.

References

- Abyankar, J. (1997). "Phantom Ships," in Eric Ellen, ed. *Shipping at Risk*. London: International Chamber of Commerce, pp. 58-75.
- Asal, V. & Hastings, J. V. (2014). "Terror at Sea: Exploring Maritime Targeting by Terrorist Organizations." Cardiff University, Piracy Studied: <http://piracy-studies.org/terror-at-sea-exploring-maritime-targeting-by-terrorist-organizations/>
- Beckman, R. C., Grundy-Warr, C., & Forbes, V. L. (1994). *Acts of piracy in the Malacca and Singapore Straits*. Ibru.

- Boutwell, J., Klare, M. T., & Reed, L. W. (Eds.). (1995). *Lethal Commerce: The Global Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons: a Collection of Essays from a Project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. Committee on International Security Studies, American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Chalk, P. (2008). *The Maritime Dimension of International Security: Terrorism, Piracy, and Challenges for the United States*. Rand Corporation, 2008.
- Greenberg, M. D., Chalk, P., Willis, H. H., Khilko, I., & Ortiz, D. S. (2006). *Maritime terrorism: Risk and liability*. Rand Corporation.
- Harrington, R. (2016). "The top ten places where you could be attacked by pirates." *Business Insider*, August 12.
- International Maritime Bureau (IMB). (2006). *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period 1 January – 30 June 2006*. Kuala Lumpur: IMB.
- Luft, G. & Korin, A. (2004). "Terrorism Goes to Sea." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 6, pp. 61-71.
- Meldrum, C. (2007). "Murky Waters: Financing Maritime Terrorism and Crime," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June, pp. 36-39.
- Murphy, M. N. (2017). *Contemporary Piracy and Maritime Terrorism: The Threat to International Security*. London: Routledge.
- Nincic, D. (2012). "Maritime Terrorism: How Real is the Threat?" *Fair Observer*, July 16: https://www.fairobserver.com/region/north_america/maritime-terrorism-how-real-threat/
- Percival, B. (2005). *Indonesia and the United States: Shared interests in Maritime Security*. Washington, DC: United States-Indonesia Society.
- Pugh, M. (1993). "Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea: Problems and Remedies," *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*. Vol. 2, No. 1.
- Stavridis, J. (2017). "Terrorists Have Been All Too Effective by Air and Land. What if they Hit the Sea?" *Time*. Retrieved June 29, 2017 from <https://time.com/4838706/what-if-terrorists-hit-by-sea/>
- United Nations (UN). (2019). *High Seas Crime Becoming More Sophisticated, Endangering More Lives, International Security, Speakers Tell Security Council*. 8457th UNSC Meeting.
- United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (2018). "Bamako Convention: Preventing Africa from becoming a dumping ground for toxic waste." UNEP Press Release, Nairobi, January 30.
- Valencia, M. (2005). "Piracy and Politics in Southeast Asia," in Johnson, Derek and Valencia, Mark, eds. *Piracy in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asia Studies.

Safeguarding Kenya's Economic Security Through the Blue Economy

By John Okul

Abstract

This article broadly discusses how Kenya can harness the blue economy to assure its economic security in the Horn of Africa region. Much of the data used here was derived from secondary sources with government and other institutional reports/ publications, journal publications, and books proving instrumental towards this end. The data obtained were analyzed through content analysis. The study found that blue economy holds a rich promise towards securing Kenya's economic future, however, this is largely possible in a secure socio-political and economic context, which is a product of functional governance architecture. Further, the article recognizes that certain obstacles need to be surmounted in order for Kenya to benefit from the proceeds of the blue economy.

Background

The "Rio +20" United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) held in 2012 is considered momentous in the way it propped blue economy as a pivotal agenda to be pursued by countries around the world as a strategy to realise the United Nations (UN's) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Rio 2012 conference was a build-up on an earlier conference staged in the same city in 1992, the *Rio Earth Summit*, which focused on fostering the growth of 'green economy', an initiative aimed at improving human well-being and social equity, while at the same time significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2011). Since these two landmark conferences, states and other non-state actors have come up with different approaches, or models to harness the full potential of the blue economy.

Building on the above notion, Kenya, a developing country by classification, has prioritized pursuit of sustainable development as a way of realizing Vision 2030. Starting recently, building on the legacy of the conference titled *Global Sustainable Blue Economy* held in Kenya in November 2018, the government of Kenya started dialogue with the stakeholders to exploit untapped potential of the maritime domain using useful solutions and innovations for increasing food security, alleviating poverty, improving nutrition and health, creating jobs, and lifting regional/ international trade while protecting ecosystem health and biodiversity, and also improving

regional peace and stability. This is coming against the backdrop that blue economy is considered a key pillar to realising Vision 2030, which is an important cog intended to launch Kenya from a third world economy to a middle income economy.

This is particularly so, given that the vast ocean resources such as the fish stocks and other inorganic resources in the Indian Ocean can contribute greatly to the economy of the country. According to the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) estimates, the maritime domain (Fisheries, transport and tourism) contributed about US Dollars 1.83 billion to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 (KMA, 2015). This is huge, given that the country's manufacturing sector is not so advanced, and as such, is not the main engine of growth and development. From the foregoing, this article concerns with how blue economy can be harnessed to secure Kenya's economic security in the Horn of Africa region.

Context

The significance of the blue economy to states in the contemporary world cannot be overstated. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (2014), oceans act as a source of food and income for billions, besides regulating the earth's climate and weather, as well as generating half of the oxygen breathed on earth. Just like the green revolution of the

1960s helped address the challenge of malnutrition in the developing world, the blue economy today presents states – more so developing states – with a novel frontier to diversify their economies well beyond land-based activities in their endeavor to conserve and sustainably utilize the environment.

The notion behind sustainable management of the maritime domain is grounded both on moral obligation of all humans, as well as the need for states to also benefit from the nature's providences. The moral obligation springs from Garrett Harding's 1968 clarion call to use providences sustainably to avoid the worst case scenario that he labelled, *Tragedy of the Commons*, which occurs as a result of selfishness of individuals. And, on the other hand, the maritime ecosystem forms a potent source of economic security for states – through provision of food, employment, revenue and a transportation pathway.

In the case of Kenya, marine ecosystem is seen to present substantial economic value. Particularly, marine ecosystem offer a renewable opportunity to meet basic human needs, support a healthy and sustainable

economy, and provide jobs for a growing population. Kenya's Vision 2030 outlines an agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes among other things harnessing the natural resources available for enhanced growth and prosperity (Vision 2030, 2008). The Vision 2030 development blueprint pillars are economic, social, and political. The blue economy agenda falls within the realm of the economic pillar. Thus, securing the coastal ecosystem means securing a crucial component of Kenya's economic facet, the blue economy. From the foregoing, this article examines how Kenya can leverage on the blue economy to secure its economic interests in the Horn of Africa region.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This paper largely relied on secondary data even though few first-hand interviews with the relevant stakeholders were conducted. Particularly, document analysis technique was used to collect data from publications focusing on themes such as sustainable development, poverty eradication, policy documents (on blue



World leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) that took place in Brazil on June 20-22, 2012 (Photo Credit: Roberto Stuckert Filho/PR)

economy), memorandum of understandings (MoUs), treaties, protocols, declaration during stakeholder gatherings and records from key meetings, press releases. Data collected from these sources was analyzed through inferential and narrative methods of data analysis. In addition, key informant interviews was conducted to complement the information gleaned from the secondary documents. Five (5) scholars and experts who focus their research on blue economy were interviewed for the study. The above approach provides an opportunity to combine both the quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques. This approach allowed for more in-depth and critical information to be obtained.

In addition, the paper relied on both realism and liberalism theories respectively to explain the phenomenon of economic security in the context of blue economy. Realism theory is based on the premise that states inhabit an anarchic world, where might is strength and self-help is the order of the day. As such, states' national interests are predicated around guaranteeing their security – whether economic, social, or political. Kenya, as member of such a system has its options limited, but to pursue self-help to guarantee its economic security in a region where hostile states (in this case Somalia) are vying for the same resources. In addition, since the ocean is one of the providences of nature, Kenya has an obligation to exploit its rich value in a sustainable manner. Thus, the element of sustainable usage of marine resources is an important component of the blue economy.

Literature Review

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2018) policy brief focus on *Leveraging the Blue Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth*. It argues that blue economy has an immense potential to contribute to higher and faster GDP growth for Kenya. The policy brief notes that diversifying the country's economy beyond land-based activities and along its coastal, marine and maritime sector is critical to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This brief notes that marine resources are important in ensuring food security, opening up new transportation routes among other positive outcomes.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2018) publication addresses how Blue Growth can benefit women, youth, indigenous groups, and migrants. The FAO document notes that analysis of the needs and interests of women, youth, indigenous peoples and

migrants is central to the Blue Growth approach. The approach, it argues, prioritizes working with governments, communities and civil society to advance policies and incentives that unlock the economic and social potential of marginalized groups and empower them to safeguard natural resources while enhancing opportunities to access decent work. Further, the publication notes that the emphasis on the aforementioned groups in the Blue Growth Agenda is consistent with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that pay a special attention to the marginalized groups in society.

Spalding (2016) writes on the new blue economy as the future of sustainability. He notes that the ocean is now the world's life support. But that human activities of previous have had a negative relationship with the ocean. Humanity failed to recognize that the oceans after all had finite capacity to take human abuse without undermining those services humans depend on. He goes on to argue that the concept "new blue economy" implies a new approach/ way of thinking intended to improve human's relationship with the ocean. This new approach account for "eco-system services" (provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural) provided by the ocean to plants and animals (including humans).

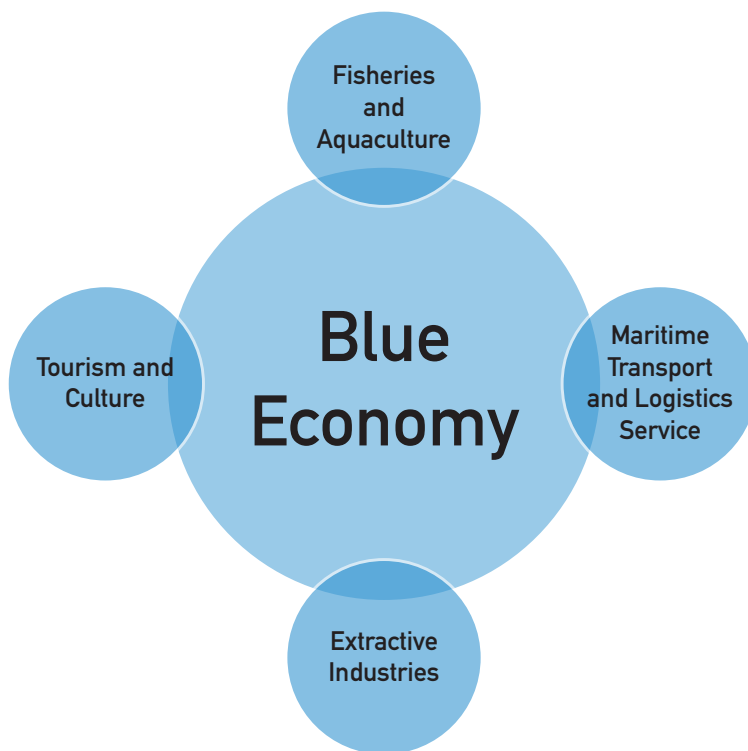
Discussions

Blue Economy and Kenya's Economic Security

Proper management of the maritime domain, hitherto referred to as the blue economy is necessary to ensure sustainable economic growth, social inclusion as well as environmental conservation. According to the *United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030*, there exists a linkage between blue economy, sustainable development and economic growth. Kenya through Vision 2030 recognizes that the country needs to implement cross-sectoral policies to raise the (GDP) over a period of years (Vision 2030, 2008). Under the economic pillar of the Vision, Kenya recognizes that diverse sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and livestock, wholesale and retail, trade, manufacturing, financial services, business process offshoring, and IT-enabled services are key to improving Kenya's economic situation. As at 2015, the marine ecosystem/ domain contributed about USD 1.83 billion to the country's GDP. This is quite substantial, and it explains the centrality of the Indian Ocean as a lifeblood to Kenya's economic future. Some of the above highlighted sectors form key components of the blue economy framework.

Components of the Blue Economy

Blue economy represents billions of dollars to any economy thereby underscoring its dynamic value to the future of humanity. According to the World Bank (2017), for an activity to qualify as a component of the blue economy, then it has to meet the following attributes: provide social and economic benefits for current and future generations; restore, protect, and maintain the diversity, productivity, resilience, core functions, and intrinsic value of marine ecosystems; and, be based on clean technologies, renewable energy, and circular material flows that will reduce waste and promote recycling of materials. Against the aforementioned, the Kenyan government rolled out a Presidential Taskforce on Blue economy in 2016 to streamline the exploitation of the marine resources. The Taskforce identified the following key sectors for development; fisheries and aquaculture, marine tourism and culture, extractive industries and then marine transport and logistics services. These sectors represents both living and non-living resources of the ocean. The diagram below represents the major sectors of blue economy.



Source: Author (2019)

The above diagram shows that blue economy is a multifaceted concept, with different interlocking parts. Each part constitutes a key element of the framework. However, the above framework should be looked at from the context of contributing to a balance in the ecosystem. Meaning that exploitation of the blue economy to build sustainable economies or livelihoods should be conducted in a manner that prioritizes conservation of the ecological environment. This thus means that proper legislative

framework coupled with rule-based system should be ensured to ensure realization of the above balance. In addition, the rule-based system should be supported by a law enforcement ability – why Kenya Coastguard Services was inaugurated to mitigate against both domestic and external security threats.

Further, the blue economy is presented to offer potential for Kenya's development, especially in achieving food security, developing extractive industries, promoting tourism as well as developing relevant industries/services that support marine transportation system. All these have the potential to go in hand to helping Kenya realize its economic development objectives. Blue economy-related economic activities can generate jobs and bring about significant tangible benefits to change the lives and livelihoods of millions of people living in the coastal areas as well as inland areas of Kenya.

The extractive sector, which is at the heart of the dispute with Somalia, is vital in the way it will diversify Kenya's economic architecture. Oil and gas, which are said to be in large quantities in the Indian Ocean, are important drivers of manufacturing. Industries run on oil, so a reduction in oil prices directly affects the cost of production and thus by extension the market value of commodities/services.

Governance Structure of the Blue Economy

Effective management of the blue economy requires that a functional governance structure be installed in place for harmony in planning and coordination of blue economy activities. The governance structure should integrate both international and municipal structures/ laws. At the international level, Kenya is a member



Ongoing construction of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor (Photo Credit: LAPSSET)

of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). It is thus rule-bound to conform to the regulations/standards set by this agency in the management of the shipping and related sectors. This also means that Kenya should comply with the standards set by different regimes that regulate maritime/ port activities. Further, at the municipal level, a coherent, conducive policy for investment should be put in place. This should be complemented by an Integrated Marine Spatial plan and harmonized National/ County Plans on exploitation of marine resources. All these put together, produces an enabling environment to optimally harness the marine resources. However, the governance structure should also be supported by a proper security framework, and that explains the importance of the Kenya Coastguard Services.

Inauguration of Coastguard Services: Securing Kenya's Economic Future?

The Kenya Coast Guard Services was operationalized through an Act of Parliament in 2018 to harmonize the fight against existential and potential security threats along the Kenya's coastal waters. The drive to find

the service was predicated on the need to neutralize the security threats around the Mombasa Port and its environs through improving both the physical security infrastructure and surveillance equipment. This step would go in hand to plugging the porous security barriers in the Kenyan coastal waters, which is boom to providing a conducive environment for the Government of Kenya and other actors to sustainably harness the resources (blue economy) found in the Indian Ocean.

Until now, the porosity of the Mombasa coastline has rendered it susceptible to exploitation by criminal networks, who traffic in illicit goods. Further, the porous coastline has been, and continue to be exposed to the threat of potential terror attacks. This has in turn presented a lot of challenges to fully utilizing the rich potential presented by the Indian Ocean waters. Complementing the aforementioned challenge is the threat of external aggression by Somalia Government that claims ownership over the energy-rich blocks in the Indian Ocean. The dispute between the two countries saw Somalia take the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. However, the case is yet

to be determined. Similar cases involving other African countries are awaiting determination. For instance, in Western Africa, Ghana and Ivory Coast are engaged in a similar conflict about their boundary in the Atlantic Ocean. The two countries are currently awaiting a decision by the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea on their dispute.

The above cases have two implications. First, it highlights the fact that technology is now enabling countries to shift their focus to exploitation of sea/ocean resources and not restrict their focus to land resources only in an effort to broaden their economic base. Second, it is a pointer to states that more than ever there is now need to buffer security on water – and, that has partly been solved by the inauguration of the Coastguard Services in Kenya. But, overall, the above cases highlight an interesting though complicated future of inter-state relations. A future of sharing common resources of unknown value – the oceans/ seas and their providences.

Before the inauguration of the Kenya Coast Guards Services, security surveillance along the Indian Ocean coast was not done on a 24/7 hour basis. However, this is likely to be transformed with the launch of the new force. The recently inaugurated Coastguard Services offers a fresh promise: heightened surveillance both during day and night. This will come in handy in dealing with any eventualities of terror attacks, external aggression, and illegal trade along the coastline. But to realize this, more resources need to be divested by government to enhance the new service logistically. This could, for instance, help offset a deadly alternative of a terror attack, which is lurking on a day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute basis. To put this situation into perspective, a senior government security official, who wishes to remain anonymous, captured the delicate security situation along the Mombasa coastline: “just a single terror attack on a ship along the Likoni channel, will block off access to the port and thus cripple normal business around the port”. This can easily translate to loss of a lot of revenue by the government. Instituting in place pre-emptive measures can thus help insulate the country against some of these worst case scenarios.

Challenges to Harnessing the Full Potential of the Blue Economy

Despite the promise of the blue economy to assure Kenya's economic security, a myriad of challenges stand in the way to harnessing its full potential. One of the main challenges is inadequate resources – both personnel and

financial. Blue economy is a relatively new frontier, and as such, many countries, especially developing countries, do not possess adequate capacity to finance or have the technological prowess or even skilled personnel or a combination of all that are sufficient enough to successfully implement blue economy projects. To offset the above challenge, the government needs to put more logistical support to ensure success in the implementation of the blue economy projects.

Another important gap for development of marine-based economic sectors is the lack of coordination between, and among the partners. Lack of clear coordination between government and research institutions; between administrations and private entrepreneurs/ businessmen; between/among public and private sector agencies has been cited as a gap to be plugged to ensure successful implementation of blue economy projects. This is building from the notion that universities/ research institutions are key in generating new knowledge to successfully implement some of the blue economy projects. Inter-institutional partnership is vital in bringing forward all the relevant developmental issues related to blue economy.

Additionally, measures need to be put in place to deal with the wanton corruption that continue to cripple provision of both essential and necessary services. Corruption has been considered a widespread challenge across the Kenyan society. According to Sir Kempe Ronald Hope (2014), corruption has grown roots in the Kenyan society at large and become endemic. This should thus serve as a wake-up call to the Kenyan governments to develop effective anti-corruption strategies so that they can increase the resource levels available for investment on economic and social development among other spheres of life.

Also, reducing the tension between Kenya and Somali is imperative to ensuring optimal exploitation of the blue

Effective management of the blue economy requires that a functional governance structure be installed in place for harmony in planning and coordination of blue economy activities



*Participants watch a video during the Blue Economy Conference held in Kenya on November 26-28, 2018
(Photo Credit: IISD)*

economy. An environment of instability is a bane to realizing economic prosperity. As such, there is a need for Somalia and Kenya to find a compromise on the Indian Ocean border dispute. Otherwise, persistent stand-off over the water boundary will in the end have zero-sum impact – affecting the economy of the two countries.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This article concludes that the above-highlighted challenges notwithstanding, the blue economy holds a rich potential to transforming Kenya's economic fortunes. Hence, the significance of the blue economy in promoting and strengthening Kenya's position as the economic hegemon in the Horn of Africa region. However, the successful implementation of the blue economy depends on both government commitment in providing an enabling environment as well as dealing with the obstacles that stand in the way. The findings indicate that there is a clear signal from the government to fully

implement the blue economy initiative, but this signal should be matched with clear and well-thought-out action points. The government needs to match its plan with a strategic approach, supported with a governance structure with a clear security component is important to gain from the dividends of the blue economy.

In addition, integrated and inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial coordination including academia-industry, public-private are essential to bringing forward the relevant issues related to blue economy development in Kenya. The aforementioned partnerships are essential if Kenya is to leverage on its maritime resources. In addition, developing countries have an opportunity to learn from the example of European Union (EU) on how blue economy can be harnessed to promote inclusive and sustainable growth. This understanding will help policy makers devise innovative strategies that takes cognizance of blue economy in securing Kenya's economic future.

The government needs to match its plan with a strategic approach, supported with a governance structure with a clear security component is important to gain from the dividends of the blue economy.

References

- Conference Proceedings (2018). Conference on the Global Sustainable Blue Economy, held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi from 26th to 28th November 2018. Retrieved on <http://www.blueeconomyconference.go.ke/>
- Government of Kenya (2008). *Vision 2030*. Government Printer.
- Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859), 1243-1248.
- Hope Sr, K. R. (2014). Kenya's corruption problem: causes and consequences. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 52(4), 493-512.
- Spalding, M. J. (2016). The New Blue Economy: The Future of Sustainability. *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*, 2(2), 8.
- UNDP, (2018). Leveraging the Blue Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. *Policy Brief, Issue No: 6/2018*.
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2011). *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*. Nairobi: UNEP.
- World Bank (2017). *Infographic: What is the Blue Economy?* Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy>
-

About the Authors

Anne Speckhard, Ph.D.

Dr. Anne Speckhard is the Director, International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE) and serves as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine. She has interviewed over 600 terrorists, ISIS defectors, returnees, and prisoners, their family members and supporters in various parts of the world. In the past two years studying their trajectories into and out of terrorism, their experiences inside ISIS, as well as developing counter narratives from these interviews. She has also been training key stakeholders in law enforcement, intelligence, educators, and other countering violent extremism professionals on the use of counter-narrative messaging materials produced by ICSVE both locally and internationally as well as studying the use of children as violent actors by groups such as ISIS and consulting on how to rehabilitate them.

In 2007, she was responsible for designing the psychological and Islamic challenge aspects of the Detainee Rehabilitation Program in Iraq to be applied to 20,000 + detainees and 800 juveniles. She is a sought-after counterterrorism expert and has consulted to NATO, OSCE, foreign governments and to the U.S. Senate & House, Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, Health & Human Services, CIA and FBI and CNN, BBC, NPR, Fox News, MSNBC, CTV, and in Time, The New York Times, The Washington Post, London Times and many other publications. She regularly speaks and publishes on the topics of the psychology of radicalization and terrorism and is the author of several books, including *Talking to Terrorists*, *Bride of ISIS*, *Undercover Jihadi* and *ISIS Defectors: Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate*.

She can be reached at anne.speckhard@icsve.org

Ardian Shajkovci, Ph.D.

Dr. Ardian Shajkovci is the Director of Research and a Senior Research Fellow at the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE). He has conducted primary research on ISIS and al Shabab, as well as trained key stakeholders in law enforcement, intelligence, education, and other CT and CVE professionals on the use of counter-narrative materials produced by ICSVE both locally and internationally. He has conducted fieldwork in Western Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, mostly recently in Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Some of his areas of interests include disengagement from terrorism, violent extremist and terrorist group media communication strategy and information security, messaging and counter-messaging, and the strengthening of resilience to violent extremism and terrorism through the application of the rule of law.

He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration (mainly focusing on Homeland Security Policy) from Walden University; a Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration from Northwestern University; and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy from Dominican University. He has published on the topics of radicalization and terrorism. Further, he has trained stakeholders in law enforcement, intelligence, educators, and other countering violent extremism professionals on the use of counter narrative materials.

He can be reached at ardianshajkovci@icsve.org

Jules Swinkels

Jules Swinkels is a Research Fellow at the HORN Institute and a researcher in international relations, conflict, and war studies. He holds a Master of Arts in Military Strategic Studies from the Royal Dutch Defence Academy (Netherlands) and Bachelor Arts in Political History and International Relations, with a minor in Islamic Studies from Utrecht University (Netherlands). His research interests are in conflict, governance, human rights, peace, and corruption.

He can be reached at jules@horninstitute.org

Prof. Wanjala S. Nasong'o, Ph.D.

Prof. Wanjala Nasong'o is a professor of International Studies at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee and is the immediate former Chair of the College's Department of International Studies. Prof. Nasong'o holds a Doctor of Philosophy in International Studies from Northeastern University, Boston (USA); Master of Arts in International Studies and Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, both from the University of Nairobi (Kenya). He has previously taught at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; University of Nairobi; and Kenyatta University. He is an author, editor, and co-editor of eight books and dozens of peer reviewed chapters and articles in refereed journals. Prof. Nasong'o has been honored with the Rhodes College's Clarence Day Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity; and the Ali Mazrui Award for Research and Scholarly Excellence from the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Nasong'o is currently editing the Politics Section of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of African Studies*, lead-editing *Handbook of Kenya and its History* under contract with Palgrave Macmillan, and finalizing a manuscript entitled *Kenya: Nationalism Betrayed* under contract with Anthem Press, London.

He can be reached at NasongoS@Rhodes.edu

John Okul

John Okul holds a Master of Arts in International Development from Sciences Po (France) and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Nairobi (Kenya). He is currently an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Nairobi. He is also involved in the ISS-led ENACT research on Trans-National Organized crimes, focusing on the themes of cattle rustling in Eastern and Horn of Africa region, as well as illicit trade at the Port of Mombasa. In 2016/2017, he was involved in the Agrimonde-Terra project on global food security for 9 billion people in 2050 with Cirad (Cirad-inra partnership) as a research associate. He has also published a book chapter from the project. His research interests are in politics and security.

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

We are excited to release our tenth bi-monthly issue of the HORN Bulletin 2019 (Vol. II, Iss. VI). We bring to you well-researched articles and analysis of topical issues and developments affecting the Horn of Africa. We welcome contributions from readers who wish to have their articles included in the HORN Bulletin. At HORN, we believe ideas are the currency of progress. Feel free to contact the Editor-in-Chief for more details at communications@horninstitute.org.

Hassan Khannenje, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief, The HORN Bulletin

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Hassan Khannenje, Ph.D.	Managing Editor: Daniel Iberi	Member: Fauzia Hussein
Senior Editor: Roselyne Omondi	Designer: Evans Ombisa	

Upcoming Event

International Conference on Africa-Middle East Relations

Shared Peace. Shared Security. Shared Prosperity

HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold an *International Conference on Africa-Middle East Relations*. The Conference will be held in Nairobi (Kenya) on January 7th and 8th, 2020 and it will provide an opportunity for scholars and experts to discuss and exchange ideas on the nature and dynamics of Africa-Middle East relations. The participants will come from Kenya, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iran, Turkey, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Sudan, Algeria, Somalia, South Africa, Djibouti, Ethiopia, United Kingdom, Denmark, Belgium, USA, and Norway.

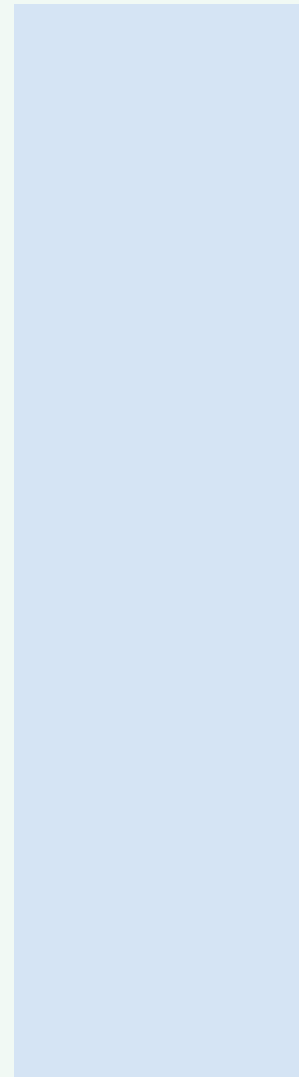
The Conference, *inter alia*, will address the following areas in Africa-Middle East relations: geopolitics and Africa-Middle East Relations; trade and investment between Africa and the Middle East; the role of ideology in Africa-Middle East relations; Africa-Middle East relations in a multipolar world; significance of political ties between African states and the Middle East; The Arab Spring, the Gulf Crisis and after; the politics of the proliferation of arms; terrorism and violent extremism and their ideological foundations; and effects of the above on the global oil markets.

FLIRTING WITH HYENAS: HOW EXTERNAL INTERESTS ARE FUELING INSTABILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA



A Study by the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies
June, 2019

This study examines how external interests are destabilizing the Horn of Africa region. The objective is to highlight how external commercial, geostrategic, political, and military interests are contributing to regional instability, and explore options for possible mitigation. This study also focuses on the dynamics of the ongoing maritime dispute between Kenya and Somalia, on potential implications for regional security.



HORN
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES



+254 720 323 896

+254 735 323 896



info@horninstitute.org

communications@horninstitute.org



www.horninstitute.org



@HISS2017



@Horninstitute

The HORN Bulletin ISSN: 2663-4996



2663-4996

