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Turkey and Ethiopia in Perspective

A History of Interactions and Interest Convergence

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Abstract

During the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was in a rivalry with the Portuguese for influence in the Red Sea region, which overlapped with conflicts between Coptic Christian-ruled Ethiopia and Muslim sultanates in the Horn. Meanwhile, the Ottomans were able to occupy Eritrea which it controlled until the nineteenth century. Italy conquered Eritrea during the 1880s, but was subsequently thwarted in its attempt to invade Ethiopia, when the latter and the Ottomans established formal diplomatic contacts. Following the First World War, Turkey and Ethiopia established embassies in each other's capitals. Turkey opposed Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, having earlier experienced its own problems with European imperialism.

Following the Second World War until 1974, both countries were pro-Western and concerned with insuring their international and domestic security. The end of the Cold War not only brought an end to Ethiopia's Marxist rule, but domestic and international developments led Turkey to pay greater attention to Africa with Ethiopia (and the Horn in general) receiving the most interest. Ethiopia has reciprocated to counterbalance Egypt, with which it has water usage disputes, and to counteract recent pressure from the United States over its human rights violations.

Introduction

Both the Ottoman Empire and its successor state following the First World War, the Republic of Turkey, have had a long history of interactions with Ethiopia. During the 16th Century, the Ottoman Empire was in a rivalry with the Portuguese for influence in the Red Sea region, which overlapped with conflicts between Coptic Christian Ethiopia and the Muslim sultanates in the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, the Ottomans were able to occupy the Red Sea ports of Suakin and Massawa, located in present-day Sudan and Eritrea, respectively, which it controlled until the 19th Century. Italy conquered

Eritrea during the 1880s, but was subsequently thwarted in its attempt to invade Ethiopia, when the latter and the Ottomans established formal diplomatic contacts. Following the First World War, Turkey, which established a republic upon the ashes of the defeated Ottoman Empire, and Ethiopia established embassies in each other's capitals. Turkey strongly opposed Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, having earlier experienced its own problems with European imperialism. Following the Second World War, until the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, both countries were pro-Western and concerned with insuring their international and domestic security. The end of the Cold War not only brought an end to Ethiopia's decade and a half of Marxist rule, during which time Turkey had little interaction with the Ethiopian regime, but domestic and international developments led Turkey to pay greater attention to Africa with Ethiopia (and the Horn in general) receiving the most interest. Ethiopia has reciprocated to counterbalance Egypt, with which it has water usage disputes, and also first to counteract pressure from the United States and western countries over the need to negotiate a settlement over the conflict with the Tigrayans and later over alleged war crimes in Tigray.



The extent of the Ottoman Empire in 1699 (Photo Credit: Wikipedia)

Turkish-Ethiopian Relations from Early Times to the Present

During the 16th Century, the Ottoman Empire established diplomatic and commercial relations with the Muslim Sultanate of Adal, a political entity centered around Harar, but including portions of Ethiopia, Sudan and what is known today as Somaliland, a breakaway region of Somalia. The sultanate was eventually defeated by Ethiopia, whose state church was Coptic Christianity, with help from Portuguese soldiers who also provided military training, after a century and a half of existence, despite the Ottomans also sending soldiers and canons to help in the sultanate's defense (Miftah, 2017, p. 23; Owen, 2008, p. 270). The control of eastern trade was the major point of conflict between the Ottomans and Portuguese. In 1555, Özdemiş Pasha, who had been governor of Yemen occupied the Red Sea ports of Massawa and Suakin. In 1561, upon his death, he was succeeded by his son, Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha. By the following century, Ethiopian Emperor Fasilides (reigned 1632-1667) expelled the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries and cooperated with the Ottoman authorities in Massawa and Suakin to bar the passage of Europeans into his country (Miftah, 2017, p. 274).

By the eighteenth century, the Ottomans lost interest in directly ruling that area. One very authoritative account albeit written in 1935 – with language that is either archaic or reflective of Britain's colonial perspective – describes the situation:

With the decline of the Ottoman Empire the Turkish occupation of Massaua [Massawa] had become a mere name. The pashalik had been abolished and the command of the town had been given to the chief of the local Beja [pastoral] tribe. He paid an annual tribute to the Sublime Porte [Ottoman government in Istanbul] and received in return a firman [imperial decree] of appointment under the title of naib [deputy]. The Turkish garrison still received pay from Constantinople [Istanbul], but by many generations of intermarriage with the natives [indigenous people] they had long ceased to bear any resemblance to Turks [meaning Middle Easterners]. (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 124)

And during the following century Massawa and Suakin fell under the rule of Egypt's governor Muhammad Ali, whose territory was an autonomous entity nominally part of the Ottoman Empire. Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II

(reigned 1855-1868) attempted unsuccessfully to arrange an alliance with Britain to drive out the Egyptians (Marcus, 1994, p. 69), who ruled Massawa directly from 1846 until the 1880s, when Italy occupied Eritrea.

Indeed, the British welcomed the Italians into Africa to limit French colonial expansion on the continent, something that they would regret later following the First World War when Italy became the birthplace of fascism with its leader Benito Mussolini harboring dreams of new "Roman Empire" and subsequently making an alliance with Nazi Germany. In 1896, the same year that the Italians were defeated by the Ethiopians at Adwa, located in the Tigray region, formal diplomatic contacts were established between respective delegations commissioned by Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II and Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II (reigned 1889-1913), though the two leaders had corresponded earlier regarding the Ethiopian Copts' use of the Deir es-Sultan monastery located on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, then under Ottoman control (Yıldız, 2018, p. 40). However, it was not until 1912 that the Ottomans established a consulate-general in Harar (Turkey, MFA, "Relations between Turkey and Ethiopia"). During the First World War, Menelik's grandson, Emperor Iyasu V flirted with Islam and presented the Ottoman Consul-General with an Ethiopian flag "embroidered with a crescent and the device: There is no God, but Allah" (Jones and Monroe, 1935, p. 158). He also was sympathetic to the Central Powers believing that the defeat of the Entente might allow his country to drive the Italians out of Eritrea (Marcus, 1994, p. 114). Fearing Ethiopia's entry into the First World War, aristocrats banded together to replace Iyasu with Menelik's daughter Zewditu (reigned 1916-1930) as empress; due to the Iyasu's act of apostasy, he was excommunicated from the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

As a member of the defeated Central Powers, the Ottoman sultan was forced to sign the Treaty of Sèvres

In 1555, Özdemiş Pasha, who had been governor of Yemen occupied the Red Sea ports of Massawa and Suakin. In 1561, upon his death, he was succeeded by his son, Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha

in 1919, while much of the empire's territory was severed, occupied or claimed by the victorious Entente, including Britain, France, Italy and Greece. Nationalist Turks under the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk challenged the European powers both militarily and diplomatically and were able to negotiate a more favorable agreement called the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 thus ensuring the territorial integrity of the core area of Turkey and shortly after establishing the Republic of Turkey with Atatürk as president. While the new republic concentrated on developing beneficial relations with countries in Europe and independent neighboring Middle Eastern states, Ethiopia was one of the few countries on the African continent that had avoided European colonization. Turkey opened its first embassy in Sub-Saharan Africa in Addis Ababa in 1926, while Ethiopia reciprocated in Ankara in 1933. Meanwhile, Ethiopia joined the League of Nations in 1923 after agreeing "not to undertake an arms trade in Africa" – Ethiopia was under an arms embargo imposed by the Tripartite powers in the region, Britain, Italy and France until 1925, when France which broke ranks fearing that Ethiopia might divert its external trade from the port of Djibouti, French Somaliland to Assab in Italian-ruled Eritrea, convinced other members of the League to exempt Ethiopia – and to ban slavery and the internal slave trade (Marcus, 1994, p. 121). During the reign of Zewditu, who died in 1930, Tafari Makonnen (as Haile Selassie was known before he became emperor) became heir apparent and wielded a certain amount of power over Ethiopia's internal administration and foreign policy. With regard to foreign policy, Tafari's "long-term policy was to wrap Ethiopia in the League of Nations' cloak of collective security," while he had hoped that the United States could "extricate the nation from the domination of the Tripartite powers" (Marcus, 1994: 120).

By 1932, two years into his reign, Haile Selassie "enjoyed unchallenged ascendancy in Ethiopia," however, by then, the Italians were working "to create an environment in which they might be able to destroy Ethiopia's independence" as France and Britain did nothing in 1930 while Italy expanded the territorial claims of its portion of Somaliland into the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (Marcus,

1994: 136 and 138-142). Subsequently, after 1933, both European states wanted to prevent Italy from drawing closer to Nazi Germany. Finally in October 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia from both Eritrea and Somaliland, occupying Addis Ababa by May 1936 and completing military operations by February 1937. During the conflict, Turkish soldiers volunteered for the Ethiopian army, and one Vehip Pasha, who at served in the Ottoman army at Gallipoli, was in charge of the southern front against the Italians (Jima, 2021, p. 478). Turkey joined the League of Nations in 1932, and its Foreign Minister Tefik Rüştü Aras told the British ambassador to his country, Sir Percy Loraine that "the integral maintenance of the covenant of the League [of Nations] 'was the foundation of Turkey's foreign policy'" (Hale, 2000, p.60). Turkey was a strong advocate for sanctions against Italy when it invaded Ethiopia, having faced the prospect of a partition even of Turkish inhabited areas of the former Ottoman Empire by the European powers following the First World War. Turkey was very disappointed that League sanctions failed to deter Italy, and even before then it looked elsewhere for alternatives for security such as the Balkan Pact together with Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia in 1934; three years later, in 1937, Turkey concluded the Saadabad Pact with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, with no provisions for mutual assistance, but was "intended to be a signal to the rest of the world" that these four states "would oppose any attempts by one of the European powers to pick them off individually as Ethiopia had been" (Hale, 2000, p. 62). Luckily for Turkey, it was able to remain neutral during the Second World War as Germany chose to invade Russia. Ethiopia was eventually liberated by the British following Italy's declaration of war against Britain and France in June 1940, just before the latter country surrendered to Germany, in an operation that lasted until November 1941. Haile Selassie was able to return to Addis Ababa in May of that year, having spent most the time in exile in England. Ethiopia's embassy in Turkey never closed during the Italian occupation (Muhumed, 2015, p. 5). However, most likely due to financial constraints, Ethiopia closed its embassy later, but reopened it in 1959, two years after Turkey did the same (Jima, 2021, p. 480).

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Towards the end the Second War, in February 1945, Emperor Haile Selassie met U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Egypt and presented the latter with his foreign policy goals for Ethiopia, which remained so until the September 1974 Revolution in which the military deposed the emperor (Marcus, 1994, p. 156). They were: 1) Ethiopian ownership of the French railway to Djibouti opened in 1917 – it went into disrepair and was eventually replaced by new one built by the Chinese but owned jointly by Ethiopia (75%) and Djibouti (25%), which began passenger service and freight operations in 2016 and 2018, respectively (“Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway Line,” 2020); 2) “free and unfettered access to the sea”; 3) recovering Eritrea – in 1952, the United Nations (UN), with pressure from the U.S., approved that territory being in a federation with Ethiopia with autonomy on all matters except foreign affairs, defense and currency, but Ethiopia proceeded to weaken the territory’s status; ten years later, Ethiopia annexed Eritrea, but not before the initiation of a war resulting in that country’s independence, a fact recognized formally in 1993; 4) war reparations from Italy – the latter did so, but it far less than Ethiopia wanted; 5) U.S. military assistance and development aid; it was too slow for the emperor’s liking until Ethiopia threatened to seek assistance from the Soviet bloc in 1959 (Marcus, 1994, p. 160). Between 1953 and 1976, Ethiopia received US\$279 million and US\$350 million in military and economic aid, respectively – more than one-half of U.S. total military and about one-fifth of U.S. total economic assistance to Africa (Yohannes, 1991, p. 225).

Following the Second World War, Turkey also embraced alliance with the U.S., feeling isolated and vulnerable like Ethiopia. In March 1945, the Soviet Union demanded from Turkey military bases in Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits and territory in the northeastern part of the country. U.S. President Harry Truman reacted with the announcement of his “Doctrine” in March 1947 urging Congress to immediately approve \$100 million in military aid to Turkey. This was followed up with Turkey accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in February 1952. Just like Ethiopia, Turkey’s contribution to the UN’s war effort in Korea and being located in a strategic geographic location in the world resulted in the U.S. establishing alliances with these countries and providing military and economic assistance; in the case of Turkey, between 1948 and 1950, it was roughly US\$200 million in military and US\$183 million in economic aid, respectively (Hale, 2000, p. 116).

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Just days after the overthrow of the pro-Western Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, in July 1958, Israel’s Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion wrote U.S. President Eisenhower of his plans to counter Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s pan-Arabism and Soviet expansion in the Middle East in what became known as the “Peripheral Alliance”:

Our object is the creation of a group of countries ... which by mutual assistance and joint efforts, in political, economic and other fields, will be able to stand up steadfastly against Soviet expansion through Nasser.... [W]e have begun to strengthen our links with four neighbouring countries on the outer ring of the Middle East – Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia and Turkey (“Ben-Gurion to Eisenhower,” 1958).

The Israeli leader asked for U.S. “political, financial and moral support,” for which Eisenhower was non-committal, but nevertheless Israel concluded a “secret pact” with all of the countries except Sudan (Bar-Zohar, 1978, p. 264). In Turkey’s case such an alliance probably came to an end in 1960 with the military coup overthrowing the civilian government and executing Prime Minister Adnan Menderes the following year. With regard to Ethiopia (and Iran) it probably continued with these countries sharing intelligence with Israel. As Ben-Gurion related to Eisenhower, Nasser was “actively stirring up agitation and discontent” in Eritrea, Djibouti, both Somalilands (British and Italian) and “amongst” the Muslim population of “Christian” Ethiopia (“Ben-Gurion to Eisenhower,” 1958). In 1959, Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, who was also executed by the Turkish military, in a speech at Colgate University in the U.S. stated the following regarding the Soviets:

Perceiving that the European area was closed to them by the NATO bloc ... the Communist bloc [during the 1950s] started to apply a strategy of wide flanking movements around the core of resistance.... There is no doubt that the continent of Africa constitutes the most important factor in this strategy, and that the Middle East is the most important bridgehead from which to reach Africa (Zorlu, 1959).

Nevertheless, during the 1960s and 1970s, both Ethiopia and Turkey, despite their alliances and suspicions regarding their neighbors, took the pragmatic approach of attempting to improve relations with both the Soviet bloc and the Arab world.

Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie visited Turkey in March 1967 and again in November 1971 (the latter was a non-official touristic visit to Istanbul on return from Geneva), while Turkey's President Cevdet Sunay reciprocated in December 1969. On his first trip to Turkey, the emperor was greeted at Ankara airport by not only Sunay, but also the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, and the presidents of the Senate and Grand National Assembly among other dignitaries. The two heads of state discussed, among other matters, the situation in Cyprus, where communal clashes had taken place the following month, and Haile Selassie visited Atatürk's tomb where he wrote "His national service ... is a good example for the whole world" (Yıldız, pp. 59-60). When President Sunay visited Addis Ababa he was met at the airport with an array of dignitaries and with people waving the flags of the two countries on the route into the city; later, he toured the Museum of the Organization of African Unity, a textile factory and a hospital, and met with members of the Turkish community at the emperor's palace (Yıldız, 2018: 61-66). Relations went well at least until Haile Selassie was overthrown by the military in 1974, as he was unable to deal adequately with the country's economic, caused

by famine, the closure of the Suez Canal and the steep rise in oil prices, and died the following year.

The Derg (Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces) was led by Major Mengistu Haile Mariam, who by 1976 had implemented a program of Marxist "scientific socialism" and by the following year had garnered Soviet bloc military support for his regime, which assisted greatly in defeating Somalia's attempt to annex the Somali-inhabited region of Ogaden, but still faced insurgencies in Eritrea and Tigray. The latter conflicts and the collapse of the Soviet Union would bring Mengistu's downfall; he fled to Zimbabwe in May 1991 just before the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition created by the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), marched into Addis Ababa, while the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front captured Asmara. Despite the fact that bilateral relations between Turkey and Ethiopia were suspended during the period of Derg's rule, the Turkish government sent 5,000 tons of wheat to Ethiopia in 1979 to assist that country's people who faced drought and starvation (Yıldız, 2018, p. 74). At the same time, the Turkish government favored Eritrean independence (Donelli, 2021, p. 45).

Meles Zenawi, the Tigrayan leader of the EPRDF, served first as president and later, after Ethiopia adopted a parliamentary system of government, from 1995 to 2102 as prime minister. He implemented a system of ethnic federalism but accepted Eritrea's independence, which took place in May 1993, allowed the development of opposition political parties and repaired relations with the U.S. and Western countries. In 1993, Zenawi's government signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation and trade with Turkey.

Turkey's problems with the European Union (EU) accession process led its government to seek alternative options in foreign affairs, among which was adopting an "Opening to Africa" policy in 1998. Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin visited Turkey in March 2000, and two months later, he and his Turkish counterpart İsmail Cem signed an agreement to cooperate in health and medicine. However, it was the coming to power of the Justice and Development (AK) Party in Turkey in 2002 that even greater attention to Africa with Ethiopia (and the Horn in general) being one its most important areas of interest on the continent. In 2004, Turkey and Ethiopia signed two agreements: one in the fields of culture, education, science, mass media, youth and sports, the other allowing for the opening an office the

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Turkey's envoy to Ethiopia, Yaprak Alp opens a health center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Feb. 2, 2022 (Photo Credit: AA Photo)

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) in Addis Ababa in 2005, the first in Africa (Turkey, MFA, "Relations between Turkey and Ethiopia); three years after the opening of TİKA's office, it initiated its African Agricultural Development Program (Özkan and Akgün, 2010, p. 537). In March 2005, Turkey's then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made an official visit to Ethiopia, his first destination in Africa, on a trip that also included South Africa. The Turkish leader reportedly offered to pay the rent if Ethiopia reopened its embassy in Ankara, while he and Prime Minister Zenawi discussed Turkish investment in the fields of construction, textiles, leather making, and agricultural-processing (Yıldız, 2018, p. 80-81). In 2006, Turkish Airlines, which now serves more countries on the continent of Africa than any airline, began service to Addis Ababa. This was the same year that Ethiopia reopened its embassy in Turkey that had been closed since 1984., but Ethiopian Airlines did not begin service to Istanbul until 2019.

In January 2007, Erdoğan addressed the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, while Zenawi made an official visit the following month to Turkey, where he signed a tourism agreement as well as holding discussions with Erdoğan and President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on increasing trade and investment (Yıldız, 2018, p. 82); since then, both have grown considerably. By 2021, Turkey's ambassador to

Ethiopia, Yaprak Alp noted that her country's investments in Ethiopia were about US\$2.5 billion, second only to China, but the largest by Turkey in Sub-Saharan Africa, some one-third of the total in that region with US\$1.2billion in textiles, more than China (Donelli, 2021: 150-151); also, there were about 220 Turkish firms employing some 30,000 workers while trade had reached US\$650 million. When Alp announced these figures she stated that Ethiopia was "not just ... a hugely important country, but also ... a part of a wider strategic region" (Getachew, 2021).

Indeed, an *Al-Monitor* article in August 2021 entitled "Turkey Views Ties with Ethiopia as Key to Influence in Africa" notes that feelings are reciprocal with Ethiopia seeking better relations in recent years "keen on enlisting Turkish support against the Arab backing for Egypt and Sudan in the escalating row over the waters of the Nile" (Taştekin, 2021). Ethiopia has also regarded this connection as another foreign policy option given pressure from the United States and the west over its human rights violations in the Tigray region. While Turkey has not been willing to take sides in the dispute over Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam, under construction since 2011, which would obviously deplete the amount of water flowing downstream to Sudan and Egypt, it has been willing to mediate with Sudan and has provided

arms for Ethiopia in the war in Tigray led by the TPLF, which began in November 2020 against the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who postponed elections that were supposed to take place two months earlier. There were some factors that helped Turkey and Ethiopia draw closer together: 1) Turkey's estrangement with Egypt following its condemnation of the military coup in July 2013 which overthrew President Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood – prior to then Egypt was the second largest recipient of Turkish official aid after Syria (Tepecikioğlu, 2017, p. 16); 2) Turkey's support for the Federal Government of Somalia and its fight against al-Shabab, which complements the African Union's Mission in Somalia, which began in 2007; and 3) Ethiopia's support of Turkey following the unsuccessful coup against Erdoğan in July 2016, which Turkey blamed on the Gülenists – supporters of Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic scholar who is in exile in the U.S.

A year and a half before the attempted coup against Erdoğan, in January 2015, Turkey's president (since 2014) visited Ethiopia, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtuand and other officials and businessmen, on a trip that also included Djibouti and Somalia. He met with Ethiopia's President Mulatu Teshome Wirtu (a former

ambassador to Turkey) and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and announced his "Africa Partnership" policy. Erdoğan also presented a speech at Addis Ababa University, during which time he stated, with the recent Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, what was going on with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and the turmoil in Somalia on his mind, that Turkey "had fought terrorism for forty years [most likely referring to the Kurdish insurrection of the PKK], we are totally against this violence no matter who commits it, where and under what pretense." Furthermore, he stressed the need for a united approach and fight [of all countries] jointly against all terrorist groups" (Tewekel, 2015). A month later, there was a groundbreaking ceremony for the Awash-Kombolcha-Hara Gebaya Railway project financed by Turkey's Eximbank and constructed by Yapı Merkezi, which when completed will connect parts of the north and northeast of Ethiopia to the Addis Ababa-Djibouti line. Also, in April Turkey's Ziraat Bank announced it would open a branch in Addis Ababa, becoming the first foreign bank to operate in Ethiopia (Tewekel, 2015).

Prior to the failed coup in Turkey in 2016, the Gülenists operated a charitable non-profit organization called Kimsi Yok Mu (KYM, literally meaning "Is There No One"),



Ethiopia and Turkey holding a Joint Economic Commission in Ankara on January 14, 2021 (Photo Credit: www.fanabc.com)

By the early twentieth century, given their contentious experiences with the European powers, Turkey and Ethiopia sought cooperation and after the Second World War the two countries were allies of the United States, due to their needs for security and their strategic locations in the era of the Cold War

established in 2002, which distributed assistance in forty-three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with extensive programs in Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda (Donelli, 2021, p. 168). The Gülenists also operated schools around the world, with 11 in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia transferred these to Turkey's Maarif Foundation in August 2021, when its Prime Minister Abiy visited Ankara. Ethiopia's President Sahle-Work Zewde promised to do so on a trip to Turkey in 2019, but the transfer was delayed for two years as the Gülenists had turned over the properties to German citizens (Berker, 2021).

Abiy's visit to Turkey in August 2021 had very important results. The *Ethiopian Herald* stated, "Though some Western leaders failed to understand the democratic development as a result of the reform [of April 2018, when Abiy was sworn in as prime minister and later], Turkey has valued the effort of the Ethiopian government to improve the livelihood of its citizens" (*Ethiopian Herald*, 2021). This criticism is perplexing as Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 and it was only later when he visited Turkey was being pressured by the U.S. and EU only for not negotiating with the TPLF; later in the year, after a U.N. investigation, it was for alleged war crimes in Tigray. During Abiy's visit to Turkey, he signed separate agreements for military cooperation and financing of resources for water management (Fakude, 2021). Two

months before Abiy's visit TİKA delivered ten tons of food, including rice, flour, lentils and cooking oil (*Relief Web*, 2021). Ethiopia also subsequently purchased 13 Bayraktar TB2 drones from Turkey greatly assisting its war effort in Tigray. However, it also forced Turkey due to security threats to move its embassy to Kenya in January 2022 (Taştekin, 2022).

Conclusion

In earlier centuries, Ottoman/Turkish-Ethiopian relations were mostly adversarial or preferring to keep the relationship distant, but there were brief periods of working together for mutual interests. By the early twentieth century, given their contentious experiences with the European powers, Turkey and Ethiopia sought cooperation and after the Second World War the two countries were allies of the United States, due to their needs for security and their strategic locations in the era of the Cold War. With the exception of Ethiopia's period of Marxist rule under the Derg, ties with Turkey have been mutually beneficial. Recently, facing criticism from the U.S. and the west, especially for their domestic policies, Turkey and Ethiopia have drawn even closer together. There is no reason to believe that this situation will not be the case at least for the near future, but Turkey needs to be cautious about getting too involved in Ethiopia's regional and domestic disputes.

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Examining the Scope of US Peace Intervention in Somalia

By Maureen Syallow, PhD. and Raudhat Sayeeda Saddam

Abstract

The scope of intervention by the US in Somalia has thus far been limited by the state's approach towards policy making and implementation. This article analyses the evolution of US Foreign Policy in security across the past 6 administrations and the impact of US's approach to security in Somalia, identifying the means by which to actualize US's goal of peace and counterterrorism efforts in Somalia. Using literature review of reports, academic works, and media coverage, this article contends that intervention in Somalia needs to distinguish between 'local guards' and violent extremists, while addressing underlying causes of conflict at the grassroots in Somalia. This paper highlights other regions where both a shift in approach by US and addressing underlying causes of conflict has improved intervention efforts.

Introduction

Somalia has experienced terrible civil wars in Africa for more than two decades. Since 1991 when the late dictator General Siad Barre was ousted, the country has been without any proper functioning government. This has caused untold suffering of the Somali people who have experienced long periods of violence and oppression in their own country. After the state collapsed militia groups were established, and they continue to cause harsh and difficult circumstances (Elmi & Barise, 2006). Conditions characterized by poverty and poor governance has been the norm in Somalia. Institutions marred with nepotism, corruption and favoritism have been order of the day.

Scholars such as Lewis (2002) established that the Somalia civil war is complex and has multifaceted causes including cultural, political, economic and even psychological. To exacerbate the situation, both external and internal actors have played a role in making it more difficult to resolve. However, research has been established that the root causes of Somalia conflicts point more towards competition for resources, power and the issue of repressive governments blind to the complaints of the citizens (Besteman & Lehman, 2019). Due to competition of power and resources, control of cities such as Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, and the management of crucial ports and airports, has been the epicenter of absolute conflict between various factions. To make it worse, the readily accessible weapons have aggravated the Somalia conflict.

Since the end of the Cold War, US has been engaging in interventions globally. Among their most notable operations are: Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (2001), Operation Allied Force in Serbia/Kosovo (1999), Operation Provide Comfort in Northern Iraq (1991), and Operation Gothic Serpent in Somalia (1993), among others (Petersen, 2021). US's Policy on intervention has undoubtedly been influenced by its rise as a hegemony after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the 9/11 attacks in New York, and the War on Terror that commenced their after (Wolf, 2009). Various presidents' foreign policies have had effect on how the policy of intervention has been expressed. For instance, Gorge H. W. Bush (1989 – 1993) who was both a statesman and diplomat believed that the use of force is only warranted where it is effective and all other policies have been exhausted (Jentleson, 2000). This is in accordance to the Powell Doctrine; its purpose is to ensure that poorly planned operations are prevented.

The American Intervention Policy shifted suddenly and radically after 9/11 attack, and the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States was formed (Joseph & Maruf, 2019). President Bush's administration (2001–2009) focused on international terrorism making it the predominant aim of American foreign and security policy, their security concerns were no longer short-term, and the United States would bring to bear all the means that are open to them due to the nature of the threat



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Washington in January 2013
(Photo Credit: US State Department)

(Wolf, 2009). The approach taken by this administration was that the American public would feel secure when global terrorism is addressed. While this new doctrine was engaging in interventions to defend what was viewed as vital interests, there was no exit plan that was formulated. Thus, when opposition sprang up against the occupation by American forces, it was violent in nature and was detrimental to any reconstruction efforts that were ongoing (Wolf, 2009).

Approximately 14 peace sessions concerning the conflict in Somalia have been held in various cities located at different States in the Horn of Africa. Some of them include Sessions in Djibouti (1991), Addis Ababa (1993), Cairo (1997), Arta (2000), and Eldoret/Mpegiati (2002-2004). Each of these sessions produced some peace agreement which went ahead to form a new government (Elmi & Barise, 2006). Nonetheless, all of the agreements did not work except for the one which took place at Mpegiati but faced serious challenges later on.

The Bush administration and America at large were expected to come with political and operational solutions to the security issues in their areas of intervention. As a result, in 2006, the NSS was revised and emphasis shifted from unilateral and pre-emptive foreign policy to diplomatic and multilateral channels (Wolf, 2009). The

goal to spread democracy, human rights, and freedom remains the goal.

President Barack Obama's administration (2009 – 2017) was clear during his first campaign that he had no plans to limit the use of military force by the US abroad. He outlined his approach to reflect that the military has the capacity to be utilized both for self-defense and in the service of the common good. His administration supported the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was recognized as the provisional government from April 2004 to August 2012, but failed to gain support from the population (Bruton, 2009). The United States' primary goal is curbing the expansion of extremist forces in Somalia as well as preventing the formation of al-Qaeda cells, training camps, and radical strongholds in the state (Bruton, 2009).

Both the Trump (2017–2021) and the Biden (2021–Present) administrations promote the idea of ending endless wars (International Crisis Group, 2021). What this entails was unclear, however they both indicated to have no interest in interventions. Policy reform under the Biden administration has brought a pause to direct action operations as the framework for such strikes is re-evaluated (Scahill, 2021). During this period any strikes were to be approved through the White House before

they are executed. Reportedly, the Pentagon requested approval for strikes in Somalia against the al-Shabab and was denied (International Crisis Group, 2021).

All factors considered, research has established that, warlords who benefit from the violence in Somalia lead most of Somalia's militia groups. Some have been accused of huge crimes against humanity and hence feel insecure about their future (Maruf & Joseph 2018; Human Rights Watch, Harsh War, Harsh Peace; 2010). Ethiopia has also been accused of meddling in Somalia's wars and help to perpetuate the Somali conflict. Ethiopia has been accused of sending weapons across the border and often times has subjugated towns in southern Somalia (Jane, 2018). Therefore, the conflict in Somalia needs more than meets the eye. Winston Tubman, the UN Secretary-General's political representative to the Somalia peace conference in Kenya was cited:

One of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council China, Britain, France, the US and Russia could make a difference in Somalia. The African Union can be interested, the European Union can help, but what you need is some driving force (by a big power) in my experience.

Experts and scholars on peace-building have agreed to these sentiments by Tubman. However, the biggest question is, does Somalia need some driving force in terms of good governance, poverty alleviation and peace-building or military intervention as US is doing? Consequently, the main goal of this study was to assess international intervention by US in Somalia which has been seen as a quick fix and has not led to long term peace. The study will look at the period between 2006 and 2020. This will be guided by two specific objectives: to analyze the US military interventions in Somalia between 2006 and 2020, and to examine why these interventions have not led to long term peace.

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Analysis

From the analysis of various reports including the Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress (2020), the critical assessment report of US policy in Somalia by Suri (2016) and Amnesty International reports (2017, 2018, 2019), it is established that the level of US commitment to helping create a stable regime in Somalia is not sufficient. US's policy in regards to Somalia has not evolved and does not reflect the advancements that have been achieved on how to address terrorism and violent extremism.

There is a lack of political will to engage in a large enough state-building program that would adequately address the challenges facing Somalia (Petersen, 2021). Policies need to be adaptable and evolving in nature, for instance, in Afghanistan and Iraq where there has been a shift in focus from militarized tactics to population-centric and integrated approaches (Bruton, 2009). This approach is meant to engage civil society, traditional local political authorities, and a variety of religious leaders. In Somalia unfortunately, the US was reluctant to deal with the consequences of their intervention (Clarke & Herbst, 1996). Bush's administration was mainly focused on the limited mission, and it was likely he wanted troops out of Somalia before Clinton's time in office began. The 30,000 American troops had the power and the greatest capability to disarm the belligerent forces in Mogadishu (Clarke & Herbst, 1996). Instead, the US officials informed warlords that they could keep their weapons if they moved out of Mogadishu. This was a setback in the efforts for peace in Somalia, as having a concentrated effort to destroy all the heavy weaponry was possible and would have also sent a strong message that the US was serious about restoring order in Somalia. The Warlords in Somalia were quick to realize that their power was not under challenge and that if they could wait out for the United States and its allies to leave then they would face fewer challenges from the UN force – which had a delicate command and control structure, as well as fewer arms (Clarke & Herbst, 1996). More recently, this is evidenced by the strategies they have put in place in combating terror in the country.

According to Elmi and Barise (Elmi & Barise, 2006), the US national security interests in stabilizing Somalia are real but inadequate. These scholars continue to indicate that since 2006, the US's focus on Somalia has been to reduce the number of attacks carried by al-Shabab. Since the 9/11 attacks on American soil, the Bush administration and consecutive administrations have used various

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military interventions to attack the Somalia based group. These airstrikes and other clandestine activities have caused the death of many people including civilians and children.

The policy that is implemented by the US is also not reflective of the realities in Somalia. The desire for state-building and the spread of democracy and freedom has historically not taken the exiting traditional political and social realities in Somalia (Bush, 1997). For instance, there were two dominant camps in Somalia in the mid-2000s to the year 2014, these are the vocally pro-Western TFG and the vocally radical al-Shabab, who are both driven by clannish and economic interests which often trump ideology when it comes to determining allegiances (Petersen, 2021). It is impractical to consider policies that do not work because they are not tailored to the people they are meant to help. The TFG had stated that they would implement sharia law, however, their willingness to engage with Ethiopia and the west hampered the government's credibility (Bruton, 2009). The government was viewed as a proxy of the west and failed to gain any support from the armed opposition in Somalia and grass-roots.

Interventions in Somalia by the US have been conducted unilaterally and have also been conducted in conjunction with other actors. For instance, with the support of the US, the AU deployed AMISOM. In 2008, when it was at the height of its occupation, with a force of 15,000 led by the Ethiopian army, they made no headway against al-Shabab (Bruton, 2009). The AU had received support in terms of military training, equipment and finances for this sole objective. Additionally, the US carried out military operations in the form of airstrikes and had aided in building up the Somali National Army. All these efforts have worked as quick fixes since the root causes of the al-Shabab attacks have not been addressed. Evidence from a report done by Besteman (2019), a professor of Anthropology at Colby College, US airstrikes directed to al-Shabab have drastically increased from 21 in 7 years (2007 – 2014) to as high as 46 in 2018 only. Unfortunately,

these forces have been accused of being instigators of conflict themselves. Both al-Shabab and credible clans have accused forces of firing indiscriminately and harming civilians while on their mission (International Crisis Group, 2021). This has led to a loss of trust at the grass-roots level, and the US can help achieve peace in Somalia if they don't have credibility and trust. It is important that the US shows neutrality when it comes to clan leaders and warlords (Bruton, 2009).

The US Military Interventions in Somalia

According to Elmi and Barise (2006), the US national security interests in stabilizing Somalia are real but inadequate. These scholars continue to indicate that since 2006, the US's focus on Somalia has been to reduce the number of attacks carried by al-Shabab. Al-Shabab is an Islamist militia group whose goal is to oust the Federal Government of Somalia. The group is linked to al-Qaida, a broad-based radical Islamist organization established by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s (Burke, 2004). Since the 9/11 attacks on American soil, the Bush administration and consecutive administrations have used various military interventions in an attempt to decimate the Somalia based group.

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On August 24th 2021, AFRICOM conducted an airstrike near Cammaara, Somalia in support of U.S. partner forces. According to the AFRICOM press release, a battle damage assessment is pending, but the initial assessment is no civilians were injured or killed.

Further reports from amnesty international (2021) and supported by America counterterrorism reports (2021) indicate that the number of airstrikes went up during the Trumps administration to 202 compared to Obama's total duration in the office which was 48 in total and Bush's time was only 12. Below are some of the significant figures of military airstrikes recorded by various reports (Amnesty international (2021), Besteman (2019), and America Counter terrorism (2022))

2006-2010

Approximately 11 military operations were conducted by the US in Somalia during this period which targeted militant groups predominantly al-Shabab. The attacks saw the deaths of both civilians and military personnel. Towns

targeted mostly were the southern city of Ras Kamboni, Waldena, the coast of Bargaal in northern Somalia and Dhobley. Other places on the target list were the training camps of Kismayo and Afmadow, coastal towns of Barawa and Dhusamareb in central Somalia. During this period, more than 327 lives were lost and millions of people were displaced. In retaliation, the al-Shabab militia recalibrated and came out forcefully to fight against the Ethiopian offensive seen as established by foreign interests. Al-Shabab was ruthless to the civilians and used inhuman tactics such as forced recruitment, assassinations and torture (Laura, 2013). These attacks intensified and citizens began escaping. In 2007, adopting resolution 1744(2007)13, AMISOM was created by the United Nations Security Council authorizing the African Union to deploy a peacekeeping mission with a mandate of six months. However, the mandate is still operating in Somalia 14 years later with the UN security council adopting a resolution reauthorizing AMISOM until March 31, 2022. This will be followed hopefully by a phased handover of responsibilities to Somalia's security forces (UN press 2021). (Hammond, 2013) observes that the result of these military attacks by the US and



Oregon National Guard Soldiers assigned to Task Force Guardian in Somalia on December 3, 2019 (Photo Credit: Tech. Sgt. Nick Kibbey/Air Force)

AMISOM was massive displacement within the region: Approximately 113,500 new refugees were recorded in the Dadaab camp of Kenya in 2011 and 100,000 others in Ethiopia.

2011- 2021

In the ten years between 2011 to 2021, the US military has conducted approximately 217 operations in Somalia (America Counter terrorism reports, 2021). During these attacks, several al-Qaida and al-Shabab leaders have been killed. The al-Qaida commander Jabreel Malik Muhammed was killed during the Dhobley fight between US-backed Somali forces and al-Shabab militants in April 2011.

The current goal of US policy in Somalia is to explicitly attack and disable al-Shabab. In retaliation, al-Shabab has successfully launched attacks of mass terror within Somalia, and against foreign intervention countries like Kenya, (Westgate 2013, Garissa University 2015, DusitD2 2019), and Uganda, whose contributions to AMISOM did not sit well with them. Current US military policy in Africa is based on a claim of "African solutions for African problems," which means that US resources are used to train Somali National Security Forces and to support AMISOM and its over 22,000 uniformed personnel in their fight against al-Shabab. Other leaders who have been killed include Ibrahim al-Afghani following the US forces attack in a Kismayo training camp in 2014. However, later on, there was word that Afghani was not actually the one who had been killed but the emir of al-Shabab known as Ahmed Abdi Godane. In 2016 alone, US military forces conducted 15 airstrikes in Somalia (Besteman & Lehman, 2019). These Airstrikes targeted the al-Shabab training camps such as Raso in central Somalia, the northern autonomous region of Puntland and Toratorow, killing

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approximately 150 al-Shabab militants. Leading al-Shabab organizers such as Abdullahi Haji Daud and ISIS leader Abdulhakim Dhuqub were also killed. Additionally, the U.S. aircraft also killed local militia members in Puntland including 22 Galmudug Islamist fighters and soldiers. Through this period of attacks, more than 2,000 lives have been lost in Somalia and Puntland. Aside from Somalia citizens losing their lives, the US Department of Defense also indicates that US soldiers, intelligence officers and other servicemen have also lost their lives.

Assessment of US military Intervention in Somalia 2006- 2021

According to the immediate former US President Donald Trump, in his presidential decree of September 2017, he indicated that there is a persistent terrorist threat that springs from the territory of Somalia, and the US government has identified this country as a haven for terrorists. He went on to indicate that, Somalia remains a destination for anyone who intends to join a terrorist group. This then threatens the national security of the US (White House 2017).

From such sentiments, it is evident that almost all successive regimes in the US since the 1998 US embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya and the 9/11 attacks and incidents of maritime piracy have vowed to continue with military interventions on Somalia soil.

Felter, Masters, and Sergie (2019) also indicate that the main goal of the US in Somalia is to minimize the ability of al-Shabab and other belligerent groups to destabilize Somalia or its neighbors and injure the United States or its allies.

It is clear that the overarching goal of the US is to attack and disable al-Shabab, which has efficaciously launched attacks of mass terror within Somalia (Council of Foreign Relations 2020). The US has helped neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda to play their regional role by increasing funds for military training programs, regional military drills, and accumulating weapons among others (Fedirka, 2021).

However, the council of foreign relations' global conflict tracker in Somalia (2020) implies that, the conflict in Somalia is unchanging. This is a strong indication that the military intervention from US and AMISOM has not been 100 per cent successful in silencing the terror

groups in this country. According to Felter, Masters, and Sergie (2019), this militant group has approximately 9,000 fighters and they remain adept of carrying out immense attacks in Somalia and neighboring countries despite a long-running African Union offensive against them.

Scholars indicate that, the US has for the longest time, taken interest in what furthers their national interest as opposed to what is ailing the Horn of Africa as a region and Somalia as a country. There is a lack of sincerity when it comes to addressing what Africans deem to be more pressing priorities, such as alleviating poverty, combating drought and desertification, and promoting good governance (Negatu 2022). Combating terrorism without checking the root causes of it might not yield much success. According reports from USAID, *Horn of Africa Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #11*, The US had spent an estimated amount of \$421.8 million as humanitarian assistance to Somalia by end of 2017. This figure has definitely gone up since the military attacks have never ceased.

It has been established that, in the absence of an all-encompassing framework to comprehend and address multifaceted regional priorities, the US will continue to pursue singular goals and respond to emergencies and challenges when and where they arise choosing to focus on individual countries as opposed to adopting an all-inclusive regional strategy. This is what pushes it to use strategies such as military interventions (Negatu 2022).

According to the General Report to the United States Congress of 2020, US policy should concentrate on acquiring two linked negotiated settlements. The first is directing its financial resources towards obtaining a genuine political agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the regional administrations (Jubaland, Southwest, Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Puntland) of the Federal Member States (FMS). The second viable option is to secure an opportunity to facilitate dialogue between key Somalia stakeholders such as the parliamentarians, the opposition parties and the sharia leaders. This is with an aim of concluding a genuine political deal from all concerned parties. This will also require the US to motivate other Somalia external partners to have the same goal in mind.

According to Suri (2016), the US support for Ethiopian 2006 invasion of Somalia and the re-establishing of a central government in Somalia all worked together to motivate the al-Shabab to becoming a more powerful

“The US has helped neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda to play their regional role by increasing funds for military training programs, regional military drills, and accumulating weapons among others

insurgency. The report indicates that, the US supported a corrupt government which entertained external actors and harmed Somali civilians through extortion and violence. This therefore enforced the al-Shabab efforts to recruit more so as to fight harder. (Besteman & Lehman, 2019) indicates that, US military intervention assumes that the al-Shabab must be challenged and silenced through grand policies such as US-led Global War on Terror, forgetting that, al-Shabab functions through connections to the Somalia government, business interests, and Somali National Security Forces, among others with regional entities. Additionally, al-Shabab asserts authority over massive regions of central-southern Somalia, supposedly relying on experience from foreigners who have fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Therefore, this calls for more interrogation of the US counterinsurgency tactics.

All factors considered, while the US might have good intentions of suppressing the terror activities of the al-Shabab, those who suffer are the civilians. The Amnesty International report of 2019 indicates that the human costs of this undercover war in Somalia since 2007 include the displacement of thousands of civilians in Somalia and the creation of IDP camps all over the country. This has overflowed to neighboring countries of Kenya and Ethiopia as refugees keep streaming to those states. Amnesty International indicates that the US may have committed war crimes since at least 14 confirmed civilian deaths have been recorded from the airstrikes to date. Ultimately, part of the human cost includes the extensive terror that Somalis experience due to the ongoing US airstrikes.

Conclusion

From the analysis above the level of US commitment to help create a stable regime in Somalia has been lacking. As evidenced above, action in Somalia by US has been impacted by domestic politics and the implementation



Marine Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, commanding general, U.S. Africa Command, speaks with U.S. Ambassador to Somalia Donald Yamamoto at Aden Adde International Airport in Mogadishu, Somalia on November 27, 2018 (Photo Credit: U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Nick Scott)

of policies and strategies with short term periods. Secondly, it is clear that the politically motivated conflicts and the merely criminal causes of insecurity should be separated. There is no distinction between real terrorists and local security guards. The kind of military airstrikes witnessed targets all and sundry. Anyone who is rumored to have weapons is targeted. According to journalist reports of Mareeg (2019), US forces conducted four airstrikes, in Kuniyow Barrow on February 23, 2019. The strikes targeted al-Shabab camps and barriers where two were killed. However, the al-Shabab later claimed that one of the strikes killed a 20-day-old baby and his father (AFRICOM press release, 2019).

Recommendation

It is recommended that, instead of US using force and military interventions in Somalia, they need to work with civil society groups, business enterprises and Somalia citizens in finding out what is ailing the country to an extent that they have become the breeding ground for terrorists. This will ensure that everyone is involved. There is feasible evidence that international intervention via nation-building does work, this would mean in helping to re-establish the governance, political, social, and economic structures. The United Kingdom started extensive plans to reform the security sector in Sierra

Leone (Dobbins, et al., 2013). The international community made efforts to address the economic and governance issues facing the state, particularly focusing on the youth – offering them opportunities in a post conflict state. There was also concerted efforts to prevent the funding of rebel groups (Dobbins, et al., 2013). Foreign institutes such as World Bank, USAID, DFID, supported the Ministry of Mineral Resources in an effort to clean the diamond industry. The Kimberly Process, which is an international system developed in Kimberly, South Africa established to identify the origins of diamonds. Similarly, the Counterinsurgency Doctrine (COIN) in Afghanistan has seen some success after the USAID's participation in late 2010 started to involve the ISAF teams and the Afghanistan government – all of whom helped in the designing and implementation stabilization strategy to support COIN efforts (Acree, 2012).

Secondly, the US should stop ignoring other pressing matters that concern this country such as poverty and poor governance that encourage vices such as corruption. It should be noted that, the capacities of the country's institutions and its citizens are inadequate at the moment. Most Somalis are either displaced internally or are refugees elsewhere. The wars have destroyed much of the domestic sources of livelihood. Hence, they

It is required that; the international community should combine forces and help Somalia to redevelop its institutions and economy. If this does not work after several years of trial without the use of force, then military intervention can be employed

are not able to function at optimum levels. It could be that, the scarcity of Somalia's resources contributes to the never-ending conflict and the emanating of terror groups to be able to survive as they are competing for the limited resources available. A similar approach worked in Sierra Leone; international parties treated the improvement of governance as top priority. At the start of the there were some difficulties for instance, during the 2004 district council elections the International Crisis Group called out the electoral process for preventing independent candidates from participating and denying them a fair chance at victory (Dobbins, et al., 2013). However, the 2007 elections under the watch of observers were considered a success due to a large turnout and were described as 'free and fair' thanks to the National Electoral Commission (Dobbins, et al., 2013). Consequently, Somalia cannot be expected to come out of this situation on their own. It is required that; the international community should combine forces and help Somalia to redevelop its institutions and economy. If this does not work after several years of trial without the use of force, then military intervention can be employed.

The Somalia conflict is complicated and emanates from multiple root causes. Therefore, a comprehensive plan of strategies dealing with each of the challenges identified needs to be considered for durable peace in Somalia. Quick fixes such as military interventions might not stop the al-Shabab from carrying out massive attacks, it could only make things worse. Moreover, with the current situation of hostile ethnic politics in the Horn of Africa region marred with the presence of varied external enemies that are determined to exploit such weaknesses – the Somali people have been convinced that ending the prolonged conflict and generating a united front of Somalia government might not make the al-Shabab deter from their cause. Nevertheless, further research should be conducted to provide stakeholders and policymakers with realistic suggestions for addressing the al-Shabaab menace and the Somalia problems.

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Insurgency, Terrorism, and Coups:

Africa's Governance-Security Complex

By Edmond J. Pamba

Abstract

Since August 2020, Africa has experienced five military coups in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Chad and Sudan, and several attempted coups. On the other hand, the wave of violent extremism and terrorism has continued to spread across all sub-regions of Africa. Africa now remains the worst-affected region by violent extremism and terrorism. This article explores how the twin problems are a function of a governance-security complex; violent extremism and widespread insecurity have in fact formed pretexts for coups in the region. The region has the highest number of autocrats, experiences the highest levels of corruption, poverty, and unemployment as well as economic inequalities. Other challenges such as demographic 'explosion' amid economic challenges, and systemic marginalization and discrimination, widen the state-society fractures and partly spawn violent extremism. However, looking at the political geography of the countries affected, foreign interference through neocolonialism and regime change campaigns also leads to coups and violent extremism. The central argument of the article is therefore that military coups and violent extremism in Africa are bi-products of poor governance, hence Africa's security, peace and development should be hinged on investing in improving governance practices and systems to make them responsive and inclusive.

Introduction

Africa is the only continent experiencing a surge in military coups in the world when about 50 per cent of the world's countries are under democratic governments. In the last 18 months, Africa has so far experienced 5 out of 6 successful military coups in the world. This accounts for 83 per cent of the world's coups today. From 2010, for instance, Africa has experienced 14 successful coups and 11 attempted coups which is a sharp contrast with an average of less than one successful coup per year in the

preceding decade (2001–2010) (Powell & Thyne, 2022). However, coups and attempted coups in Africa are not a new phenomenon according to data covering coups between 1950–2022 by Powell and Thyne of the Cline Center of the University of Illinois. In the entire period from 1950 to 2022, Africa still dominates the world with 214 coups out of 486 coups or 44 per cent of all coups globally, of which 106 have been successful (Powell & Thyne, 2022; Duzor & Williamson, 2022).

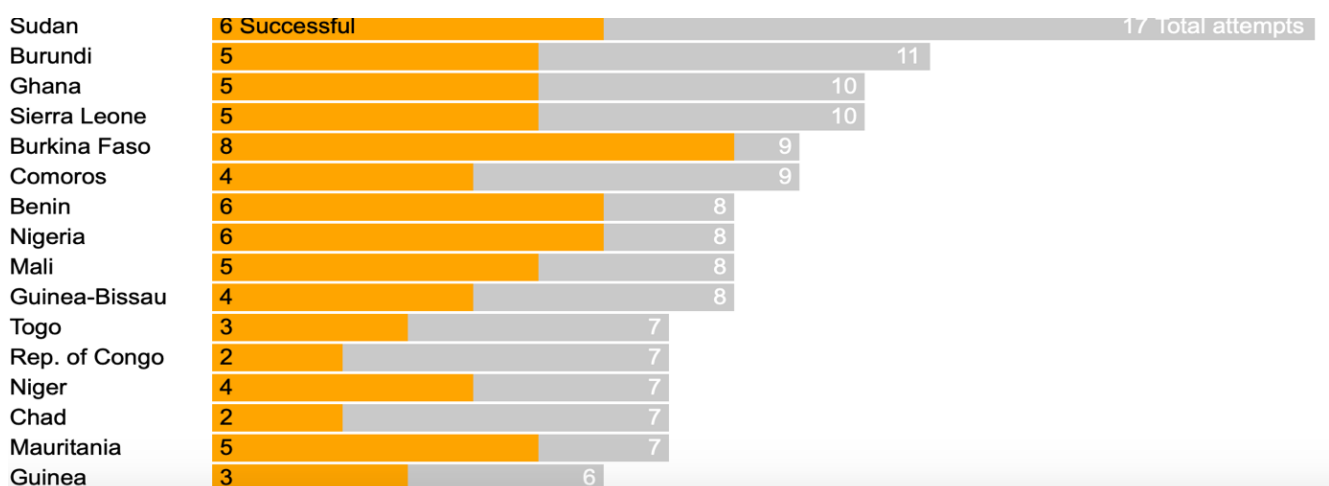


Figure 1: Leading countries in coups in Africa



Thousands of Sudanese protesters demonstrate in Khartoum against the detention of government officials by the military in October 2021 (Photo Credit: AFP/ICG)

With Africa only having 54 countries, it is incomprehensible that there are so many coups. In fact, some countries have produced more coups than others forming the geography of coups as shown in Figure 1.

On the other hand, Africa has increasingly become a theatre of violent extremism and terrorism globally, only ranking second to the Middle East for the last decade and there are signs that it is overtaking the Middle East. The region accounts for 50 per cent of the world's 10 most hit countries in which the level of fatalities increased ranking top in the world, followed by

South Asia (Afghanistan and Myanmar) (Institute for Economics and Peace [IEP], 2022). As IEP observes, the worst-hit countries by violent extremism and terrorism also experience high levels of conflict and political instability, which draws a nexus between terrorism, insecurity, poor governance, and the recent coups in Africa (Maclean, 2022).

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	● Afghanistan	9.109	↔
2	● Iraq	8.511	↔
3	● Somalia	8.398	↔
4	● Burkina Faso	8.270	↓ 2
5	● Syria	8.250	↔
6	● Nigeria	8.233	↑ 2
7	● Mali	8.152	↔
8	● Niger	7.856	↓ 4
9	● Myanmar	7.830	↓ 15
10	● Pakistan	7.825	↑ 2

AFRICA COUPS

214

44 per cent of all coups globally

Figure 2: Top 10 worst-hit countries by terrorism in the world. Source: IEP, 2022

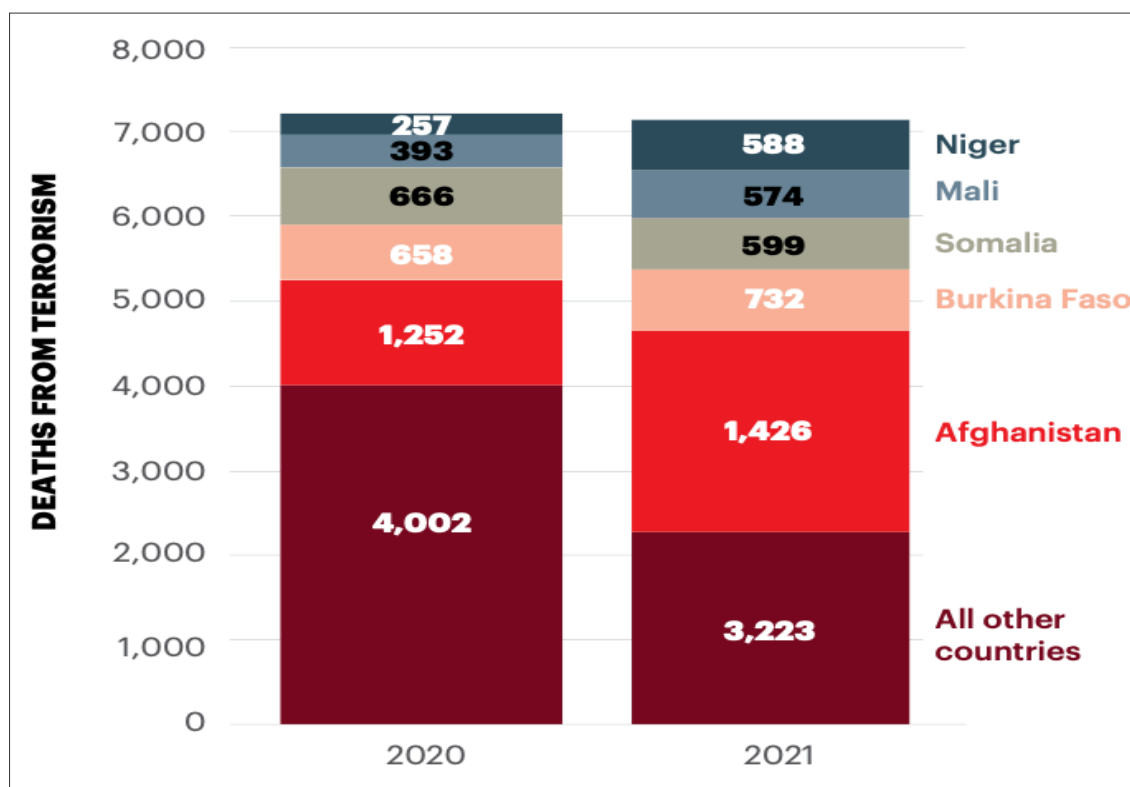


Figure 3: Fatalities from terrorism in the world

By now, all sub-regions of Africa are now badly affected by jihadist violence with the Sahel, the larger West Africa, the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa leading, followed by Southern and Central Africa. In fact, three of the ten most-affected countries in the world are in the Sahel (Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso) while four of the ten are in West Africa (Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria) as shown in Figure 2. Al Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and their affiliates are co-opting regional and local violent extremist groups into the global terror networks and thus complicating regional mechanisms to prevent, combat and punish violent extremism and terrorism. This article looks beyond the numbers to understand the underlying factors causing coups in Africa and whether there is a linkage between coups and terrorism in the region.

“In the entire period from 1950 to 2022, Africa still dominates the world with 214 coups out of 486 coups or 44 per cent of all coups globally, of which 106 have been successful

The Geography of Coups in Africa

From 2010 to 2022, coups have increased in Africa, a phenomenon that has incidentally affected the Western Africa sub-region, which also includes a larger part of the Sahel that is most affected by terrorism in the world. The only coup outside the Sahel has happened in Sudan. The only country worst-hit by terrorism (and not experienced a coup recently) outside the Sahel is Somalia, and both Sudan and Somalia have a long history of armed conflict, and are highly fragile and politically unstable. All the countries which have experienced successful coups or coup attempts in Africa are in the “red or alert zone” which represents highly fragile states globally according to *Fragile States Index 2021*. The countries in focus are also highly fragile and prone to jihadist insurgencies and armed conflict which have undermined the state’s capacity to effectively manage security challenges. However, going back to the review period 1950–2022, certain countries especially Francophone countries (former French colonies) have experienced more coups and remain at the highest risk of coups than other African countries given the recent resurgence of coups manifesting in mostly former French colonies.

The specificities of Francophone vulnerability to coups will however not be addressed in this article.



Figure 4: Countries with the most number of coups in Africa - 1950 – 2022 Source: BBC

Theoretical Framework

Using existing theoretical literature, this section attempts to create the understanding of why coups are surging in Africa, especially why they are successfully executed by certain cadres of the military. The principal-agent theory has been used to explain the civilian-military relations which lead up to coups or coup attempts. The civilian authority is the principal whereas the military is the agent; the skills, ability and competence to manage violence, purge insurgency or defeat an external military threat is reserved by the military and the civilian head of state (or government) depends on the military's special knowledge, skills and abilities to provide security for the state.

In the event of a serious internal or external threat to the state's security and existence, the military begins to exploit the information asymmetry to elevate their role in politics and policy making, and because the civilian government pegs its popularity and success on the military's success, it begins to provide greater autonomy for the military and even pulling the military into politics to shore up the strength of civilian authorities or of decisions and policies adopted. In such case, the military only intervenes in politics short of a coup (Finer, 1975). By elevating the military into politics, Powell (2012) argues that civilian – military equilibrium undergoes change to the extent that civilian authorities increasingly find it difficult to control the military. Such can be seen especially where the military gains both organizational

and policy autonomy as well as influence over political or bureaucratic decisions.

However, where the military, having more war tactical information, or enjoying the stature of the protectors of the state, it might plan a coup either when the civilian government appears ineffective to manage insecurity or when it loses legitimacy to the extent of receiving public anger. Studies have shown that external (interstate war or foreign terrorist organizations) or internal security threat (insurgency or unmanaged mass protests) hence raises the risk of a coup (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011; Bove & Rivera, 2015; Geomans, 2008). The military positions itself as the competent provider of security, or custodian of the state where the civilian authorities have lost legitimacy by overemphasizing security threats and the possibility of anarchy and state collapse. In such a case, a coup becomes more likely and military intervention in politics becomes more direct as the civilian authority is replaced with military authority (Powell, 2012).

Additionally, there are structure–opportunity conditions that make coups more likely to be successful or to be

imagined by the military. Structural conditions are formed by military organizations in a manner that either coup-proofs the civilian authority or makes it vulnerable to coups (Powell, 2012). Military organization that coup-proofs fundamentally reduces efficient coordination among coup plotters and reduces the likelihood of success and reduces the military's disposition to attempt a coup. On the other hand, military organization which helps efficient coup coordination makes a coup more likely to be successful and increases the military's disposition to attempt a coup (Powell, 2012).

The Role of Insurgency and Violent Extremism in Africa's Coups

From northern Mali to northern Burkina Faso across to western Chad, and all around Niger's borders, violent extremism has spread as a contagious threat to these countries' security and stability. Increasingly, the involvement of the military in politics either as a policy preference by the political elites or by the military's thrust into politics at least through coups and coup attempts can be observed in the mentioned countries. While it has



Mamadi Doumbouya during the carnival celebrating the anniversary of Guinea's independence (Photo Credit: Aboubacarkhorrâa. October 2, 2021)

not yet led to a military coup, Nigeria has had a serious jihadist problem in its northeastern region and the military has become increasingly involved in Nigerian politics epitomized by the election of Muhammadu Buhari, a former military ruler who led a coup in 1983, as president in 2015 to succeed a civilian, Goodluck Jonathan.

There is a need to examine the contexts within which the coups are occurring, and the empirical evidence of violent extremism (or at least insecurity) making military take-overs plausible. In Mali, the army exploited public protest against a rigged parliamentary election and the growing public feeling of the government's incapacity to manage the jihadist insurgents in the country's north. In Chad, after the President was killed in a battle with insurgents, the military suspended the constitution and installed the president's son, also a military general, as president. The unexpected killing of the president

especially by rebels could have been exploited by the military to cast an impending government collapse and overwhelming rebel threat, to overthrow the civilian rule and constitutional order.

In Sudan, the military had long lamented the security situation in the country following mass protests, tribal clashes and rising cases of ethnic and militia violence which appeared to establish the pretext for the coup. In Burkina Faso, the military deposed President Roch Kabore in January 2022, whom it accused of failing to contain the jihadist insurgency the country is struggling to contain (Moderan & Koné, 2022). As such, the threat of violent extremism and insecurity from insurgencies has had a causal relationship with military take-overs of the governments in Africa recently. At least five out of six of the military coup leaders cited insecurity related to violent insurgencies or jihadism.

Table 1 Shows coup attempts in Africa between 2020 and 2022

Country	Year	State of Coup	Reasons for the Coup
Mali	2020	Successful	Insecurity from jihadist insurgency
Burkina Faso	2022	Successful	Insecurity from jihadist insurgency
Chad	2021	Successful	National security (insurgency and death of president)
Sudan	2021	Successful, short-lived	Dysfunction in the civilian government but had lamented growing security threats
Guinea	2022	Successful	Corruption, presidential term extension
Niger	2021	Unsuccessful	Insecurity (jihadist insurgency)

Studies have indicated a causal relationship between civil war and coups (Bell & Sudduth, 2015), and terrorism and coups (Bove, Rivera & Ruffa, 2019a; Aksoy, et al., 2015). Bell and Sudduth in their study argue that civil war or insurgencies (whether jihadi or political) "increase the risk of coup attempt and that such a risk increases the more states face stronger rebel groups which existentially threaten the regime security of the government of the day" (p. 2). Similar observations have been made about terrorism increasing military involvement in politics either through coups or through gaining more policy autonomy and influence (Bove, Rivera & Ruffa, 2019b).

Insurgencies and terrorism increase the involvement of the military in politics through coups by first affecting the nature of civil-military relations in two major ways. First, the

military begins to exploit informational asymmetries with civilian authorities (Svolik, 2013) to gain more influence in domestic and foreign policies as an extension of their security roles. The civilian leaders may also begin to either elevate military leaders into cabinet-level decision making or expand their autonomy over military policy in countering terrorism or insurgency if it appears to help boost the government's support locally.

However, coups are rife when civilian authorities have unsuccessful streaks at containing terrorism or insurgencies or appear to be imminently losing the war against insurgents and terrorists. The military thus positions itself as the ultimate guardian of the state and exploits the falling legitimacy of the government in handling security, to orchestrate coups (Bove, Rivera

& Ruffa, 2019a; Aksoy, et al., 2015). Bell and Sudduth (2015) argue that insurgencies or civil wars especially protracted ones, create dissatisfaction with the status quo among the military. Circumstances such as long deployments, unstable salaries, depletion of equipment, and fatigue may contribute to coup plotters resenting the government of the day (Bell & Sudduth, 2015).

To understand the military agency, Bell and Sudduth (2015) argue that the military's welfare in the context of a civil war or insurgency is insured by the prospects of the incumbent government winning against rebels. Coup plotters thus increase their disposition to attempt a coup or dissatisfaction with both the status quo or the incumbent government the more it is likely that the government might lose to the rebels who might supplant the entire military organization upon assumption to power (Bell & Sudduth, 2015). The coup in Chad when rebels killed President Idris Deby seems to have adopted this rationality. While the coup plotters were not dissatisfied with the incumbent government, Deby's sudden demise would have opened the path for succession by another civilian leader, who perhaps could not have the military's position in Chadian politics. Only Deby's son would have insured military organizational interests since a new yet unfamiliar military leader would have perhaps created factionalism in the military. Deby's own assumption to power was by coup and his regime stability remained pegged on a stronger military role in the country's politics for the decades he was in office.

On the other hand, Kydd and Walter (2002) argue that the threat level posed by terrorism on a country's territorial integrity (through territorial control), regime stability (by seeking regime change), government policy (by seeking policy reversal), social order (by pursuing social change in which they end up in control), and the psychological fear it inflicts on a population, are exploited by coup plotters

as a justification, especially where the government's response is overwhelmed. Between 2015 and now, Burkina Faso for instance has lost 7,569 people to terrorist attacks whereas 1.6 million citizens have been displaced by jihadist violence. The country's defence budget began rising between 2016 and 2020 according to Moderan and Koné (2022), by 271 per cent from 241 million Euros to 653 million Euros indicating the military's increasing importance in Burkina Faso's political decisions.

In the case of Algeria for instance, as cited in Bell and Sudduth (2015), the military gained a significant level of power over the civilian Front de Libération Nationale-led (FLN) government as a result of the nature of civilian-military relations during the country's liberation struggle against colonial rule in which the military played a strategic part in the 30 years civil war. FNL had depended on the military wing to vanquish the French forces and claim national power and independence. However, Entelis (1992) argues that the economic crisis and political pressure of the mid-1980s on the FNL-led government led to economic and political reforms which limited the military's role in Algeria's politics.

However, according to Aït-Aoudia (2015), the country's terrorism index increased from 1989 when extremist groups began aggressively vying for national power from the dominant ruling party (independence party), FNL. Through period into the early 1990s, the military amplified the threat posed by terrorism and began exploiting it to increase its role and influence in Algerian politics. The military which had played a significant role in bringing FNL to power during the decolonization period had remained informally influential in Algerian politics but began moving towards formal influence in decision and policymaking. As Lahouri (2002) observes, the military had maintained a strong grip on Algeria's politics to the extent of wielding informal veto power over the government's decisions. In 1992, the military finally carried out a coup having justified it as a move to protect the country's democracy from terrorist insurgency (Lahouari, 2002; Martinez, 2000).

From northern Mali to northern Burkina Faso across to western Chad, and all around Niger's borders, violent extremism has spread as a contagious threat to these countries' security and stability

Why is the Public in Africa Celebrating Coups?

In the recent successful coups, the public has flooded the streets to welcome the military's overthrow of civilian governments in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. It is only in Sudan that the public rose in protest against



In Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on January 25, 2022, a man holds a national flag in support of the coup that ousted president Roch Kabore. (Photo Credit: Vincent Bado/REUTERS)

military rule, partly because the military had long ruled through the country's long-serving President Omar Bashir between 1989 and 2019 when the popular revolution hounded him out of office. First, Bove, Rivera & Ruffa, (2019b) argue that security threats such as terrorism make the public willing to exchange security for their civil liberties. In such a case, the military may receive little opposition and immense support from the public if the government proves ineffective in warding off terrorism as is the situation in Mali and Burkina Faso.

The other reason motivating public support for coups in Africa relates to the opportunity aspect in military take-overs. The military's disposition to intervene in politics through a coup is based on cost-benefit analysis as well as the likelihood of success, and more especially, the ability to justify the coup which increases public support (Powell, 2012; Wiking, 1983). The opportunity makes such intervention conditions right for a military capable of successfully taking on the civilian government and all its backers and military structural inhibitions. Such can be deduced from Powell's (2012) postulation that military coups are successful as a result of the opportunity which reduces the cost and increases reward for coup plotters. The opportunity presents itself whereupon the public has

already rejected the incumbent government's legitimacy as in Guinea where President Alpha Condé's third term was against the constitution and was widely rejected by the public or is engaged in mass protests against the government as in Mali where mass protests began on June 5, 2020, in which the public demanded the resignation of President Boubacar Keita.

The crisis of legitimacy as Powell (2012) observes, is a key determinant of a coup's success but also of public support, as the overthrow appears to be a symbol of democratization. In such a context, mostly autocracies are affected by coups when crises of legitimacy hit hard. For instance, in Zimbabwe's November 2017 coup, when the long-time ruler (1980 – 2017), President Robert Mugabe, suffered a soft coup by the military and the public joined the military on the streets in celebration. The loss of legitimacy or popular support in a government exposes it to indefensibility in the wake of a coup, hence increasing the disposition to intervene. Powell (2012) adds that government ineffectiveness or poor performance increases its loss of legitimacy. In Burkina Faso, the public has been protesting against the government's failure to tackle jihadist insurgency and the extremist violence targeted at innocent populations. For

Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso are battling prolonged spates of jihadist insurgencies which are changing civilian-military relations to the extent of increasing the military's role in politics or providing a justification for the military to take over government the more the security threat increases in gravity.

the military to take power based on taking full charge of security matters and pledge to decisively combat terrorism, the public's celebration of the coup can thus be understood to stem from a deep dissatisfaction with the incumbent government and lacking a mechanism to recall such a government.

Ineffectiveness of the incumbent government is, however, not necessarily in the security sector but in many other areas including economic performance as in the case of Zimbabwe under Mugabe and many of the recently deposed African heads of state in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. Guinea's Alpha Condé was also for instance accused by the military of failing to tackle corruption which was crippling the country's economy and public welfare. The putschists pledged to combat corruption and bring about national 'renewal'.

Conclusion

The recent coups in Africa are not entirely unexpected since the affected states are chronically fragile. Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso are battling prolonged spates of jihadist insurgencies which are changing civilian-military relations to the extent of increasing the military's role in politics or providing a justification for the military to take over government the more the security threat increases in gravity. The proneness of West African countries to not just coups but also civil wars has also eroded the country's military organization's ability to coup-proof as a result of structural distortions with repeated coups and civil wars which leave militaries in disarray. The processes of rebuilding the region's militaries also suffer pre-mature disruptions from other coup plotters or prolonged insurgencies hence sustaining vulnerability to coups.

However, in the current conditions, military coup plotters in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Chad and even Sudan operated in the best environments to launch coups successfully. The loss of legitimacy to incumbent

governments, the existence of serious security threats, and inefficiencies of the respective deposed governments in tackling insecurity, corruption, and economic crises create justification for coups and increase the acceptability of military rulers. This is not to classify military rulers as the most competent in security and economic management or corruption eradication. In fact, the majority of data may point in the opposite direction.

Sudan's situation is unique to the extent that the recent military coup attempts and coup have been received with public rejection while at the same time the public may have protested against the civilian transitional government for failures in economic management and political reforms. It is worth noting that from 1989, Sudan had virtually been under military rule turned civilian, in which case the military maintained a powerful role in the country's politics. The public's revolt against former leader Omar Bashir was also the public rejection of military role and influence in politics for gross misgovernance and economic mismanagement during the 30 years of Bashir's rule. Any attempts by the military to act for public interest or overthrow the government can only be interpreted as attempts to stall the transition into civilian-led democratic governance and the military's service of its own organizational self-interests (to preserve its role and power in Sudan's politics).

The coups are thus reflections of governance failures mixing up with security challenges to the extent of undermining civilian authority and legitimizing military intervention. At the same time, the governance – security complex can be seen as a structural trap, to the extent that the respective militaries are not structurally coup-proofed and the civilian governments render poor governance performances, which create structure (security sector organization) – opportunity (governance or incumbent government performance) vulnerabilities which increase military disposition to intervene.

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Gender-based Violence in Mozambique: Future Prospects of Affected Women

By Veronika Calsavova

Abstract

The insurgency in the north-eastern province of Cabo Delgado has so far caused a displacement of nearly 856,000 people (Miguel & Baptista, 2021). Alongside these reports on internally displaced, there are many reports on violence against women in the region. Testimonies of women held captive, raped and sexually assaulted by both the insurgents and Mozambican government forces constituted systematic sexual slavery. Such acts are not unique to Mozambique. Similar cases may be found in other African conflicts as well as elsewhere in the world. The purpose of this article however, is to highlight the current situation, put it within a wider regional context, and present possibilities of working with and reintegration of the affected victims, borrowing from successful cases of good practice in the region.

Who are the Mozambican insurgents?

Even though the international attention has turned towards Mozambique only within the past year, the Islamist insurgency in the northeast province of Cabo Delgado of Mozambique has been going on for years now. The current insurgency dates back to the 2000s, when a group of young men, mostly poor fishermen, began a revolt against local religious leaders. They accused them of having close ties with state (secular) authorities (PolGeoNow, 2020). In response, they began to establish their own mosques and prayer houses and promoted a radical version of Islam. The group centralised and grew in number. They officially gathered firstly under the name *Al-Sunnah*, later *Al-Sunna Wa Jama'a* (ASWJ) (ICG, 2021). The group is also known as *Al-Shabab*, although this name might be confused with Somali militia *Al-Shabaab*. In the international context, it is thus often distinguished between these two groups by using a double "a" in *Al-Shabaab* for the Somali group and a single one for the Mozambican one (PolGeoNow, 2021a).

The recruitment of new members was primarily focused on local villagers but was often complemented by a growing number of supporters from neighboring Tanzania. In fact, Tanzanian Abu Yasir Hassan was identified by the United States as the leader of ASWJ. A connection to Kenya also exists. A radical Kenyan cleric, Aboud Rogo's followers travelled across the region after his death in 2012 (ICG, 2021). By 2015, they had arrived in northern Mozambique,

spreading Rogo's teachings (PolGeoNow, 2020). Some of these disciples took part in the 2018 killings of villagers in Cabo Delgado province (*The Standard*, 2018). In 2018, the first photo stating ASWJ's pledge to the Islamic State (IS) appeared online (Nasr, 2019) but a precise connection between ASWJ and the IS remains unclear (Nasr, 2019).

The first major attack of ASWJ came in 2017 in Mocímboa da Praia and was followed by numerous attacks against villagers in which they beheaded them, forcibly displaced and burnt down their houses. This violence only grew in scale. So far, their greatest attack was directed against the town of Palma, which they claimed to have seized in March 2021 (France24, 2021a). It was this event that drew international attention, as the French energy giant, Total, closed its gas plant and suspended its gas project in Mozambique due to security reasons (France24, 2021b). In July, Rwanda responded to Mozambican appeal and sent its troops to help the fight against insurgents. Rwandan High Commissioner in Mozambique, Claude Nikobisanzwe, spoke about great and efficient cooperation with Mozambican forces, stressing the fact that several joint groups were established ('Will Foreign Intervention Save Cabo Delgado?', 2021). The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) also deployed several troops. Despite this ongoing presence of Rwandan and SADC troops, the conflict has not abated and it continues to affect Mozambican civilians.



An insurgent group in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. It is part of the larger group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Photo Credit: Institute for Security Studies July 23, 2020)

The precise number of internally displaced people (IDPs) varies. However, according to UNICEF, since 2017, nearly 856,000 people have been displaced (Miguel & Baptista, 2021). Children, the elderly, and women are the most affected by this conflict due to their inability to adequately protect themselves. Nevertheless, women represent a special type of a victim group, since they are subjected to several specific forms of violence (Feijó, 2021). Such violence is commonly addressed as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). One of the most specific crimes is then sexual slavery, which has gained international attention only during last couple of years.

Women in Mozambique

Women in Mozambique were a significant part of the Mozambican Independence War in 1960s and 1970s and they used the war for advocacy for equal rights. In fact, their participation was so massive, they formed women's faction of the guerrilla army – the *Destacamento Feminino*. According to Arnfred's research (1988), the period of independence war was marked by equality between men and women. It was even advocated for women's emancipation. This, however, changed after the Mozambican victory and independence. Women who engaged in the guerrilla were left with no education, employment or equality. It was only later that they

were encouraged to work in state factories and farms, which afforded them at least some level of economic self-sufficiency.

In late 1990s and early 2000s, several mechanisms were introduced in order to ameliorate the women's situation. The Ministry of Women and Social Action was established, followed by the Directorate-General for Women's Affairs responsible for the implementation of decisions and policies from the Ministry. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were not omitted – The National Council for Promoting Women is a governmental body responsible for facilitation of NGOs cooperation with private sector and religious representatives. Within this period, Mozambican women were enabled the right to own and use land (Mbabazi, 2020).

Nevertheless, a large number of Mozambican women are still mostly housewives with limited access to education. This issue is particularly common in the northern provinces, where the Islam predominates (u/Nino123,2021). However, the gender inequality persists across the whole country, even in the provinces not affected by the current insurgency. In 2020, Mozambique was ranked 181st out of 189 countries according to Gender Development Index (UNDP, 2020).

In 2003, the Assembly of the African Union adopted Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, of which Mozambique is a state party. Amongst others, the Protocol addresses a protection of women in armed conflicts. In Article XI, point 3, the Protocol states that

"States Parties undertake to protect asylum seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, against all forms of violence, rape and other forms of sexual exploitation, and to ensure that such acts are considered war crimes, genocide and/or crimes against humanity and that their perpetrators are brought to justice before a competent criminal jurisdiction" (AU, 2003).

This point is very significant in the terms of examining the prospects of women affected by the insurgency in Cabo Delgado, as the Mozambican state pledged to not only protect women in armed conflict but also to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Sexual and gender-based violence in contemporary Mozambique

Various agencies operating in the region report that the SGBV violence is widespread and omnipresent (UNHCR, LSHTM, 2021, HRW, 2021a, Feijó, 2021). Importantly enough, the violence does not come only from the insurgents. Much more often, reports are mentioning the SGBV carried out by the Mozambican troops which should be alarming in the light of the Mozambican signature under the aforementioned Protocol. These assaults usually happen after the women are freed from the insurgents to whom they most often served as sex slaves or as a commodity to be sold for more resources to the insurgency. Since 2018, the number of kidnapped and enslaved women and girls rose to 600 (HRW, 2021b). It should be noted that this number is still an estimation and the number of returnees (referred to as "survivors")

is just as important. In just the first four months of 2021, the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) provided counselling to more than 100 women survivors, most of them victims of rape and sexual assault (Wadekar & Ram, 2022). As for the trafficking of women, the estimated price ranges from USD 600 to USD 1,800 and they are, among others, distributed to other fighters. Sex trafficking mostly concerns teenage girls, as they are demanded more (AIM, 2021).

Women are usually enslaved during an attack on their villages – local men are killed (most often beheaded) as the rest of family and village is forced to watch. The elderly and children are either left behind or forced to flee. Women are sometimes allowed to take their children with them, or are kidnapped and enslaved. Rape of local women in front of their men, before the decapitation, is not an exception. However, the term "survivor" does not address solely surviving such an attack on the village. It aims to emphasize women's courage and strength in surviving many other forms of SGBV during their captivity.

Neha Wadekar, Ed Ram (2022) and Feijó (2021) conducted several interviews with the survivors. According to them, women were distributed by the chief of the insurgent group amongst its members. They then proceeded to rape them, often in front of the women's children. That is how a woman becomes an insurgent's property. Repetitive sex is then required or used as a punishment for misbehaviour, either woman's or her child's. Sexual violence is often accompanied by other forms of physical violence and threats.

"He slept with his machete, knife and gun in the same tent. He put the gun right next to where we slept," she says. "I couldn't sleep because I was scared he would wake up and stab me (Wadekar & Ram, 2022).

Another form of SGBV in Cabo Delgado is group rape where a woman is raped by a group of men, one by one, while others are watching:

They collectively and abusively rape you, and after they have had enough, they introduce sticks and inappropriate objects to you. You, as a woman, were not created to be raped with sticks or with more than 80 men, you being unique. What are you left with as a person? (Feijó, 2021).

"The first major attack of ASWJ came in 2017 in Mocímboa da Praia and was followed by numerous attacks against villagers in which they beheaded them, forcibly displaced and burnt down their houses

As the Mozambican fight against ASWJ continues, some of the occupied villages are being freed, together with these women. However, this does not have to mean the end of committing atrocities against Mozambican women. As mentioned above, various reports are informing about SGBV committed by Mozambican troops. One of the most discussed cases is the one from 2020. Couple of men in Mozambican army uniforms are captured in a video as they are forcing a naked woman to march in front of them. One of the soldiers beats her several times with a wooden stick and then she is shot dead, 36 times (Al Jazeera, 2020).

After freeing the ASWJ's basis, women (and children) are most often taken into the Pemba Sports Complex, waiting to be screened and released afterwards. It is mostly during this time, that women are exposed to SGBV from the Mozambican soldiers.

It is not just the insurgents. Even the uniformed personnel that are state armed groups, the state security forces, themselves have been perpetuating these crimes." "Those soldiers took advantage of us ... they used their power to force the young girls to be with them (Wadekar & Ram, 2022).

Not even Mozambican displacement camps can be considered as a secure environment for women and girls. According to UNHCR and LSHTM study (2021), sexual violence persists even in these camps. While the nature of the SGBV remains similar, including sex trafficking, its perpetrators change. This time, it is community members and even family, in-laws or intimate partners. Moreover, these freed women bear a social stigma with them. A woman that has been a sex slave is not accepted by her community, she is not allowed to participate in society and probably most importantly, it is very hard for her to be married off and therefore to reach at least economic security. This projects already in the displacement camps as the community members condition the provision of obtained humanitarian aid by sexual abuse of the women in need. In addition, such "trade-offs" for humanitarian aid are not specific only for the freed women. Many women, disregarding their age, encountered such conditions as well (Valoi, 2021). According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, sexual harassment by relief workers also occurs (HRW, 2021c).

Cases of SGBV elsewhere in the region

Mozambique is surely not a unique case of SGBV during the conflict in the region of eastern and central Africa.



People wait for friends and relatives in Pemba, Mozambique, as a ship arrives carrying passengers who fled an attack on the town of Palma (Photo Credit: Emidio Jozine/Reuters. April 6, 2021)

Women are usually enslaved during an attack on their villages – local men are killed (most often beheaded) as the rest of family and village is forced to watch. The elderly and children are either left behind or forced to flee. Women are sometimes allowed to take their children with them, or are kidnapped and enslaved

For the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the SGBV is a daily threat for women since 1996. According to the OCHA, the number of cases reached close to 26 800 in 2018 (OCHA, 2019). In fact, it was the case of DRC, where it was first used the term “rape as a weapon of war”, meaning that insurgents and militia groups rape women (and even men) to humiliate the enemy, to claim domination over local population and to seed the fear to revolt. Moreover, the formally first cases of sexual slavery, as a specific crime, comes from DRC – the *Katanga case* (sexual slavery as a crime against humanity) and *Ntaganda case* (sexual slavery as a war crime) (Čáslavová, 2021).

In 2019, the DRC was ranked first with the highest number of reported sexual violence, Mozambique ended up fifth, with India, South Sudan and Burundi respectively in between (ACLED, 2019). Burundi's women are mostly affected by the civil war between 1993 and 2003. Within this period, they were exposed to SGBV from the armed groups. However, the tensions did not end with the 2003 peace accords and so did not the sexual violence.

“There is still a lot of tension between neighbours, or even between family members and friends. Someone from the family had been killed by some neighbour, and as a revenge, a boy from this family can rape a girl from that neighbour's family” (Dijkman, Bijleveld & Verwimp, 2014, 14).

As it is in the case of Mozambique, most perpetrators nowadays are survivors' intimate partners, family or community members. Due to the socio-economic situation of Burundian women, local officials demand sexual favours on unsecured women, in return for food and other assistance, as is happening in Mozambique (Zicherman, 2007).

In Rwanda, current Mozambique's closest partner in countering the ASWJ insurgency, SGBV occurred massively during the Rwandan genocide, in various

forms, including rape (even *post-mortem* cases of rape are documented, (de Than and Shorts, 2003, 353)), systematic rape, gang rape, sexual assaults and sexual slavery, classified as a form of genocide (Čáslavová, 2021). However, since the end of the genocide, Rwanda has made major improvements regarding gender equality and protection of women and girls, including legalizing abortion (still under specific conditions) and equal access to education. The socio-economic situation of women may be ranked among the best in the region as well as their political representation (Čáslavová, 2022, 64) and the Rwandan level of Gender Development Index even surpasses the global average (UNDP, n.d.). Various mechanisms of survivors' support were established, as well as various judicial mechanisms.

What are the established mechanisms?

The number of NGOs engaging in helping survivors in DRC is probably one of the highest. That is given surely by the exigency of the situation as well as by the protraction of the conflict in the eastern provinces. The United Nations' Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) support 30 projects altogether in DRC, being implemented by 51 local organizations (WPHF, n.d.). This cooperation between WPHF and local organizations is facilitated with a contribution of Spotlight Initiative, a partnership between the European Union and United Nations dedicated to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. However, the participation of local agencies is crucial. Together, they address several issues:

- crisis intervention – provision of medical, psychological and legal help
- socioeconomic empowerment and reintegration – mostly agro-pastoral activities, education in leadership and community conflict management
- reinforcing the capacities of women's organizations and associations
- access to education

The cases SGBV in DRC received significant international attention after 2018, when Dr Denis Mukwege was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his advocacy against sexual violence as a weapon of war. However, his journey became almost twenty years earlier, when he founded Panzi Hospital in 1999 in South Kivu, a province strongly affected by the ongoing conflict. Panzi Hospital provides both, medical and psychological help to SGBV survivors. Moreover, Dr Mukwege established Mukwege Foundation, which creates international networks between states and regions affected by SGBV. So far, this network contains the Central African Republic, DRC, Nigeria and Ukraine.

As for the justice and reparations to survivors, five out of six cases at the International Criminal Court (ICC) contains charges of rape and sexual slavery as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Two cases were closed so far, the *Katanga* and *Ntaganda* cases, both of them found guilty. The ICC executed order on Reparations to victims in both cases. On the local level, the access to justice is aggravated by the social stigma and women's uneasy access to legal representation.

The WPHF is active in Burundi as well, although the extent of activities and number of local organizations is lower. Projects in Burundi are focused mainly on the role of women in society, on their mediation potential and communication with local authorities. Nonetheless, no project is focused specifically on work with survivors and their trauma and local women NGOs are mostly dedicated to legal services for women and their economic empowerment, that is, Dushirehamwe.

Rwanda is then quite a special case, in the terms of available mechanisms. Firstly, as most of the gravest crimes against women took place during the Rwandan genocide, these crimes were tried either at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) or at the traditional *gacaca* courts. The most notable case at the ICTR was the *Akayesu* case – the Tribunal found that rape and other forms of sexual violence constitute a form of genocide (ICTR 1998, para 731).

Within its post-conflict rebuilding, Rwandan representation focused on the situation of women as well. The Rwandan Ministry of Justice has established Access to Justice Bureaus (MAJ), present at every district, to facilitate its citizens to access legal aid at free cost. One of the MAJ's tasks is to handle all issues related

to gender-based violence (Republic of Rwanda, n.d.). Furthermore, in 2010, Rwanda hosted the International Conference on the Role of Security Organs in Ending Violence against Women and Girls, resulting Kigali Declaration. The signatories of this Declaration pledged, besides others, to allocate sufficient resources to eliminate violence against women, to conduct training for all security organs, at the same time to recruit more women officers and to improve the prosecution process of gender-based violence (Abagi, 2010).

Finally, several local NGOs focuses on the situation of Rwandan women and girls, i.e. SEVOTA and Harmonious Initiatives. However, most of the organizations are focused on socio-economic empowerment and education, as is in the case of Burundi.

What is then the situation in Mozambique itself? Only a small number of local organizations dedicated to survivors operate in Mozambique, let alone in Cabo Delgado itself. The Spotlight Initiative conducts several projects in Nampula, a province southern to Cabo Delgado. One of such projects is training sessions for local traditional leaders since it is them, who have the highest authority in the society. Through these training and discussions, Spotlight Initiative aims to ease the social stigma around women affected by the SGBV and facilitate their reintegration (Neves & Lambo, 2021).

Nweti is one of the purely local organizations dedicated to working with and for women. Their focus is actually broader than on SGBV solely. It encompasses various programmes mostly dealing with the issues of reproductive health, HIV or malaria.

The Mozambican government set several goals in terms of empowerment of the role of women in the country, i.e. ensuring gender equity in the military recruitment cycle,

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Displaced by the conflict in Cabo Delgado, these women and girls receive a literacy lesson in Marrupa IDP camp in Chiure district, Cabo Delgado. (Photo Credits: Ed Ram. Mozambique, 2021)

restructuring the Women's Defence Centre and lecturing of military units on gender-based violence. Furthermore, the Mozambican report from 2014 states that:

"In Mozambique, women refugees receive protection and assistance through empowerment actions, which aim to prepare these women for leadership processes in refugee camps. Women can thus head up food distribution mechanisms and schemes for sanitary products and other items. Moreover, women refugees actively take part in decision-making in host communities in Mozambique" (Ministry of Women and Social Action, 2014, 23).

Nevertheless, from the current situation in Cabo Delgado region it is apparent that Mozambique, or at least its troops, did not manage to act accordingly and there are no reports on investigations or trials with individually responsible soldiers.

Although women have formally the opportunity to seek justice, due to institutional and legal framework, it is not happening on a regular basis. That is given mainly by a vast information deficit among the female population and by the strongly traditional nature of society outside of the urbanized areas. Nonetheless, in Mozambique operates

a number of NGOs providing legal assistance to women, i.e. Service Office for the Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence, the Institute of Sponsorship and Legal Assistance, the National Commission of Human Rights, Women, Law and Development Association, Human Rights League, Association of Mozambican Women Lawyers, Association of Women for Democracy or Association of Disadvantaged Women (Lawyers Without Borders, n.d.).

Recommendations

It is apparent, that Mozambique is making progress to improve the position and situation of women within the society and their representation in civic services. However, the issue of survivors of SGBV in conflict remains to be solved. The situation of women in Cabo Delgado is critical. Even though some groups of women may indeed constitute a potential threat to national security, as they might be radicalised by the ASWJ members, the acts of Mozambican troops certainly do not contribute to the situation.

This article proposes stronger cooperation between local organizations with expertise in SGBV and the Mozambican authorities. As the case of DRC has shown, medical and psychological help is essential for any further

steps in the reintegration of the survivors. Furthermore, the survivors need to be aware of their rights and possibilities. A decentralization model, as presented in the case of Rwanda, is a possible contribution to the improvement of women's access to justice. Establishing local legal offices would enable women to easier access justice and perhaps more importantly it would improve the current information deficit about legal possibilities. The role of local NGOs in this is once again indisputable, as it is shown not only in the above-mentioned cases but also in other parts of Eastern Africa, i.e., the Kenyan Coalition on Violence Against Women. Dr Fatma Ali, its board member, confirmed in an interview with the author that it is crucial to educate women in their rights and to ensure they pursue them. The other side of the issue, that needs to be worked upon, is then the traditional society and their perception of survivors.

Therefore, the work of Mozambican NGOs with local traditional leaders needs to be appreciated, as the local community plays a crucial part in survivors' reintegration. The author proposes, that besides the strengthened cooperation between Mozambican NGOs and authorities, the cooperation among regional NGOs is desirable as well, as the Mozambican organizations may strongly benefit from previous lessons learned.

“The situation of women in Cabo Delgado is critical. Even though some groups of women may indeed constitute a potential threat to national security, as they might be radicalised by the ASWJ members

As for the war crimes and crimes against humanity, the perpetrators of SGBV cannot be tried at the ICC – Mozambique signed the Rome Statute in 2000, although it never ratified it. It is therefore up to Mozambique if it decides for the ratification in the light of the current conflict or not. Importantly, the cases brought to the ICC cannot be tried retrospectively and therefore, only newly confirmed cases of sexual violence could be investigated – possibly leaving the current Mozambican troops untouched. It is thus, once again, up to Mozambican authorities to decide on its internal system of investigation and possible reparations to the victims.

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

We are excited to release our 23rd bi-monthly issue of *The HORN Bulletin* (Vol. V, Iss. II, 2022). 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

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Note:

The views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the authors and they do not necessarily reflect the position of the HORN Institute.

UPCOMING EVENT

AN EXPERTS' ROUNDTABLE FORUM RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA

The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold an Experts' Roundtable discussion themed *Russia-Ukraine Crisis and Implications for the Horn of Africa Region* on March 21, 2022 from 9:00am to 12:20pm at Villa Rosa Kempinski.

This forum seeks to critically analyze the Russia-Ukraine conflict and identify potential security, diplomatic and economic consequences for the Horn of Africa. The purpose is to help inform regional countries' response to the conflict including managing the inevitable economic shocks, undertaking appropriate diplomatic steps and developing security preparedness to mitigate the negative effects of any further escalations. Experts, practitioners, scholars, policy makers, and select members of the diplomatic missions have been invited to take part in this discussion.



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 vision is a progressive Horn of Africa and the African continent, served by informed, evidence-based and problem-solving policy research and analysis. 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.



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