



Committee: Disarmament and International Security

Question of: Terrorism in Sub-Saharan

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Introduction:

Terrorist activity continues to be an important issue for policymakers in both developed and developing countries. Africa has been increasingly recognized as a region warranting special counterterrorism attention. Since the late 1980s, sub-state terrorist activity in countries such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Sudan is responsible for millions of casualties and significant destruction of physical property.

Terrorism is fuelled by apocalyptic and radical religious beliefs, noting that there are more Muslims in Africa than in the Middle East, which may further increase the possibility of radical Islamist terrorism.

The way terrorism and counter-terrorism have evolved in Sub-Saharan Africa during the last 7-9 years has been the apparent tolerance of terrorist groups to increasingly large-scale national and international responses. For example, between 1974 and 2008, a total of 4,993 terrorism incidents took place in sub-Saharan Africa, of which 261 groups claimed responsibility. According to the "Terrorism Knowledge Base" database the top ten terrorist groups in the world are located in Africa and South Asia. Actually, a recent study indicates that most lethal effective terrorist groups from 2009 to 2012 are based in Africa. In spite of various studies on the economics of terrorism and prevention strategies, terrorism as rational choice has not been exhausted in the literature and very little of it considers sub-Saharan Africa.

The Issue:

Terrorism is not new in Africa; however, many Sub-Saharan countries have seen an increase in terrorist acts in recent years. There are many explanations of why terrorist attacks happen and some attribute it to poor economic conditions, which causes deprivation and poverty; low education attainment, and historical events such as slavery and ethnic conflicts have also been used to explain terrorism; still, there are studies that suggest differently. The scale of destruction show that these acts are properly planned and they have devastating impact for victims with injuries or death, and promote physical asset destruction. The fact is that members of terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas are neither poor nor uneducated, so calculated attacks tend to have serious economic damage.

Key states

The UN Development Program lists 46 of Africa's 54 countries as "sub-Saharan," excluding Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia.

Sub-Saharan Africa's foreign counterparts are building closer partnerships with the region because they see new openings for trade and investment, as well as growing threats from terrorism and criminality. Just like China, these countries believe that Africa is increasingly important to a wide

range of economic, security, and political goals. This engagement represents a sea change in Africa's foreign relations. While many of these countries, including China and the Gulf States, have been involved in the region for decades, the precipitate number of countries and significant arrival of resources have reshaped the landscape.

The decision by the Pentagon to create a separate Africa Command is the clearest indication that the US Military and other branches of the US Government view sub-Saharan Africa as a growing Islamic terrorist threat. The United States paradoxically is going away from the region while the rest of the world is leaning in. This declining posture not only leave out opportunities for U.S. trade and investment, it also impedes the United States from shaping outcomes in the region and beyond. Nevertheless, Canada focuses its international development efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Terrorist groups

Terrorist groups and individuals draw from very different ideological wells to those of Al Qaeda affiliates: groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda (Allen and Vlassenroot, 2010), Christian militia groups in countries including the Central African Republic and Nigeria (BBC, 4/12/2013, Borzello, 2004), extreme right wing groups in South Africa (Welsh, 1995), and ethnic militias and so-called 'civil militias' in West, Central and East Africa (Nyabola, 2009, Okumagba, 2009). Other groups are the Sunni-Salafist groups who are seeking to build a network of jihadist groups to establish an Islamic caliphate. In contrast to the Sunni-Salafist groups, which are supported by al Qaeda, the radical Shiite Groups are tied to Lebanon and Hezbollah through family and business networks. This grouping is supported by Iran in order to expand its economic reach into Africa. Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and ISIS were the most lethal militant organisations.

Sub-Saharan Africa's weaknesses

The strong presence of radical Islamic groups in Somalia and the growing presence of Iranian-backed groups tied to Hezbollah, at times cooperating with al Qaeda, in West Africa. An essay in Sada al- Jihad, an online magazine which supports the global jihad, specifically outlines al Qaeda's interest in expanding into sub-Saharan Africa as the general weakness of central government and high levels of corruption make it easier to operate in Africa than in countries which have effective security, intelligence and military capacities.

Plagued by systematic state failure, sub-Saharan Africa's failed states have helped facilitate internationally sponsored terrorist networks and operations. However, until recently, this type of activity was primarily relegated to North Africa and the Horn. But that has begun to change. Now, what was once a seemingly benign terrorist presence in sub-Saharan Africa is starting to transform into a movement, with states such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) now lending arms, financial support, and radical militants to the extremist jihadist movement of internationally sponsored terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda.

Further, with the recent bombings in Kenya and Somalia, and the failed bombing attempt on a U.S. airliner by a Nigerian national, it is becoming increasingly evident that internationally sponsored terrorist networks have found a permanent home in sub-Saharan Africa, which poses significant challenges for the international community, given the region's patchwork of failed states, where terrorists can easily hide and thrive.

Consequently, this study discusses how the conditions of state failure have fostered support for internationally sponsored terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa. Terrorist groups are now actively

recruiting more militants from within the region and popular support for extremist acts is on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa.

Key Events

Over the last decade, terrorist activity in Africa grew by 1.000%
From 317 in 2013 to 1,549 for the period April 2017 to April 2018.

Event/Date	Explanation
September and October 2016	The terrorism group's ideologies in sub-Saharan Africa has been quietly growing. Indeed, over the past years, three new Islamic State affiliates have gained prominence in sub-Saharan Africa. In West Africa, the group known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has gained prominence with a string of deadly attacks in September and October 2016. In the last quarter of 2016, there were carried out three notable attacks near the borders of Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali.
April 2016	On this date is registered the first time that an Islamic State affiliate had claimed an attack in Somalia.
March 2015	In March 2015, Boko Haram was transformed into the first (and still only) sub-Saharan African Islamic State wilaya, known as Wilayat West Africa. Also, Boko Haram ostensibly supposedly ceased to exist. In its place, the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) was set up.
2014	Abubakar Shekau, became infamous for its deadly insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin of West Africa and for its 2014 kidnapping of the 276 Chibok girls
December 2013	In December 2013, the Directorate organized, in cooperation with the Government of Tunisia, a seminar on bringing terrorists to justice, as part of a series of seminars for senior counter-terrorism prosecutors to enable practitioners to share challenges and lessons learned and discuss good practices and the way forward on specific thematic issues
August 2013	This date was when the story of ISGS begins, which started with the merging of two other jihadi groups: The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and the Masked Men Brigade, which created a third group, al-Mourabitoun.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

During the last years, many different countries have acted to help solving this issue in Sub-Saharan Africa. African countries their self are also making attempts to solve the problems, for example, at the UN Assembly, African leaders call for more support to fight terrorism in sub-Saharan Sahel.

Organizations like The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) has published a useful map of militant Islamist groups active in Africa. According to its review, the number of fatalities dropped in 2017, but the number of events associated with Islamist groups increased. At the same time, the U.S European Command (EUCOM) spearheaded a series of training and military support operations in the Sahel; the program later blossomed into the much larger Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative that now involves both North African and Sahelian states.

Moreover, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided capacity development advice on anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism to several Governments in Africa, including the Comoros, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan and the Sudan.

In addition, in 2007, the Pentagon announced that it would establish a new unified Africa Command (AFRICOM) to bring together its varied programs on the continent, a sign of increasing U.S focus on security in Africa.

Finally, given the role of radicalization in the spread of terrorism and the importance of focusing on young people in preventative actions, UNESCO continued to provide, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and country teams, policy advice and technical assistance to support the Governments of Burundi, Ghana, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. UNESCO also works with the media as an important vector for promoting tolerance, implementing programmes in the field of media and information literacy. Also the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is engaged in conducting and applying conflict analysis to support evidence-based conflict prevention efforts. UNDP is supporting security sector reform and local community security through its peace consolidation and governance programme covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

Possible Solutions

- Encouraging all the members of the OPCW to sign an agreement that obliges the destruction of every weapon left, in order to avoid their utilization, trades and even wars.
- Encouraging every state to find and close every illegal or clandestine laboratory of chemical weapons or nuclear weapons in their country so that chemical weapons will not be traded on the illegal market, with the aim of shutting off the supplies to the Syrian war.
- Applying machine learning at a deeper level to security and using machine learning to identify potential attacks, rather than relying on humans to sift through the numerous alerts and logs.
- Maintaining updated the records of weapons in each country and the records of terrorist groups.
- Encouraging every country to report as many terrorist attacks in their country as possible so that people would be awareness of them.
- Requesting all Member States increase their support for volunteers to be specialist in areas that the victims are most affected, specifically:
 - a. educators who are sensitive towards children who may have feel abandonment or have faced violence or harassment in the past
 - b. psychologists who can create a bond to enhance the communication and healing process.

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