Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2015
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Forum: *African Union*
Issue: *Militant Islamism*

Position: *Deputy Chair*

Introduction

Over the past years there have been a lot of discussions about the balance of politics and religion. A lot of cruel activities have taken place by different groups, each trying to overrule the other.
Several ethnic and religious groups have attempted to subdue their opponent through violent approaches, resulting into terrorist attacks.
Africa is plagued by the presence of terrorist organisations, major examples include al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram and al-Shabab. These terrorist organisations are based on Islamic fundamentalism. The threat of violent extremism is growing within the African continent. Since 2013 the number of terrorist attacks has increased by 60%. This situation is getting more serious day by day. Terrorism is a major threat to peace and security of countries and their inhabitants. The presence of terrorism can destabilize countries and lead to political changes.

Definition of Key Terms

Jihad
A holy war fought by Muslims to defend Islam. The Jihad is also a struggle in self-perfection to the religion.

Fundamentalism
The demand for a strict adherence to certain theological doctrines, in reaction against Modernist theology

Terrorism
The use of violence or the threat of violence, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political goals.

General Overview
First of all, we need to keep in mind that this conflict is not only a militant conflict, the battle for power is also coming from religious differences. Fundamentalist Islamism is a totalitarian global political ideology. The jihad warriors are willing to fight for their believes.

Electoral violence in Nigeria in April 2011 caused the deaths of more than a thousand

citizens, and terrorist violence committed by Boko Haram has escalated since then, resulting in many more deaths and destruction in the nation.
On September 21st, 2013, the Islamist group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for an attack on the upscale Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya. It was reported that over 175 people were wounded and 67 people were killed in the attack.

All of these groups want to take over control from the government and fight against those who are considered infidel by the Muslim law. Terrorist attacks do not only take human lives but they also affect the economy, by harming transportation and tourism, latter supporting hundreds of thousands jobs and contributes up to 12 percent of jobs in the area.

Various East African countries are detecting, investigating, disrupting and prosecuting terrorist incidents. They are also enhancing domestic and regional efforts for border security. These nations are able to create counterterrorism strategies with the information of those investigations. After the attack on Westgate mall, nations began to examine their counterterrorism procedures for responding to attacks.

Major Parties Involved

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

AMISOM is an active, regional peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with the approval of the United Nations. It was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council on 19th January 2007.
AMISOM is authorized by the AU to take all measurements for reconciliation. AMISOM is also an organisation which is ensuring a safe passage and protection.

The role of AMISOM is to realize the development of a comprehensive and broad-based security sector.
AMISOM staff comes from a wide range of nations from across Africa. The Force Headquarters of the military component is staffed by officers from Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. Most of AMISOM its troops come from six nations: Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

Somalia

Al-Shabab is based in Somalia. Somali security forces and the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) continued to make gains against Al-Shabab in 2013. But an inability to undertake consistent offensive operations against the group allowed Al-Shabab to develop and to carry out attacks outside of Somalia. The Somalian cabinet has recently signed the anti-terrorism amendment bill. This bill is aimed at reducing the thread of terrorism. The bill is also giving powers to security forces and is ensuring protection of witnesses.

Kenya

Kenya sent troops to help the AU mission (AMISOM) for the repression of Al-Shabab.

As a response to the involvement of Kenyan armed forces units in Somalia, Al-Shabab launched an attack in the Westgate mall in Nairobi on the 21st of September 2013. This attack on innocent civilians has killed at least 65 people. As the amount of terrorism increases, Kenya responds with heavy tactics: police raids on mosques, arrests of imams, a ban on political subjects during prayers, Western security assistance, temporary shutdowns of mosques and strict control of their hours. Kenya has also started an anti-radicalisation program for children to understand when radicalisation turns into evil.

Al-Shabab
Al-Shabab is a jihadist group from Somalia. El-Shabab came from the ashes of another Islamist group, the Union of Islamic Courts, in 2006. The leader of Al-Shabab is Ahmad Abdi Godane, Who formalised the alliance with al-Qaeda. This militant group is trying to create an Islamic state. They are infamous for their punishments such as stoning adulterers or amputating the hands of thieves.
Al-Shabab is targeting or threatening nations who are contributing to AMISOM.

The Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
The oldest of the Islamic militant groups in Africa, is AQIM, founded in 1998, operating in North Africa. AQIM forms an alliance with AL-Qaeda. Abu Mus'ab Abdel-Wadood, also known as Droukdel, is a former member of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the militant group that fought the Algerian government during the 1990s. He became the group's leader in 2003.
AQIM's objectives include freeing North Africa of Western influence and overthrowing governments including those of Algeria, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia; and installing fundamentalist regimes based on the Koran.
The group has about one thousand members in Algeria, and smaller numbers in the Sahel region, which includes areas in Chad, Mali, and Mauritania. It also has cells in Libya, Nigeria, and Tunisia.
AQIM helped launching a rebellion in the beginning of 2012 against Mali's government and gained control of the nation's thinly populated north.

Boko Haram
Boko Haram is an extremist Islamist militant group whose name can be translated into "western education is forbidden" and is led by Abubakar Shekau. Boko Haram is initially focussed on wiping out western education but they also launched military operations in 2009 to create an Islamic State. In 2013 Boko Haram was officially designated as a foreign terrorist organisation by the U.S. department of state. Boko Harem has attacked Nigeria's police and army, politicians, schools, religious buildings, public institutions and civilians with increasing regularity since 2009. Because of Boko Haram's related violence more than ten thousand people have been killed. Boko Haram is rejecting the Western society.

Timeline of Events

Terrorist attacks in Africa since 1997:

28 September, 1997	Attack on Side Rais in Algeria, 256 people were killed. The attack isn't claimed.
30 December, 1997	Attack on Kherarba in Algeria, 206 people were killed. The attack isn't claimed.
22 April, 1998	Attack on Bandaguru Commune in Burundi, 120 people were killed, the attack isn't claimed.
7 August, 1998	Attack on Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, 11 people were killed. Al Qaeda is responsible.
7 August, 1998	Attack on Nairobi in Kenya, 224 people were killed. Al Qaeda is responsible.
1 November, 1998	Attack on Haouch Sahraoui in Algeria, 200 people were killed. GIA is responsible.
23 July, 2005	Attack on Sharm el Sheik in Egypt. 60 people were killed. The attack isn't claimed.
24 April, 2006	Attack on Dahab in Egypt, 23 people were killed. The attack isn't claimed.
11 December, 2007	Attack on Algiers in Algeria, 26 people were killed. The attack isn't claimed
1 July, 2012	Attack in Garissa in Kenya, 17 people were killed, AQIM is responsible

21 September, 2013	Attack on Nairobi in Kenya, 65 people were killed. AQIM is responsible.
16 June, 2013	Attack on Mpeketoni in Kenya, 48 people were killed. Al/Shabab is responsible.
3-7 January, 2015	Attack on Baga and nearby villages in Nigeria, over 2000 deaths. Boko Haram is responsible
4-5 February, 2015	Attack on Fotokol in Cameroon, 91 people were killed. Boko Haram is responsible.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

In February 2009 there were two coups. One in Mauritania and one in Guinea. There was also a coup attempted in Guinea-Bissau. As a reaction the AU has made a policy of zero tolerance for all coups. In this policy is stated that the AU would never recognize any government which came to its power unconstitutionally.

There have already been different counterterrorist operations in Africa. In march 2012, Islamic militants from The Islamic Maghreb(AQIM) exploited the political issues by following a coup in Mali and overran half of the northwest African nation. Nine months later UN allies such as France, the Netherlands, USA, UK, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Chad and the United Arab Emirates sent forces to control northern Mali. Moreover, the restoration of Mali's political stability through the means of elections and western support have already showed good results.

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is an initiative which involves a partnership between Algeria, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Marocco, who is no longer member of the AU.
TSCTP is an initiative which is aimed at the regional capabilities of nations to protect themselves against terrorism, improving and stationing security forces on regional basis, promoting the democratic government and reinforcing cooperation with the United States.

Possible Solutions

Every possible solution should mainly consist of the idea that peace needs to be regained. Therefore, there needs to be a strong interim government in the nations who haven't, to make building long term peace possible. Peace will be difficult to achieve until a neutral transitional administration is in power, such as a government has proven successful in places like Kosovo and Namibia, and would be necessary to

revitalize a nation that has few resources, little or no infrastructure, a population suffering from extended overexposure to brutality and a sense of national unity that is in tatters.

An issue of this kind cannot be solved easily, it needs a flexible but comprehensive solution which involves a lot of cooperation between countries. Since the intervention of one or multiple countries can be seen as an attack and this will only lead to counter moves.

A political unstable nation could be an easy target for groups like al-Shabab. For example in Somalia, where the absence of a national government for over 2 decades provided a situation where al-Shabab could easily gain power. This has already been limited by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Useful documents

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