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AFRICA COMBATS TERRORISM

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FINANCING TERRORISM IN THE AGE OF CRYPTOCURRENCY

■ Dr. Abbas Mustafa Sadik

Cryptocurrency has attracted a significant global attention with its increasing value and widespread use. However, some governments have taken a stance against it, including Arab governments, that they completely banned the possession, purchase, and circulation of cryptocurrency. Meanwhile, a number of public and private institutions in Arab countries are willing to take the risk and employ new technologies, and soon acknowledge such currency without having to wait for regulation laws to be passed.

■ Sudanese expert in digital media, media analysis, terrorist groups and extremism studies.

What is Cryptocurrency?

Cryptocurrency is a digital asset designed to function as a financial-transaction medium that records currency ownership in a Ledger, which is a computerized database, such as the Blockchain. The Blockchain functions as a database for public financial transactions and is able to continuously operate a large records list known as Blocks. Each Block contains a time-stamped chain of information and a link to the previous Block. All operations are strongly encrypted in order to secure the transactions, control the minting of additional regular coins, and verify the transfer of currency ownership.

Back in 1983, American cryptographer David Chaum conceived cryptographic electronic money called eCash. Later in 1995, his conceptions came to life in what was known as DigiCash, which was a form of early electronic crypto payment.

Bitcoin, which was first released in 2009 as an open-source software, is the first decentralized cryptocurrency. Satoshi Nakamoto, who authored the Bitcoin white paper, created and deployed Bitcoin's original reference implementation, and devised the first Blockchain database, is presumably the developer of Bitcoin. During this process, the developer was supposedly the first to solve the issue of digital currency double spending via a peer-to-peer network. However, many have claimed to be Nakamoto since Satoshi Nakamoto is a pseudonym used by the person or persons who developed Bitcoin.

Cryptocurrency and Terrorism

What we are most concerned about here is terrorists using cryptocurrency. On August 13, 2020, the US Ministry of Justice declared that counter-terrorism authorities had dismantled a series of fundraisers online run by three organizations classified as terrorist by the US. This highlights the weaknesses of those terrorist networks and provides valuable lessons for future attempts of countering terrorist financing online.

Two of those fundraisers have received contributions in Bitcoins at least since 2019. The third was started on a fake website set up with the outset of COVID-19 pandemic by an alleged financial intermediary between ISIS and a Turkish hacker. The website claimed to sell self-protection tools during the pandemic, such as N95 face masks.

Terrorist organizations are financed through many traditional and novel sources—from extensive resources based on territorial control to kidnapping for ransom, as well as small donations from supporters all over the world.



These organizations have sustained diverse sources of financing over the past few decades.

One of the diversification aspects is fundraising through, for example, traditional online fundraising platforms, social media, and most recently via cryptocurrency and other means. The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted terrorist groups to increasingly use virtual assets and financial services online. Yet terrorist groups remain resourceful when it comes to online fundraising.

Important Studies

The American RAND Corporation has studied how terrorist groups can potentially rely on cryptocurrency on a wider scale given their needs and the technical pros and cons of digital currency that can be utilized to their advantage.

RAND suggests that this study should be relevant to stakeholders, including counter-terrorism policymakers and investors in digital currency.

This study was conducted by RAND's International Security and Defense Policy Center (ISDP), National Security Research Division (NSRD) that conducts research and analysis for the Office of the US Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Commands, the defense agencies, the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the US Coast Guard, the US Intelligence Community, allied foreign governments, and relevant foundations.



This study argues that, given the financial support meant to facilitate terrorist operations, counter-terrorism efforts in particular are directed towards tracing out capital flows in bank accounts and preventing financial transactions that can potentially be used to support further terrorist attacks and activities. However, Combating Terrorist-Financing (CTF) strategies having successfully prevented terrorist access to banknotes (i.e., officially minted by the government) has raised concerns over an increasing terrorist use of digital cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, to support their terrorist activities.

RAND suggests that Bitcoin is both a (protocol) for securely storing and transmitting tokens (virtual coins) and the name of the unit of value in the system. Bitcoin revolves around a public ledger called the aforementioned Blockchain, which is maintained by an online peer-to-peer network that tracks transactions and maintains a complete history of verified transactions.

Illicit Financial Flows

In recent years, the mass media have often published in-depth reports and investigations confirming that some or even many terrorist organizations have unlimited, untraceable flows of digital currencies used to undermine the successes of CTF efforts. Policymakers have also raised concerns over terrorist use of digital cryptocurrencies; the global cryptocurrency market cap hit over \$2 trillion on April 5, 2021.

As per the research study by RAND, in order to understand the potential terrorist use of cryptocurrencies, it is useful first to consider how terrorist organizations use money, and then to identify needs and opportunities for such use. The study examines terrorist organizations' use of money in three parts: receipt, management, and spending.

According to RAND's report, *Financing Terrorism through Cryptocurrencies – A Danger for Europe?* that was published in the *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, transfers of Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies are not always completely anonymous as it may seem. Such transfers potentially leave electronic traces that may reveal the identity of cryptocurrency users involved. Although some platforms like Telegram offer a safe space for terrorists, online fundraisers often go beyond such platforms that they reach channels breached by officials.

Mainstreaming Bitcoin URI schemes on these channels as well as official or well-known websites potentially allows third parties to find them and run advanced analytics of the Blockchain, particularly suspicious patterns of transactions. This helps to reveal the user's IP address and owners of other relevant accounts.

Furthermore, many virtual stock markets that deal with and store cryptocurrencies are subject to AML and CTF regulations, such as Know Your Customer (KYC), or require registration in the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) as Money Services Businesses (MSBs). Such regulations affect all listed stock exchanges, including those of clients headquartered in the US, and include gathering personal information on account holders.

ISIS Deadliest Parasite

A research study, themed *DOES THE BITCOIN HYPE MAKE THE WORLD LESS SAFE?* published by Emerald concludes that ISIS is the deadliest parasite of cryptocurrencies. One ISIS supporter states that this digital system is capable of increasing ISIS' fundraisers, and that it is such an easy process that they are rushing to use as soon as possible.

The Ghost Security Group, a hacktivist and anti-terrorism

group, claimed to have found a chain of transactions to Bitcoin wallets believed to be owned by ISIS. The total amount of funds held in the wallets were reported to be between \$4.7 million and \$15.7 million, representing between 1–3% of the group's total annual income. The Group confirmed to News BTC that ISIS is extensively using Bitcoin for funding their operations. Similar claims were reported by Deutsche Welle in 2015, when they reported that one Bitcoin wallet believed to belong to ISIS received around \$23 million within one month.

One major concern is the ability to purchase and transfer Bitcoins via cash-to-Bitcoin ATMs. Angela Irwin and George Milad, Researchers at the Centre of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, observed that using such ATMs is a weakness given how easily and quickly transfers are made around the world. These ATMs allow Bitcoin purchases via credit/debit cards. They date back to October 29, 2013, in Vancouver, Canada, when Robocoin announced the very first Bitcoin ATM machine accessible to the public.

Bitcoin has had its share of funding criminal activities. With the increased anonymity it offers, it has been popular on the Dark Web, and has been used in drugs and contraband trades.

Cryptocurrency Regulation

Irwin and Milad demonstrated how, for a number of years, financial institutions have successfully used red flag indicators and suspicious behavior models to detect money laundering and terrorism financing activity. They said that it is unlikely that similar red flag indicators exist for detecting illicit transactions travelling through the Bitcoin Blockchain, referring to insufficient or ineffective levels of verification being carried out in many cases to determine their money laundering or terrorism financing risk.

Irwin added that even though tracking the Bitcoin users' public keys can provide access to transaction dates, users remain anonymous unless the transactions are associated with other data verification requirements, such as e-mail. This restricts the opportunity to verify the user's information.

Therefore, with the continued growth of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, cryptocurrency regulation has become more urgent. Accordingly, Irwin and Milad concluded that it is essential that steps are taken now to understand potential weaknesses in this technology before it, and similar ones, become mainstream methods of transferring illicit funds around the world. Failing to respond now may result in unforeseen dire consequence. ■





UAE COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES OF COUNTER-TERRORISM AND ANTI-EXTREMISM

■ Dr. Hany Ramadan Zarad

The United Arab Emirates has been witnessing a prosperous era in different fields, mainly the media, security and peace. It is considered the safest state on earth according to recent global reports, most notably the Global Peace Index (GPI) issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in Sydney, Australia. It was only after 50 years of extensive efforts that security was achieved. Not only has UAE made counter-terrorism efforts, but it has also been fighting ideologies inciting terrorism and violence. It has become one of the primary countries adopting comprehensive counter-extremism and terrorism strategies, drying up terrorists' financial wellsprings.

■ Specialized researcher with a PhD in Media, Egypt.

Law and Legislations

UAE holds a well-established legislative structure countering extremism and terrorism, including: Federal Decree-Law No. (1) of 2004 on Combating Terrorism Offences, issued by former UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nahyan; Federal Decree-Law No. (39) of 2006 on International Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters, issued by UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Federal Decree-Law No. (5) of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes; and a witness-protection law issued two years earlier regarding crimes that include terrorist acts.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a decree on combating the defamation of religions or any of its sanctities as well as caste and all types of discrimination and hatred discourse based on creed, doctrine, faith, sect, ethnicity, color, or origin. The decree imposes deterrent penalties up to death sentences, imprisonment, and fines of more than a million dirhams in some cases.

International Cooperation

UAE has joined international and regional conventions, treaties, and alliances on countering violent extremism and terrorism, including IMCTC, created as part of the KSA initiative of December 2015, comprising 41 countries, to unite the counter-terrorism efforts of Islamic countries. These efforts include UN conventions, Arab convention, and an OIC treaty to combat international terrorism.

UAE and USA signed a mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) for the purpose of gathering and exchanging information, to proactively detect terrorist and transnational crimes. It was also engaged in working sessions with the UN and the UK to discuss money laundering and terrorist financing. Furthermore, it has supported, alongside the USA, the UN Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (RRR) program in addition to supporting all initiatives aiming at developing a comprehensive international counter-terrorism convention that would provide a clear and accurate definition of terrorism, to upgrade legal means of combating terrorism, which threatens global safety and security, violates human rights, and is forbidden by divine scriptures.

Practical Initiatives

UAE has launched several initiatives aiming at protecting its infrastructure in addressing current global security challenges, most notably:

- ◆ **Hedayah Center:** Hedayah Center was founded in 2012 in partnership with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), as the first international institute devoted to training, dialogue, collaboration and research to coun-

ter violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, one that supports international counter-terrorism efforts. The Center is concerned with combating terrorism within important frameworks, such as fighting violent extremism through educational curricula, denouncing fundamentalism in prisons, supporting victims of terrorism, and sporting and cultural diplomacy. The foundation of this Center is an embodiment of UAE principle of tolerance. As a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and co-chair with the UK of the GCTF Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group in 2011–2017, UAE seeks to develop new means to inhibit the propagation of extremism and violence.

- ◆ **Sawab Center:** Sawab Center was founded in 2015 in cooperation with the USA to combat terrorism on social media. The Center seeks to bring the voices of millions of Muslims and non-Muslims from all over the world, who reject terrorist acts as well as misinformation and misleading ideologies propagated by terrorist organizations. It works on harnessing media outlets and social media to correct misconceptions and put things right on track, provide a greater scope for moderate voices that often get lost in the hype of misperceptions propagated by extremists. Engaging with the public in virtual space, the Center works on disclosing and refuting false allegations, highlighting and responding to religious misinterpretations disseminated by extremists.

- ◆ **International Institute of Tolerance (IIT):** This Institute was established under Law no. (9) of 2017 to promote tolerance and enhance the UAE regional and international stature, to instill justice, equity, tolerance, a culture of openness, and civilized dialogue, and to denounce intolerance, extremism, intellectual isolation, and all forms of discrimination. The IIT launched an award named “Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Award for Tolerance” to honor groups and entities with outstanding contributions to the dissemination of tolerance nationally and internationally, the promotion of interreligious dialogue, and reflection of the true image of Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance. The IIT proposes policies and legislations, holds international conferences, conducts research, engages in partnerships with cultural institutes around the world concerned with spreading the principles of harmony and tolerance among generations, promotes coexistence among society members of all categories, and is keen on creating an environment of cultural and social harmony that would reduce exclusion and hostility.

Promoting Tolerance

UAE recognized the threat that extremist ideology poses to society's security and state stability early on. As a result, it adopted preventative precautions by modifying its official institutions' religious discourse, media and religious platforms, and religious education curricula. It also established religious education programmes at various levels, including formal schooling and Qur'anic schools under the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (GAIAE).

UAE has appointed a Minister of Tolerance, and hosted the Human Fraternity Meeting in February 2019 to enhance dialogue on co-existence of humans of different religions and cultures and to explore means of enhancing fraternity values and human relations. The Meeting resulted in the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together by Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, and Head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis.

Through the GAIAE, UAE has sought to reform religious discourse, develop Islamic culture by conducting lectures, seminars, and programs to develop Friday sermons, which allows individuals to contribute to enriching sermons with distinguished titles and thoughts. UAE supports moderate religious institutions in the Arab and Islamic worlds, such as Al-Azhar. It also established the Muslim Council of Elders on July 19, 2014, comprising a group of wise, moderate, and independent Islamic scholars and experts, to undermine the turmoil prevailing in Muslim communities and eliminate the factors of conflict.

Countering Terrorist Financing

UAE has made substantial efforts promoting CTF and AML efforts through relentless international communication, to monitor and shut down terrorist financing networks, cooperate with other financial intelligence units, international organizations, such as the Middle East & North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), and financial-information gathering and analysis programs. In addition, UAE has been contributing to the global fight against financial crimes for years, and holds a strong CTF and AML system at world-class standards, in partnership with international entities. It is keen on preventing the exploitation of its land as a path for financial transfers resulting from any criminal act.

Among the achievements of 2021 as demonstrated by Hamid Al Zaabi, Executive Officer of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Finance, UAE authorities have confiscated \$625 million, including money laundering assets, and \$109 million by preemptive CTF measures. A collective fine amounting to \$234 million against 48 de-

endants and companies was convicted in one case by the Abu Dhabi Courts for money laundering and fraud, raising the percentage of sentences in AML cases in 2019–2021 to 98.3%.

Seeking to target terrorist financing networks and their relevant activities, the UAE Cabinet has issued Resolution No. (83) of 2021, designating 38 individuals and 15 terrorist entities of different nationalities on its list of persons and organizations supporting terrorism (Local Terrorist List). Moreover, UAE and the UK have issued Partnership for the Future, a joint communiqué to tackle illicit financial flows.

International Acclaim

Such substantial efforts have been acclaimed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which praised the UAE-positive progress in developing its national AML and CTF system in its general meeting, where it discussed the UAE post-surveillance report as well as the endorsement of the UAE Action Plan in March 2022. The US Department of State annual report on terrorism published in December 2021 has also praised the UAE CTF efforts.

Given that the UAE has not reported any terrorist event since 2021, such procedures demonstrate how deserving it is to be classified among the safest countries in the world. Wise UAE leadership is focused on ensuring long-term security and safety for UAE citizens and residents, allowing for increased growth, progress, and prosperity. ■





HOW EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY SERVES TERRORISM

■ Alhussein Akhdoosh

Extremist ideology is one of the main pillars of extremism and terrorism, especially when it results in the emergence of groups that call for religion, are closed off, reject any opposition, and oppose any critics of their views, considering them enemies, conspirators and traitors. These are condemned with blasphemy, and their lives, land, and money are deemed lawful. Hence, extremism turns into intolerance, hatred, and violent strife, and becomes a vicious means of terrorism to kill anytime, anywhere.

■ An academic Researcher, Morocco.

Corrupt Interpretations

Extremism has been deep-rooted and ongoing for centuries. The past century, however, witnessed the emergence of extremist takfiri movements that committed murders and sabotage against innocent civilians, drawing on corrupt interpretations and on illogical and invalid arguments. Extremist views still feed into terrorist groups across the world, serving as their frame of reference. The decline in enlightenment movements led by reformist leaders is perhaps one of the reasons why such movements came to light, forcing their deviant interpretations into political affairs.

Ideologues of these movements have promoted threatening views aiming to refine extremist thoughts to face opposing ideologies in the Arab and Muslim Worlds, such as attacking the idea of an open society and describing their opponents as infidels. Radical interpretations of religion resulted in theorizing violence, then in actual practices all over the world.

Extremist interpretations reveal a serious systematic inadequacy, and mixes political strife with religion to sanctify, accept, then adopt such views. This eventually leads to the highest levels of extremism. Given the recent events known as the “Arab Spring” and the insecurity prevailing several Arab countries, some of these extremist groups crawled out of their hideouts to oust Arab regimes and assert their dominance as was the case with ISIS and al-Qaeda in Syria and Iraq. However, the prevailing terrorism is a clear manifestation of the failure of such dynamic ideology and interpretations in resolving the dilemma of the underdevelopment of the Arab nation. It led to violence, destruction, and subversion, which soon turned into a nightmare for the whole world.

Contradictory Discourse

Extremist ideology was neither able to present a community-based model compatible with the current needs, one that could achieve economic, social, cultural and political growth, nor provide the promised prosperity and welfare. Recent events have shown how hard it is for this extremist ideology to understand its own political and ideological contradictions given its intrinsic contradictory discourse and the obvious gap between its slogans and actual practices. This type of “splinter awareness” is what leads to fragmentation, distraction, and disarray.

Drawing on the reality of these groups, which is characterized by mystery, skepticism, and unclear goals, it could be said that religious extremism is arguably a reaction that indicates unreality and intolerance. This is exploited



by extremist movements to propagate their own ideology, which is based on allegiance and their unilateral approach. These movements adopt the Machiavellian principle of utilitarianism, which entails that “establishing a political entity requires deeming opposition evil and exposing their evil whenever the opportunity arises”.

Unilateralism

The prevailing unilateralism and authoritarian interpretation usually lead to extremist ideologies and behavior. Mixing politics with religion and using religion to achieve political gain pave the way to the emergence of extremist groups disguised in religious slogans, historical figures and national considerations. These groups implant terrorists within their religious discourse, including their unilateral interpretations, which aim to take over ideologically, culturally, and politically, resulting in violence and terrorism.

Extremism often adopts a discourse based on interpretation and bigotry as a means of alluring movements and groups to use a violent lexicon based on binaries that feed into the extremism of their followers according to their religious and nonreligious sentiments. These binaries classify

people into followers and opponents, believers and non-believers. This classification shows the features of these groups' discourse. At times, a segment is called pious and good, and at other times the same segment is called wicked and corrupt for opposing their ideology. These groups believe that their supporters are dignified believers, whereas their opposers are regarded as blasphemous and immoral.

Extremism has no Religion

Extremism has no religion, faith, or creed. However, it exists among followers of other religions. In the West, it is depicted as fundamentalism; i.e., a rigid, subjective reading of holy books. Far-right parties and groups emerged in Western communities with vitiated religious and political concepts. Reports suggest that thousands of terrorist crimes were perpetrated by non-Muslims. Muslims themselves have fallen victim to extremism and terrorism. Perhaps the Christchurch shooting, northern New Zealand, of 49 Muslims during the Friday prayer is an example of violent extremism. However, Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's Prime Minister, announced at the time that the perpetrator was a violent far-right terrorist.

Extremist discourse in general is a destructive force that generates terrorist motives and deems killings, destruction, and sabotage lawful. Thus, the extent of damage resulting from extremism cannot be anticipated. Under such an extremist interpretation, followers adopt the

motto of "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed one". Extremists usually support each other under religious, national, and political slogans.

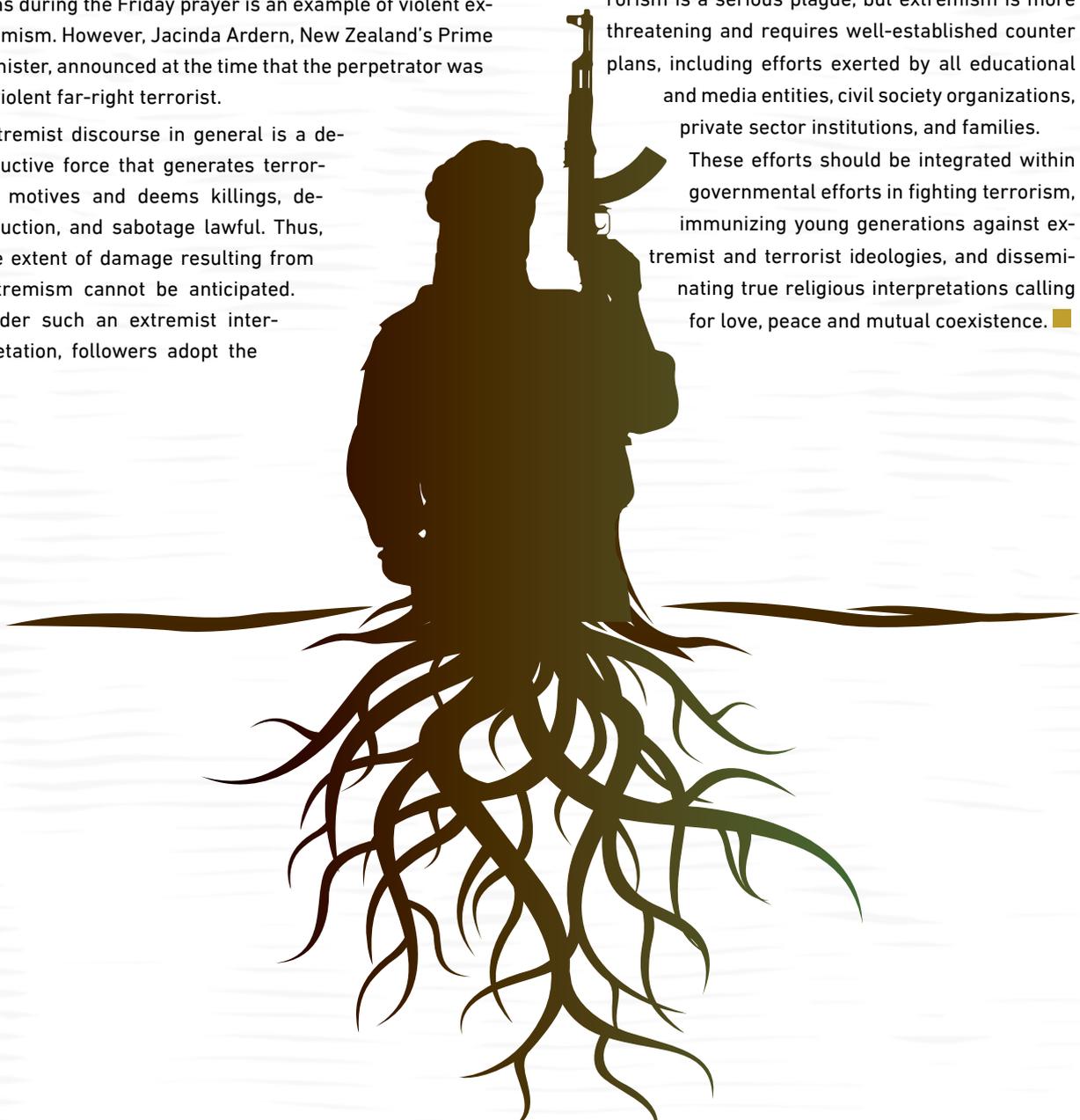
As per this analysis, extremist interpretations and concepts are responsible for the "demonization" and condemnation of human nature in our religious contexts. They prompt religious groups to assert that political change is a religious duty, even if excessive force is used. ISIS, al-Nusra Front, and Boko Haram, are concrete, practical examples of how extremist ideology serves terrorism. Atrocious crimes were perpetrated under the mantra of Islam and Shari'a.

Conclusion

The world has resorted, in vain, to counter-terrorism military and security means. Security reports indicate the alarming rise of terrorism in recent years, which confirms

that the world treats a symptom, not a disease. Terrorism is a serious plague, but extremism is more threatening and requires well-established counterplans, including efforts exerted by all educational and media entities, civil society organizations, private sector institutions, and families.

These efforts should be integrated within governmental efforts in fighting terrorism, immunizing young generations against extremist and terrorist ideologies, and disseminating true religious interpretations calling for love, peace and mutual coexistence. ■





AFRICA COMBATS TERRORISM

ETHNIC CONFLICT, POVERTY, AND FRAGILITY

Africa has become a hub for violent extremism and terrorism. Five out of ten most affected countries by terrorism over the world in 2021 were African: Somalia (3), Burkina Faso (4), Nigeria (6), Mali (7), and Niger (8). Deaths from terrorism in the Sahel Region alone (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) rose ten times between 2007 and 2021, accounting for 35% of the global total of terrorism deaths in 2021, compared to just 1% in 2007. Niger recorded the second largest increase in the world in 2021.

Two of the four terrorist groups responsible for the highest rate of deaths in 2021 (3364 deaths) were in Africa: Al-Shabaab terrorist group in Somalia and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM). Given its importance, this subject is addressed, analyzed, explored, and highlighted in this issue, providing causes, implications, and recommendations.

Professor Ali Mohamed Othman Aliraqi explored the controversial relationship between development and terrorism in Africa, explaining how poor development and inequality in the distribution of development dividends have created a perfect environment for extremism. Terrorist behavior has contributed to a poorer development. The destruction of the infrastructure by militant groups, the collapse in the investment milieu, and the declining incomes resulted in a fragile national economy in African countries. It has been common for some terrorist movements to justify their actions by

calling for fighting and undermining the government. However, they disregard the impact of those actions on civilians who painfully wonder about the relationship between their jobs and income and opposition to the government.

Researcher Lydia Mawenya Amedzerator observed the propagation of violent extremism from the Sahel Region to West African countries, where most security institutions suffer significantly, being incapable of protecting their regional borders. This made the region a perfect environment for groups seeking to play any role on the political map. Moreover, unstable borders have contributed to the dissemination of extremist approaches, abductions, robberies, facilitation of the movement of mercenaries, and arms trafficking. Border areas unprotected with adequate patrols have helped, also, to provide a substantial shelter for such groups, from which they could dominate local communities. Given the loose security grip in border areas of South West Africa, radical groups make use of peripheral areas as financing sources for their terrorist acts and extremist goals.

Despite the importance of counter-terrorism military and security measures, they are not adequate. All kinds of exclusion: political, economic, and social, must be addressed since they have strengthened people's sense of injustice. This is exploited by extremist groups to propagate their terrorist plans in afflicted countries. Human rights violations and illegal killings of suspect extremist group members by



security forces should be stopped in order to prevent lack of trust in government bodies and cut off the support received by those groups.

Researcher Yida Seydou Diall analyzed violent extremism in Mali, the most dangerous African country, as an example of Sahel Region countries which foster violent extremist organizations. Terrorism in Mali is directly proportional with domestic turmoil and ethnic strife prolonged for years, particularly in the central region. In addition, insurgent terrorist groups seek independence from the government and a Mali Northern autonomy. These factors have rooted terrorist groups even further into the Mali society, where they draw strength from aggravating problems. The Mali society suffers, too, from political, economic, social, religious, and demographic issues that resulted in the growth of violent extremism.

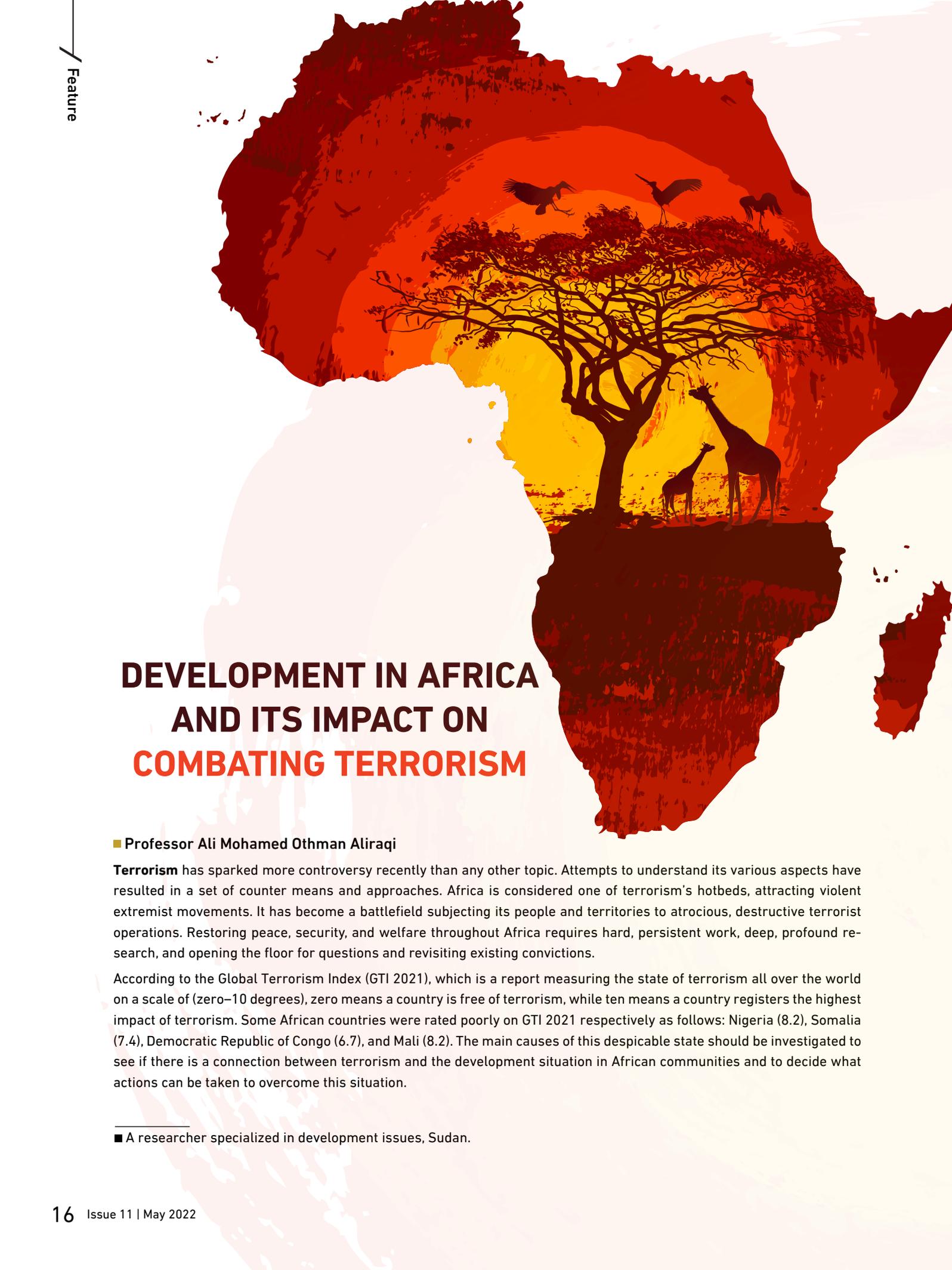
Genuine reform requires a set of initiatives addressing the different fundamental causes of the conflict, including fundamentalist and economic issues. This comes in unison with a wider range of domestic counter-insurgency skills, such as ending the conflict between tribes and communities in feud, stabilization, improving relations between people and the government, dedication to unity, and boosting people's morale.

Researcher Odraogo Yacoub reviewed the causes and implications of violent extremism in Burkina Faso, identifying two main causes: allurements related to the region as a whole and motives stemming from the domestic context. Burkina Faso's history of violent extremism over the last

decade is part and parcel of the security context of the Sahel Region. Terrorist groups have taken advantage of the fragility of security services in the region, aiming to expand and proliferate. Violent extremism in Burkina Faso had different consequences. Regionally, the state has lost control over its territory due to extremists occupying some parts of the country. Demographically, there has been a mass exodus across the country.

Violence has undoubtedly left grave implications on people. Accordingly, the state has been developing a military response against violent extremism, though in reality this preferred military approach had little results. Thus, it is time that political authorities paved the way for holding dialogues that have already yielded positive results in other countries, along with the development of the social structure, and for initiating developmental programs aiming to find solutions to the conflict.

Researcher Othman Adma examined terrorism in the North Region of Cameroon, and called for taking measures addressing the causes of terrorism, such as the rule of law, curbing corruption, providing goods and public services, creating maximum transparency, reducing economic, political and social differences, elevating functional capacities of youths, and providing suitable job opportunities to decrease unemployment and prevent their recruitment by extremist groups. Efforts should also be directed towards building a stable society able to fight and prevent extremism through economic, social, religious, and cultural reconstruction, aimed at a goodwill-oriented cooperation between the government and the people.



DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND ITS IMPACT ON COMBATING TERRORISM

■ Professor Ali Mohamed Othman Alirraqi

Terrorism has sparked more controversy recently than any other topic. Attempts to understand its various aspects have resulted in a set of counter means and approaches. Africa is considered one of terrorism's hotbeds, attracting violent extremist movements. It has become a battlefield subjecting its people and territories to atrocious, destructive terrorist operations. Restoring peace, security, and welfare throughout Africa requires hard, persistent work, deep, profound research, and opening the floor for questions and revisiting existing convictions.

According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI 2021), which is a report measuring the state of terrorism all over the world on a scale of (zero–10 degrees), zero means a country is free of terrorism, while ten means a country registers the highest impact of terrorism. Some African countries were rated poorly on GTI 2021 respectively as follows: Nigeria (8.2), Somalia (7.4), Democratic Republic of Congo (6.7), and Mali (8.2). The main causes of this despicable state should be investigated to see if there is a connection between terrorism and the development situation in African communities and to decide what actions can be taken to overcome this situation.

■ A researcher specialized in development issues, Sudan.

Terrorism in Context

Most African countries represent the strange, illogical reality of human and non-human resource abundance vis-à-vis poor development. This is simply because of how stuck they still are in the colonized zone, which resulted in post-colonial countries characterized by the following:

1. Extensive bureaucratic systems and security services;
2. Poor gross national product (GNP) and the failure of the economy to generate employment opportunities;
3. People's perception that there is no genuine democratic representation and that citizens' voices are being snatched away in favour of inspiring leaders, leading parties, or saviour officials;
4. Increased tribal and ethnic attachment due to institutional failure to understand and meet people's needs and to aggressive governments that encouraged tendencies towards tribalism in order to avoid state violence;
5. Imbalanced religious impact on public life given that, despite the ostensible spiritual legacy in many African communities, governments' approach towards religion has been limited to either subjecting religion and religious institutions to state authority, or excluding them completely from public life;
6. Specializing in producing and exporting raw materials, which resulted in a substantial deficit in the balance-of-payment and confirmed the common stereotype about Africa as a strategic stockpile for the world;
7. Poor attention designated to human capital formation, where illiteracy is high in many African communities and education outcomes are poor; thereby, human competition has been drastically reduced.

All these factors resulted in injustice, which in turn produced extremist expression patterns by religious, ethnic, or tribal movements that share tendencies towards violence regardless of their ideological differences and goals.

Terrorism and Development

As stated above, poor development and injustices have produced a perfect environment for terrorism. Terrorist behavior, in turn, has contributed to a poorer development. The destruction of the infrastructure by militant groups, the collapse in investment, and declining incomes resulted in a fragile national economy. Some movements tend to justify their terrorist actions by calling for fighting and undermining the government. However, they disregard the impact of those actions on civilians who painfully wonder about the relationship between their jobs and income and opposition

to the government. How do anti-state movements claim being keen on meeting people's demands while fighting them at the same time?

This situation is the outcome of the way governments have tackled development as merely policies and economic programs, overlooking any required updates. African countries continue to stagnate, producing no sustainable national development paradigm that would combine knowledge with conventional wisdom and current achievements. Moreover, they have not yet found an all-inclusive way for everyone to participate in national construction by making wise compromises, which made rebelling against governments the easiest means for change.

Colonialism had established the so-called "colonized economies" to meet the colonizers' needs by using the raw resources of the colonized countries without striving to establish a national industry. Seeking promptness following their independence, African countries continued to adopt a raw-material-dependency approach to reinforce their national economies, increased efforts for strengthening the capacity of the bureaucratic state service, established the public sector including various companies and institutes, and turned into rentier states in which power is more than absolute, and society is more than helpless.

Studies confirm that this turn has changed the nature and function of countries from producing countries to allocating rentier states. Producing countries should actively seek the growth of their local economies. This can only happen by engaging the whole community in the production process, which generates local income that would enable states to spend their revenue on their administrative and defense institutions, public services, and income redistribution. Allocating rentier states themselves are the main source of income. The question here is: are there any regulations?

Rentierism did not only affect the nature of countries, but also impeded their transformation into producing nations unlike the situation in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. In feudal Europe, internal rentierism made the transformation from feudalism to industrialization easier. However, rentierism in developing countries originated externally. Seeking to build their economic structures based on rentierism rather than production has contributed to the expansion of post-colonial states into the public realm and the transformation of political regimes into authoritarian rule, where ruling elites consider human resources and nature in their countries as inherited fiefs.

Rentierism is characterized by several features, most prominently: ■



- Rentierism originated externally, whereas internal rentierism is limited to internal payment transfers.
- Only a few people are responsible for rentier income-generation, while the majority undertakes distribution and consumption.
- Rentierism is not the single source of income in economy, but is the largest.
- Rentierism generates a predominant economic environment influencing private investments. It targets ore extraction, speculations, restaurants, and commercial agencies.
- Rentierism generates values and forms of behavior that promote a pillage culture at the expense of production and innovation.
- Rentier economy limits economic activity to big money-makers, disregarding any potential producing or innovative business, either by businessmen, private and public sectors companies, central governments or state and district governments.

Several researchers argue that democratic transition and economic stability are truly difficult under rentier economy that lacks accountability, maximized governmental au-

thority, and marginalized civil society. More importantly, a nondiversified economic base leads to rising inequality and poor income distribution.

Rentierism originated from conventional external sources, either petroleum, minerals, or financial aids. Then it transformed into an integrated institutional system capable of “rentiering” any economic, investment, production, or trade process to generate state-sponsored benefits by the acquisition of greater values from production processes, such as rents, bonuses, and profit shares.

Rentierism and Terrorism

The rentier state internalizes intellectual convictions, perhaps the most prominent of which is the adoption of a top-down modernization approach, undertaken by the government, which expanded at the expense of society. This requires forcing certain methodical policies on incomes along specific patterns. Global experiences indicate several patterns of rentierism impact on political regimes, most notably:

1. Surplus production and large revenues gained by the government provide budgets for scaling up political expenditure, which makes civil service a prize over which parties and individuals compete;
2. Rentierism increases the capacity of the government apparatus, allows for maneuvering society, and undermines the capacity of other parties (the private sector and civil society organizations), their impact on the public realm, surveillance capacity, transparency, and accountability;
3. Rentierism overseas is associated with the global market that sets the prices of raw materials. This, along with other factors, makes governments vulnerable to fluctuating markets, balances of power, and regional arrangements. This situation makes other countries rather than local economy the main drive for development. Thus, economic diversification has declined, and value chains of productive sectors have been solidified.
4. Rentierism results in the deterioration of civil services. Employees become more important than the job or position itself. Consequently, employees turn into ones looking for job opportunities, or contractors regarding jobs as means of self-profit or “pillage”. Instead of being a source of enhancing confidence between the ruler and the ruled, thus consolidating citizenship, the employee turns to boosting the authority of the government and imposing its power. According to some

researchers, this case is called “the vicious circle in the rentier state”.

5. Rentierism hinders democratic transition, the development of civil society (political parties, syndicates, and NGOs), and the relatively independent reconstitution outside a non-state framework.
6. Rentierism hinders democratic transition due to the lack of productive activities that would promote the value of workers and their productive efforts, allowing for their independence and their right of free speech with no fear of dismissal due to governmental dominance over job opportunities.
7. Government security authority in rentier states is often authoritarian and dominates the executive power. The executive power dominates the legislative and judicial authorities as well as the media.
8. Rentierism is conducive to two kinds of subordination: one to the resources sector, and the other to the imports sector. In addition, more attention is given to some ministries at the expense of others, such as petroleum and minerals rather than agriculture and industry.
9. The resources sector curbs the development of the export base, the industrial sector, and innovation; it also lays down restrictions on businesses by encouraging rentierism, which is manifested in non-violent rentierism, as in tax evasion and bribery, and violent rentierism, as in separatist movements calling for seizing wealth and demanding independence from their own countries.
10. Rentier economy generates a political behavior that is based on reinforcing tribalism and ethnic prejudices. It is observed that rentierism income is not yielded from labor employment in local economy, which increases unemployment and injustices.
11. Flow of rents is not necessarily a defining characteristic of a rentier system, but rather a means aiming to change state structures and decision-making processes. There is no doubt that maintaining raw materials transforms national economy into a modern one.

Instead of advancing countries, it makes them vulnerable to fluctuating markets, and results in large external deficit problems. This, in turn, leads to political, social and security turmoil.

12. Rentierism leads to rising inequality within societies, since it creates a network of contacts regarding distribution, redistribution and benefits, resulting in a social hierarchy of successive rentier segments gaining special benefits given their special position in the hierarchy.

As stated above, rentierism directly and significantly influences the political regime structure and power relations; it also indirectly influences the outcome of malformed economic structures and the distribution pattern of production dividends. Many African countries depending on raw materials attest to this fact, thus providing the perfect environment for religious, ethnic, or tribal terrorism.

Future Challenges

Understanding terrorism and its complications requires a comprehensive approach, careful observation and awareness of societal realities, global economic progress, rising powers (China and India), and their implications on African economies. There is no doubt that competing over African resources shall rise. However, for Africa to benefit from such rivalry, African countries and leaders should seek a brighter future. That would be possible only if they provide some benefits, most notably:

First: Profound understanding of social structure and needs.

Second: Establishing harmony between major active stakeholders in the public realm, whether parties, civil society associations, conventional entities, or military institutions.

Third: Awareness of the importance of religion and its profound impact on the public realm. No one should ever be excluded from the public realm or used as an instrument of power.

Fourth: Harmony between regional entities in Africa in order to impose fairer relations with multinational companies and developed countries. ■





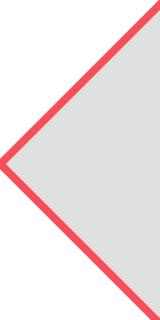
ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN WEST AFRICAN STATES

AFRICAN INITIATIVES COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

■ Lydia Mawenya Amedzerator

Interrelationships between extremist groups, politically and militarily influential entities, and the local population of the Sahel Region and West African countries led to more violent extremism in the region. The relationship between al-Qaeda and Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) in Mali and the Independent Nasserite Movement (INM) resulted in a noticeable increase in terrorist attacks in some Sahel countries, such as Burkina Faso and Mali. Poor border surveillance, inadequate intelligence, increasing security issues, widespread youth problems, and increasing rates of poverty and unemployment have all enhanced the risks of the free mobilization of extremist groups and more extremism in neighboring Sahel countries, such as Ghana, Togo, and Benin. This calls for joint regional and national efforts to fight the rising terrorism and to address the deeply-seated causes of violent extremism in the region.

■ Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Ghana



Roots of Extremism

In the wake of the Libyan crisis and the murder of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, thousands of armed refugees, particularly Tuareg tribe members, returned to their home countries carrying large ordnance. Given their constant aspiration for self-autonomy, Tuareg rebels in Mali launched an armed attack in 2012 upon the central government that peaked in the March 2012 coup d'état and the murder of Mali President Amadou Toumani Touré.

Such events instigated the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) which started a new era of turmoil, declaring MNLA in northern Mali an independent state. Fierce battles raged between MNLA and its allies affiliated to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), in addition to the prevalence of the extremist Islamic Front in the Sahel Region. Violent attacks perpetrated by AQIM have increased, as well as those perpetrated by Ansar al-

Dine and Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) in Northern Mali. The crisis extended to Central Mali by late 2013, then relocated to Niger and Burkina Faso in 2016.

Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)

Observers suggest that JNIM was founded in March 2017 as a reaction to the attacks by joint international, regional, and national forces, such as Operation Barkhane in the Sahel Region. Four groups integrated: Ansar al-Dine, Katiba Macina, al-Murabitoun, and the Sahara branch of AQIM. Launching JNIM, Emir Iyad Ag Ghali, a Tuareg leader, swore allegiance to al-Qaeda Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The foundation of JNIM ostensibly represents the overcoming of ethnic and social barriers in favor of transnational extremism, given how it includes different

ethnicities. While JNIM seeks to expand its activities outside of Mali, the Macina Liberation Front led by Amadou Koufa carried out a series of violent attacks in Burkina Faso. Despite the emergence of local branches of such groups, their constant changes, and consecutive threats posed by groups along the North Sahel Region, West Africa, particularly in Benin, Ghana, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire, these groups extensively continued their subversive operations, with no drop in their capacities.

In May 2019, two French tourists and their local tour guide were abducted in Pendjari National Park in Benin; four customs officers were killed in Eastern Burkina Faso near the Togolese borders; Spanish priest Antonio César Fernández was assassinated in an attack near Togo-Burkina Faso borders. These events uncover how such groups aspire to expand their activities to new regions, such as West African Sahel countries.

Asserting Power

The military attack by joint forces undermined the capacities of extremist groups in Western Africa and parts of the Sahel Region. However, several indications emphasize the capacity of such groups to adapt, maneuver, survive, expand, and assert their power. This resulted in renewed attacks by IS in Nigeria, the emergence of Boko Haram dissident group, constant attacks by terrorist groups in Mali and Burkina Faso, and more violence in North-West Africa. Meanwhile, it is important to look into the way these armed groups manage to thrive. How do they assert their dominance in new territories? How do they get help from the community?

These groups, particularly Macina Liberation Front and Ansar al-Dine, took advantage of local injustices to create narratives of the exclusion and injustices experienced by citizens, seeking to recruit them. For example, Ibrahim Dicko, an advocate for violent extremism in Burkina Faso, created a narrative of the violent methods adopted by security forces while hunting extremists in Soum Province and the injustices experienced by some people there. Such narratives have resulted in increased extremism, especially among young people, and fostered empathy and public support towards such groups in their zones of influence. Besides, they have scaled up polarization and resources, legitimized their acts, and supported other fundamentalist groups affiliated to global Salafist movements, which further highlighted their atrocious acts and created a fragile environment of growing violence.

Weak Governance

Most security institutions in the region suffer significantly and have become incapable of protecting their regional borders. This made the region a perfect environment for groups seeking to play a role within political circles. Moreover, fragile borders have contributed to mercenary mobilization, arms trafficking, the dissemination of extremist approaches, abductions, and robberies. Border areas unprotected with adequate patrols have helped, too, to provide a vast shelter for such groups, from which they could dominate local communities.

Given the loose security grip in border areas of South West Africa, radical groups make use of peripheral areas as financing sources for their terrorist acts and extremist



goals. The commerce and migration route links West Africa with parts of the Sahel Region, Burkina Faso, Northern Ghana, and Northern Togo, and serves as an arms-trafficking route. Extremist groups take Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo as sources of financing and support services. Besides, income generated by arms trade, robberies, abductions, illicit trade of arms is utilized to purchase fuel, motorcycles, food, training fighters and recruiting new members.

Overcoming Challenges

West African countries started a number of initiatives aiming to overcome regional security challenges resulting from violent extremism. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo started the Accra Initiative on September 14, 2017 to address the lack of security in the region, and to create a single entity that would coordinate cooperation between South-West African countries to overcome security challenges. The Accra Initiative is based on three pillars: information exchange, training security and intelligence personnel, and the conduct of joint cross-border military operations. This initiative aims at fighting organized criminal activities in border areas, the cooperation of Member Countries in dismantling terrorist networks, preventing their proliferation, impeding terrorists seeking political asylum, and combatting violent extremism.

Three main operations named (Koudanlou) were conducted regionally within the framework of the initiative. Within May and November 2018, Operation Koudanlou I and Operation Koudanlou II were conducted jointly by Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Togo in border areas, then Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana respectively. On November 19, Ghana and Togo embarked on the joint security Operation Koudanlou III, aiming to prevent terrorist activities, illegal extraction of natural resources, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and other transnational crimes. This operation resulted in 170 arrests of terrorists and suspects.

In May 2020, the joint Operation Comoé was launched by Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, resulting in 38 arrests of terrorist suspects, 24 in Burkina Faso and 14 in Côte d'Ivoire. This operation managed to destroy a terrorist base in Alidugu, and confiscated arms, ammunition, memory chips, and mobile phones.

Trust-Building

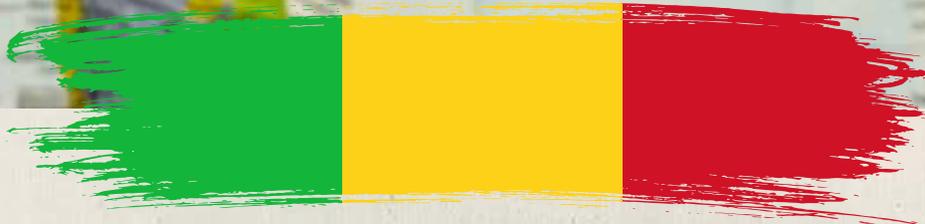
Security efforts made by Sahel countries in combatting violent extremism resulted in trust-building between



Member Countries, and addressed concerns and doubts, which fostered information and intelligence exchange, and reinforced constructive cooperation to counter violent extremism. Despite the successes achieved, challenges still persist since the military operations conducted were improvised, temporary, and limited in scope. This means that terrorist groups remained capable of regrouping and conducting more deadly attacks.

Nationally, a number of counter-terrorism operations were conducted in Sahel countries. On March 7, 2019, Burkina Faso launched Operation Otapuanu, which dismantled bases of some groups and undermined their threats. Ghana launched Operation Grip and Operation Claw-Eagle to address border security breaches, and train security personnel on carrying out their mandated tasks. On January 5, 2017, Operation Dump was officially code-named Coordinated Concept in March 2020.

Excessive counter-terrorism military and security measures would not necessarily address all kinds of exclusion such as political, economic, and social exclusion which heightened people's sense of injustice. This has been exploited by extremist groups to propagate their terrorist plans in those countries. Human rights violations and illegal killings of suspect extremist group members by security forces should be stopped in order to prevent the lack of trust in governments and cut off the support received by those groups. ■



VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MALI'S SAHEL REGION

■ Yida Seydou Diall

The Sahel is one of Africa's most unstable regions, with an alarming increase in terrorist attacks on civilians, government and foreign forces alike. The fragility of the geographical location, ongoing social conflicts, the spread of poverty and unemployment, and the exacerbation of religious extremism are regional factors allowing terrorist groups to bolster their presence and operations while making it difficult to control and combat them.

■ Researcher in violent extremism, Mali.

The Most Dangerous

Mali's atmosphere is a breeding ground for extremist and violent organisations, and Mali is one of the world's most dangerous countries. Despite the United Nations' and France's backing of the Malian government in combating these terrorist groups, no genuine stability appears on the horizon, and the security situation threatens the state's survival as well as the entire area.

Internal turmoil, long-standing ethnic and sectarian disputes, particularly in the north-south region, as well as rebel groups demanding independence from the government and claiming autonomy in northern Mali, are all linked to terrorism in the country. These factors allowed terrorist groups to establish themselves in the depths of society, drawing power and survival from the escalation of these issues.

The terrorist threat in Mali dates back to 2003 when an Algerian terrorist group known as the "Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat" began operating in the north in order to obtain access to other parts of the country. The group rebranded themselves "Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb" in 2007 after declaring allegiance to Al-Qaeda. In 2012, Al-Qaeda allied with Tuareg rebels against the Mali government, resulting in the rise of other armed groups, such as "Ansar Eldeen Group," the majority of which are Tuareg.

Fundamentalism has dominated intercommunal disputes in northern Mali since 2012, has been linked to numerous terrorist attacks in central Mali, and has extended to Burkina Faso and Niger. These groups seek to spread sectarian and ethnic turmoil from time to time in order to open new fronts of conflict, aggravate the security situation, and assist themselves in controlling and expanding power by exploiting latent ethnic animosities and the absence of the state in the periphery.

Extremism on the Rise

Political, economic, social, religious, and demographic problems have plagued the Malian society, all of which have contributed to the rise and spread of violent extremism in the country. The most serious of these issues are:

1- Abject Poverty

Though Mali is one of the richest African countries in terms of mineral and agricultural resources, its people have not benefited from these riches which has not been invested in development as the majority of the country's 20 million inhabitants remain quite poor. Terrorist organisations take advantage of the public's desire for money in order to

recruit new members and expand their ranks of gunmen. Many unemployed or low-paid young people join these organisations to meet their necessities, but in exchange, they are subjected to brainwashing, which converts them into dangerous extremists.

2- Grievances Against the State

Many civilians hold grudges against the government, owing to the deterioration of services or lack of access to them, such as education, security, health care, and decent livelihood, as well as being treated badly by officials such as water and forest officials, district heads, heads of departments, and judges. Shepherds and peasants frequently complain of repression, brutality, frequent arrests, large fines, expensive taxes, and terrible punishments for non-payment of taxes and fines; the family's head is sometimes thrown into the blazing sun to pay the fine. These circumstances have produced dissatisfaction with the state, prompting individuals to join extremist groups.

3- Natural Resources

A scarcity of natural resources is a nightmare that afflicts the lives of millions of people in these countries as agriculture, fishing, and livestock provide income for around 80% of the population. Due to a scarcity of resources, bloodshed has erupted amongst villages vying for water and pasture. Meanwhile, extremist groups are rushing to seize control of these resources, administer them, and profit off the public's desire for them to impose specific obligations, such as joining them and obeying their commands. When a family's head of household is unable to feed his children, he is forced to accept the terms of these organisations, which have evolved into organized shadow governments that provide basic services to the populace and, in some situations, act as if they were the official government.

4- Arrests

Some residents in Mali complain of ill-treatment at the hands of defence and security forces, including being repeatedly arrested and held in pretrial detention for months, if not years, prompting them to seek refuge in extremist groups after their release, strengthening the influence of these groups and increasing the number of their members.

5- The Media

Terrorist groups do not rely solely on military force to achieve their objectives; rather, they are eager to use modern communication technologies, particularly the internet and social networking sites, to promote their ideas, reach the largest possible audience, obtain material and



moral support, and expand their membership. With the movies and audio recordings that they publish on these sites, these groups attempt to malignantly influence the public. In this region, these approaches have contributed to inciting violence and hatred, spreading rumours, and causing confusion and instability.

Consequences of Extremism

The Mali community has been subjected to ongoing hardships as a result of the continued spread of extremist groups in the region, which has affected various aspects of life as follows:

◆ Deterioration of Security

As a result of a surge in ethnic conflicts and terrorist attacks that victimize innocent people, the security situation in northern, central, and southern Mali has dramatically deteriorated, putting the population's lives and property at jeopardy. Famines have spread in some regions due to human kidnapping, livestock theft and sale, the spread of the drug and arms trade, crops being burned in fields and granaries, ploughing machines being destroyed in some areas, causing poverty, and the prices of basic food commodities skyrocketing to the point where the population could not afford them. Because of thefts and repeated attacks on crops, animals, and private property, wealthy families have become drastically impoverished.



Some terrorist groups have been able to take advantage of these circumstances. In 2017, they attempted to take control of entire villages, and this situation continues to this day.

◆ **Awkward Development**

It is natural for every country's progress to be hampered by insecurity. In a country like Mali, where deadly conflicts and terrorist attacks have raged for years, development possibilities must dwindle and essential services must be curtailed, particularly in areas held by these groups. Many vital service sectors in Mali were destroyed, including telephone networks, highways, and transportation traffic. Royalties on land and river transportation were enforced, and traffic control procedures were intensified to collect these royalties.

◆ **Social Disintegration**

One of the key reasons for the disintegration of the social fabric in the Sahel region was violent extremism because of migration and the search for resources, extremist group activity, the complex security situation, and population attempts to flee areas of armed conflict. Because of internal migration and the hunt for safer regions, the population of certain large cities, such as Bamako, Segou, and Mopti has doubled. Due to the influx of tens of thousands of Malians crossing the border and seeking asylum in neighboring countries such as Algeria and Mauritania, North African countries have faced demographic issues.

◆ **Deteriorating Education**

The education system in Mali is in serious decline; many schools have closed their doors to students as a result of terrorist groups' opposition to the French formal

educational system and of these groups' acts of terrorism. According to reports, 700 schools in central Mali, the Mopti region, and the Segou and Niafunke regions of Timbuktu have been closed as a result of violent extremism.

◆ **Self-Defense Groups**

With the growing threats of extremist groups in the Sahel region and Mali, some communities were forced to form volunteer teams and armed groups for self-defence. However, internal conflicts erupted between these groups in open areas, such as Country, Madenty Nyono, and Macina in the Segou and in communities throughout the delta region, resulting in increased unrest and anarchy.

◆ **Religious Extremism**

Some extremist groups in Mali such as Ansar Eldeen Group demanded independence from the state government, the establishment of a Sharia state in the north, and the open implementation of Sharia law; they continued their bloody attacks under the guise of enforcing Sharia.

Conclusion

The causes and repercussions of extremism in Mali cannot be exhaustively examined in this review, but the pressing issues that have been raised here call for the development of comprehensive measures to resolve the crisis. The solution must not rely solely on security grounds; there must be a series of initiatives addressing the various root causes of the conflict, including economic and fundamentalist issues, as well as the importance of coming up with more creative skills to combat internal rebellion, end tribal and disputes and community conflicts, attempt to restore stability, and pay attention to improving relations between the population and the state, ensuring unity, and raising morale. ■





VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN BURKINA FASO: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND SOLUTIONS

■ Dr. Odraogo Yacoub

Burkina Faso used to lead a quiet, peaceful life in an atmosphere of religious tolerance. However, things changed after terrorism and violent extremism have hit the country. From 2015 to 2020, terrorist activities grew significantly, which spurred experts to investigate into the causes of extremism, its impact on people, and possible solutions to managing the crisis.



■ Assistant Professor of History at Joseph Ki-zerbo University, Burkina Faso

History of Violent Extremism

Burkina Faso's history of violent extremism over the last decade is part and parcel of the security context of the Sahel Region. Independent and religious movements resorted to violence as means to achieve their goals. Relevant news circulated widely regarding operations and attacks perpetrated by groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), Macina Liberation Front, Ansar al-Dine, and Boko Haram.

These so-called religious groups have taken advantage of the fragility of security services in the region to foster their expansionist goals. The conflict that erupted in Northern Mali in 2012, when MNLA announced its independence, enabled terrorist groups to seize certain areas, particularly Timbuktu and Gao. Following the intervention of the French army to expel these groups, they gathered in the Sahel Region.

Burkina Faso fell a victim to terrorism in 2015, which started in April by the kidnapping of a Romanian worker in Tambao manganese mine in the North by masked men. Next was in October, when an attack took place against the gendarmerie of Samoroguan in Kenedougou, North-West of Burkina Faso, resulting in three killings of the gendarmerie workers and one civilian. Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, witnessed the first terrorist incident in January 2016. An attack was carried out by gunmen on a hotel and a cafe, where 26 people were killed while 56 were injured. AQIM and al-Murabitoun declared their responsibility for those attacks.

However, the major turning point was the emergence of the first local terrorist group, Ansar al-Islam, founded in 2016 by Ibrahim Malam Dicko, a Fulani from Soum Province in the North. This group arose in December 2016 with an attack against the military post in Nasombo, Northern Burkina Faso, killing 12 soldiers.

Since the emergence of terrorism in Burkina Faso, different acts of aggression have increased, such as kidnappings, assassinations, ambushes, bombings, arson fires, and car bombings. The most affected areas were the North and East, while the Western border areas with Mali were less affected. Three major extremist movements yet dominate smaller movements: the local Ansar al-Islam and two transnational movements: the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (EIGS) and the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM).

Causes of Violent Extremism

Violent extremism is due to two major causes: allurements related to the region as a whole and motives stemming from the domestic context. The regional factor has contrib-

uted to the growth of terrorism; however, it owes its survival to local contexts.

The main **causes of violent extremism** include:

1- Aggravating Crises:

Burkina Faso has witnessed social and political turmoil since the late nineties, which has even worsened since 2010. Early signs of the crisis were the constant insurgencies within the army in 2011, where divisions among the armed forces and the security sector weakened the state service, and prompted President Blaise Compaoré to embark upon institutional reform to mitigate such upheavals. This reform, which aimed at establishing a Senate and amending the article regarding presidential terms, worsened the conflict, followed by a popular uprising in October 2014 that ousted President Compaoré's regime.

The National Transitional Council founded after the fall of the regime to lead the country into new elections has experienced considerable difficulty in fulfilling its mission. In addition, the Regiment of Presidential Security was dissolved, which was the Imperial Guard created by Compaoré following a coup attempt. The consecutive crises have shaken the Security Service and disrupted the army and intelligence.

2- Challenges of the North:

Northern Burkina Faso, particularly Soum Province, is considered the epicenter of the conflict and violent extremism polarization. This region populated by the Fulani people has witnessed insurgencies against the social and political system. Burkina Faso is the least influential country in the region, where the level of development is very low compared to other countries. Exploitation of natural resources, especially mining, only benefits foreign companies rather than locals, and the injustices committed by officials misusing their power while doing their jobs have burdened the Fulani people. All these and other factors have given rise to different kinds of violent extremism, besides the conflict with the social and political system recorded in the annals of history.

3- Historical Reality:

The part of the Sahel Region shared with Burkina Faso used to be a battlefield in the 19th century. It witnessed major violence given the huge resentment of the Fulani people towards the dominant power at the time. The area was populated by the Gourmantché ethnic people who took Koala as their capital. The Fulani people migrated gradually and eventually settled in the region. However, they face huge obstacles in blending with the natives.



Stories have been told of the Fulani people being suppressed and despised by the Gourmantché, how they were humiliated, and how power was misused against them. For example, there was a story of a Fulani woman shackled by ropes, another's head shaved, in addition to the confiscation of properties. To break free from such hegemony, the Fulani people led a protest movement to fight the suppressing Gourmantché power, in line with the Fulani revolution led by Usman dan Fodio in Nigeria. Eventually, the Fulanis took over and founded two states: Liptako Emirate in 1810 and Yaga Emirate in 1812.

The protest movement was acknowledged by the French regime. Faith-based Dori was the most prominent among other colonies of Upper Volta. Thus, it was more under consideration and surveillance than others according to the French policy regarding the colonized. Besides, al-Murabitoun were heavily suppressed, which naturally led to rebellions. The modern state did not pay attention to its developmental programs in this area, which witnessed religious strife that shaped its social and religious structure, making it a propitious environment for extremist groups.

Extremism Consequences

Violent extremism in Burkina Faso had various consequences. **Regionally**, the state does not control its territory due to extremists occupying some parts of the country.

Demographically, there has been a mass exodus across the country. Internally displaced people were estimated around 83,000 in February 2019, and 148,000 in April 2019. Host families in towns received internally displaced people from Burkina Faso, either victims of violence or people fleeing conflict and violence, or they were allocated in camps supervised by humanitarian organizations.

There is no doubt that there was a heavy toll of hundreds of deaths and casualties in armed forces, civilians and terrorists. The psychological consequences were profound due to the trauma suffered by civilians and security and defense forces. Violent extremism forced the state and local authorities to take security measures that disrupted people's daily life. Accordingly, a state of emergency was declared by late 2018 in 14 provinces on the borders with Mali and Niger.

Socially, the education sector has been impacted by the desertion of thousands of teachers and the temporary shut-down of hundreds of schools. All in all, more than a million people are in dire need for humanitarian aids. The lack of security arising from violence has impacted the often-persistent divisions between ethnic groups; the Fulanis, for example, suffered from social stigma and stereotyping where they were considered terrorists, which increased social strife. The economic sector is no exception. The Northern and Eastern regions were the most impacted by

this violence, since they were first-degree pastoral areas and fostered the largest livestock markets. The lack of security has strongly impacted the mining sector in the Sahel Region.

Prospects

Ever since the attacks started in 2015, Burkina Faso resorted to a military violent approach to counter extremism. President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who was re-elected in November 2020, seemed to resolve the crisis militarily without negotiations with the invisible enemy. Nonetheless, all counter-transnational-terrorism efforts exerted by the five Sahel Region countries, embodied by Operation Barkhane, and national strategies to counter violent extremism, failed to put an end to terrorism.

In addition to the military and security measures taken on the ground, it was worthwhile to launch dialogue with extremists as suggested by experts and some presidential candidates in November 2020. This approach may succeed in getting some extremists back to their senses, disarming them, and reintegrating them into society. It may be wise to launch dialogues with negotiable groups, taking advantage of their various backgrounds. This path of dialogue can potentially be an outlet for many terrorists to return to the right track.

Besides, to resolve the problem of violent extremism, social and local aspects of the crisis must be taken into

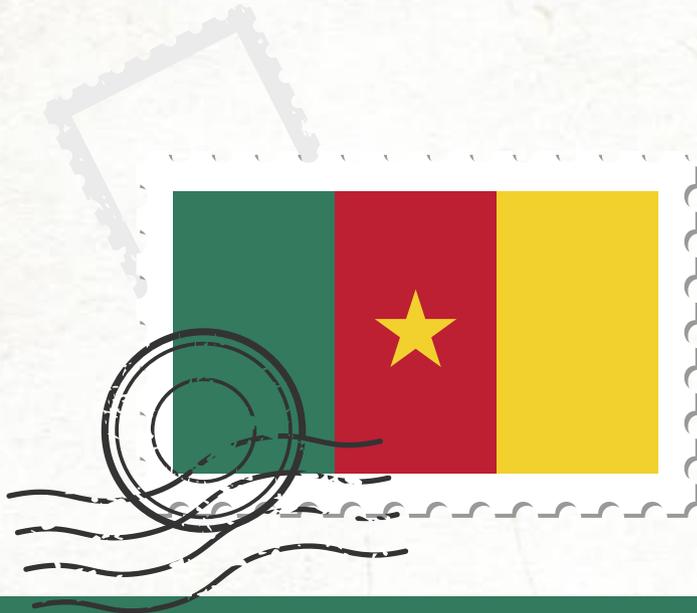


President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré

consideration, where religious and security aspects predominate. The ultimate solution will not be easy should the social and political system be a source of frustration and inequality. Thus, the government should address the causes of the crisis through fundamental developmental programs and cultural incentives in order to counter stigmatization and ostracism of groups, taking into account the local mentalities in charge of crisis management.

Conclusion

Burkina Faso is one of the countries most impacted by violent extremism. Extremist movements across the country have a regional identity besides the local group of Ansar al-Islam. Burkina Faso has provided a perfect environment for the prevalence of regional extremism. Violence has undoubtedly left grave implications on the people. Accordingly, the state has been developing a military response against violent extremism. However, the state's preferable military approach had little results. As a result, it is time for political leaders to pave the way for dialogues that have previously had positive results in other countries, as well as the growth of the social structure and the launch of developmental projects aimed at resolving the conflict. ■



TERRORISM IN NORTH REGION OF CAMEROON

THE CHALLENGING INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT

■ Othman Adma

Violent extremism in the North Region of Cameroon has been a reality in Northern Nigeria. Colonial borders between the two states never impeded ethnic, religious, or environmental solidarity between the two peoples. Neighboring Nigeria, the North Region of Cameroon is privileged with significant trade, economic, and social benefits; it also suffers from the same crises: the proliferation of violent extremism and terrorism. Nigerian Boko Haram has reached the North Region, carrying out and financing operations there, recruiting new members, and disseminating radical views.

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Boko Haram

The North Regions of Cameroon and North-East Nigeria are torn apart. Their religious and ethnic formulation is constantly changing. Religion in the North Region, Cameroon, has a significant impact on social harmony. However, it is used sometimes as an incentive for violence in Northern Nigeria. The rise of religious fundamentalism and violent extremism in North-East Nigeria had a grave impact on the North Region of Cameroon given how it has been a center for propagating Islam throughout history and a trade route between the two states. The Far North Region of Cameroon is part and parcel of the Sahel Region, which has been affected by fluctuating climate change, desertification, social turmoil, poverty and destitution. This contributed to the infiltration and spread of Boko Haram across the North Region.

Several factors have contributed to further implementation of Boko Haram's terrorist schemes in the region, such as local collaborative networking, social turmoil, security vulnerabilities, poverty, marginalization, and mismanagement. Perhaps this would invite a pressing question: why did the North Region of Cameroon become a target to Boko Haram? The answer entails several aspects highlighted as follows:

Political and Social Factors

Politically, Cameroon regards the insurgence of Boko Haram as a purely Nigerian domestic affair. Accordingly, military retaliation was merely defensive, even though neighboring countries are constantly taking measures

to fight Boko Haram's expanding terrorist activity. Cameroonian authorities only started to fight Boko Haram in 2014, even though 2011 marked the onset of the group's terrorist attacks in the Far North Region.

It is necessary to highlight the social aspect of Boko Haram. The group is not keen on recruiting religious scholars, lawmen, pedagogical figures, or public morality officials. Rather, it recruits the poorest strata, particularly young people and students who graduated from traditional religious schools rather than public schools. Boko Haram does not only resort to sentimental religious discourse that uses social grievances to allure angry youths, but also pays off its young members while the government is unable to provide job opportunities and a decent life for thousands of unemployed, frustrated, resentful young people.

Along with the amounts paid by the terrorist group, promises are made of being rewarded in the Hereafter for fighting in its alleged sacred battle. This is one of the reasons behind the religious fundamentalist tendencies of the group.

Economic Factors

The economic situation has been a major factor in the increased violence of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria; it has also led to the deterioration of social services and infrastructure, educational backwardness, increased unemployment, and the decline in agricultural production. Boko Haram has been a direct cause of economic deterioration in the North Region of Cameroon and the region as a whole over the last seven years, given the





massacres, assassinations, abductions, slavery, violence, and terrorism perpetrated, as well as other crimes that crippled daily life. The Cameroonian government states that more than half a million people in the Far North Region of Cameroon are in need of urgent food aid following Boko Haram attacks that forced farmers to leave their lands, shut down local markets, and impeded the movement of goods and individuals.

Food insecurity has considerably deteriorated, specifically along the borders, due to the constant flow of Nigerian immigrants who rely on host communities in Cameroon. Midjiyawa Bakari, Governor of the Far North Region, stated that unless farmers are provided with aids and local markets are restocked with the essential products, the region shall face an impending famine.

Besides, poverty is one major problem confronting Cameroon, especially in the North region. As per



Cameroon's Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (DSCE) of 2009, 41% of Cameroonian people live in absolute poverty and the Region faces constant drought, leading to the displacement

of herders who lost a huge part of their livestock. Had they found any job opportunities, their income would be completely insufficient. Consequently, those people find themselves compelled to believe in Boko Haram's ideology and in the solutions it provides to end poverty.

Religious Factors

Many analysts suggest that violence mainly results from religious causes. However, it is rooted in deprivation and inequality. Social and economic aspects have contributed to the proliferation of extremism, the emergence of criminal networks, increased panic among citizens, and displacement of thousands of people. Ethnic harmony of such groups, however, resulted in criminal solidarity that led to gang formations.

Boko Haram's ideology promises stability and eradication of social and economic injustices. Thus, violent extremism is adopted by the group as an ideology that employs religion to serve its political agenda, until it sounds rational

and acceptable to the public. Given that this has seemingly become the rationale for a reform project, Nigerians looked for a fairer community ruled religiously. They believe that a community is held by a strong people's bond, which maintains its cohesion, regulates its flow, and makes it more just and equitable.

Boko Haram has utilized this desire to recruit a large number of fighters. Between 2002 and 2009, Mohammed Yusuf, former leader of Boko Haram, managed to recruit a large number of youths aged between 17 and 30. Accordingly, many poor families in Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries, such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, sent their children to Yusuf's religious complex, which includes a mosque and a school to disseminate the group's ideology.

Armed Groups

Among the factors behind the upsurge of terrorism in the North Region of Cameroon is the immigration of armed and militant groups near Lake Chad and Nigeria. These groups chose to redeploy individually and collectively along the Cameroonian borders with mercenaries who receive military ethnic solidarity for adopting the same culture.

For example, a Kano immigrant moving from Bama, Nigeria to Kolofata, Cameroon, or an Arab from Chad moving to Cameroon will have no trouble blending in with new communities thanks to their ethnic solidarity. In light of the fact that regional and religious identities significantly identify one's allegiance compared to national loyalty and citizenship, this indicates how environmental, religious, and ethnic solidarity contributed to boosting popular support for Boko Haram in Cameroon's North Region. The organisations uses these allegiances to acquire popular support in the Region.

Boko Haram is particularly active in Mayo-Tsanaga located on the Nigerian border, Logone-Et-Chari on Lake Chad, as well as in Mayo-Sava. It takes advantage of the existing vulnerabilities to utilize the Far North Region as a base for launching terrorist operations and as a convenient place for recruitment, mobilization, preparations, and training. The group also takes care of its supporters in border provinces through dictating ideologies, creating social and economic incentives, and coercion. Furthermore, Boko Haram uses the North Region of Cameroon as a route for arms trafficking. Arms caches were found containing Kalashnikovs, machine pistols, missile launchers, bombs, and exploding wires. Many firearms found in countries suffering from severe crises, such as the Central African Republic, were confiscated.

Tourism and Infrastructure

The Far North Region of Cameroon used to be a popular attraction for western tourists. Lately, however, travelling there is considered high risk given the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the Region. Since 2013, no one has dared to visit it, especially following Boko Haram's doubled rate of abductions and ransom demands, which had a catastrophic impact on the economy since tourism represented a real income source to thousands of working families in the field.

As for education, the government shut down many schools, specifically Qur'anic ones, out of fear of indoctrination. Some were moved to other places. This weakened the pedagogical and educational process, and adversely affected children over the compulsory school age.

Boko Haram seeks to surmount any obstacles to the implementation of its plans. It therefore targets the defensive infrastructure, police stations and gendarmerie along Nigerian borders, and forces policemen to abandon their positions. It demolished several police stations and gendarmerie in Amchide, Fotokol, Garoua, Kirawa, Homaka, Afade, and Hilé Alifa, resulting in substantial losses and economic recession, depriving people of their fundamental rights.

Shutting down police stations resulted in increased robberies, conflicts, and disputes among citizens, given how they were the only state structure that would face such scourges in the region. Health-wise, there was a huge shortage in doctors and medications due to burglarized pharmacies of border health centers, abductions of medical teams, and demolition of infrastructure.

Conclusion

Despite faith in the importance of military confrontations and combatting Boko Haram's terrorism, we believe in the dire need for taking further measures to address the causes of terrorism, most importantly: the rule of law, curbing corruption, providing goods and public services, creating maximum transparency, reducing economic, political and social gaps, and opening professional training centers in order to elevate the functional capacities of youths and to provide suitable job opportunities to decrease unemployment and prevent their recruitment by extremist groups.

These are measures encouraged by governments after realizing that military actions alone had failed to yield the desired results. Efforts should also be directed to economic, social, religious, and cultural reconstruction, aimed at a goodwill-oriented cooperation between the government and the people, in order to develop a stable society that confronts extremist groups and prevents their emergence. ■

IDEOLOGY AND MILITARY PLANNING IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIC AWARENESS

■ Dr. Al-Sadiq Al-Faqih

This article highlights the ideological vision of military strategy and strategic awareness, which is one of the major planning approaches in attack and defense, in the context of military ideology as a frame of reference, and high command vision building that practically affects this strategy development. Strategic awareness as knowledge entails taking a distinct approach to sensory information organization and interpretation, variable and update adaptation, trend and development prediction, and strategic reconstruction of practical cognitive standpoints and frames of reference.

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Defense Strategy

Knowledge is the essence of thought that brings performance change, its constant updates based on intellectual prowess, which is positively manifested in making right decisions at the right moment. Strategic awareness is an unusual recognition, given how it is linked to innovative and strategic thinking when handling situations. It is also correlated to the challenging decision-making process, and requires situational awareness. This article explores some fundamental principles of strategic awareness in the military domains, relevant practical concepts, and the positioning of counter-terrorism in the knowledge system to ensure human security.

Military leaders describe counter-terrorism as an “active defense strategy”. This strategic concept combines proactive measures taken to anticipate, address, and prevent conflicts, with concepts of wartime operations, which aim at achieving military supremacy, undermining the opponent’s capacities, as well as imposing terms of victory, thus eliminating potential threats. The strategy asserts the integration of all operations: defence and attack, defensive maneuvers, and counterattacks within the war on terrorist hotbeds, in order to prevent terrorist organization, cripple terrorists’ movements, continuously clash with them in all theatres of operations, and dismantle terrorist infrastructure and ideologies. Eradicating terrorism requires destroying its military assets, cutting off its financing at source. This is a war of a particular nature unlike ground attacks in regular wars that seek the acquisition of territory.

Relationship Controversy

The controversial relationship between the principles governing military planning and strategic awareness is considered the basis of variable analysis and assessment within the framework of counter-terrorism decision making. The USA and the West are driven by concerns resulting from ideological residue that precludes providing an all-encompassing definition of terrorism. On another note, this relationship is clearly manifested between major powers with ideology-based armies, such as Russia that inherited the Soviet Union, and China which is racing against time to build a striking military force. Military philosophy is closely linked to the political philosophy of the government. This stems from cognitive wiring, which aligns with and reinforces such a philosophy. It is an innovative creation of the mind, based on the information at hand and the analytical capacity of



mental perceptions, and acts as a mental reference based on understanding performance variables. The military institution becomes evidently dynamic based on how it can develop and change its basic structure in terms of armament, training, organization, and deployment in line with the threats posed to national security and interests.

Strategic awareness incorporates awareness of the optimum use of military resources, such as human potential, ordnance, and intelligence, in order to attack, undermine, and eliminate opponents, forcing them to surrender. Such awareness develops through focused training and keeping up to date with military sciences.

Modern military theory classifies warfare into three main levels:

1. strategic;
2. operational;
3. and tactical;

This classification is based on ancient warfare, with a modern formulation brought about following the Franco-Prussian War, including the five main military strategies: extermination, exhaustion, annihilation, intimidation and

subversion. These bases are incorporated together within a theoretical framework to develop a strong, cohesive military strategy. The controversy over these strategies is no longer in place, since the military staff of experts and professionals are capable of formulating these strategies based on their theoretical knowledge and expertise.

The Nature of War

War for those aware of its reality is based on various levels, including:

- Physical Level: Includes the size of arms and how far they are sophisticated, number of soldiers, and the power of logistic support.
- Psychological Level: Includes intangible things, such as the morale of leadership and soldiers, courage, and prowess.
- Analytical Level: Involves the ability of leaders to assess the situation on the battlefield, make right and effective decisions in due course, and formulate perfectly tactical plans to implement those decisions.

In this context, strategic philosophy refers to personal individual views related to organizational strategy that is

based on the mind, expertise, and intuition. Philosophical views can be influenced by a number of personal factors, referring to a set of beliefs, personal views, or rules related to the nature of strategy. Military leadership utilizes these beliefs, values, and rules in the strategic decision-making process to provide guidance, coherence, mission, and the motivation to pursue the strategic objectives of the state or alliance sharing a common goal.

Thus, in the Cold War, the distribution of US military forces across the world was based on the threats posed by the Soviet Union and its socialist bloc and their military representation in the Warsaw Pact. The ideology of the enemy was publicly declared, and the threats were clear. This is clearly manifested in the current Chinese situation, where the USA and its so-called allies are assessing a situation that relies on firsthand knowledge of the staunch opponent. Thus, China was not left with any potential locations for any cold or heated war. This was manifested in the US resolution of joining the trilateral AUKUS security pact with Britain and Australia.

The strategies of Washington's Cold War with Moscow are now being applied to Beijing by reassigning areas where US forces are based. Thus, the Cold War strategy is to deploy well-equipped forces in specific locations to deal with a known enemy. This strategy requires a comprehensive knowledge of enemies to restrict their military movement, which is believed to threaten the interests of the United States and its allies.

Active Defence

Military leaders describe the current counter-terrorism strategy as an active defense strategy. This military concept dates back a long time. It evolved from a practical discussion to a strategic ideological framework, particularly in the late Soviet Era. In Russia, military strategy is the highest military art. It provides general principles of the theory and practices of warfare, preparation for national defence, ways to prevent conflict, wartime force management, and the identification of strategic operations.

Military strategy and the relevant practical concepts show the "Russian way of war" and the implications of mainstream ideology. This means that military strategy shows the ideological planning options, operational concepts of organization, the hierarchy in operations and their achievability. Accordingly, the concept of activity in military strategy describes both proactive measures taken to deter conflict and principles of war management as an emergency threatening society, or a rising conflict in certain countries. Thus, precautionary measures are

taken to neutralize their danger and threat, including utilizing limited forces. The defence strategy asserts how maneuvers and counterattacks are perceived as constant engagement in all theatres of military operations. Thus, counter-terrorism military strategy consists of defensive practical concepts and offensive structures, without clear differentiation. Active defence in the war against terrorism undermines the strategic value of lands under attack while possessing a space field advantage in defence and maneuvering.

Counter-terrorism military strategy is the highest military art, given how it provides general principles of the theory and practice of warfare, starting with preparation for defence and attack, and ending with infiltration, explosions and surprise attacks. Military strategy must therefore be developed in response to the changing environment that leads to focusing on the maneuver warfare approach, which has been recognized as a viable combat philosophy over the past decades. Maneuver warfare arose in the last decade given how adequate it is for the current counter-terrorism situation. Even though this approach is designed for the battlefield, it presents a new creative way of thinking regarding counter strategies for addressing other military threats. This allows politicians to make use of them rather than submitting to challenges and difficulties they face in the war against terrorism.

Conclusion

Despite the similarities between the types of warfare in military operations, the organization of armies, and terrorist acts, which are often cited in political discourse, it is impossible to apply military warfare principles as a whole to different environments, such as counter-terrorism. These other types of war do not take place in specific locations; civilians become endangered; and moral standards governing armies during war cannot be guaranteed under hit-and-run tactics. Yet, armies continue to compete over developing well-established, feasible strategic plans in a world of chaos as the one created by the war on terrorism.

Although developing plans for regular military battles may seem easy, counter-terrorism is directly related to strategies of intellectual work in particular since they are developed according to the given circumstances in maneuver warfare. Accordingly, such an approach can help leaderships to gain a decisive advantage, with minimum force deployment. This awareness is particularly important within an environment of terrorism, where states designate their resources to counter-terrorism. ■

FOREWORD



TERRORISM IN AFRICA: A MENACING WORLD THREAT

Violent extremism is no news to Africa; however, it has been increasingly threatening in the past few years as per several reports and studies. Terrorist groups and organizations have been wreaking havoc from the Horn of Africa in the East, to the Sahel Region in the West, and across the center, north, and south, through killings, looting, human, drugs, and arms trafficking, arson fires destroying farmlands, school break-ins, and student abductions. This resulted in a large number of casualties and widespread destruction and chaos, making Africa the world's most vulnerable region to the scourge of terrorism.

Security reports highlighted that in 2021, Africa entered a stage of exacerbating terrorism, which is no longer confined within the borders of its states. Africa has rather become an example for transnational terrorism. A study published by the European Center for Counter-Terrorism and Intelligence Studies (ECCI), entitled "The Future of Terrorism Regionally and Internationally in 2022" predicts how Africa would become a hub for most terrorist groups and organizations for launching attacks all over the world.

Some studies suggest that 60 terrorist groups and organizations are gathering in Africa, seeking to establish their presence and assert their power, most notably ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Ansar al-Dine, and Al-Shabaab movement. These groups brag about possessing sophisticated arms in the face of regular armies, and their great ability to collect donations and win supporters and followers. They managed to seize many natural resources, prevent governments from accessing them, control water sources, and damage agricultural production, resulting in the decline of investments and economic growth, and increasing rates of poverty and unemployment in these countries.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that organized criminal operations of these groups generate large sums of money, over \$400 million

a year, in exchange for release of hostages, the protection of goods, drugs and arms trafficking, and other illegal activities.

Terrorist groups prevail in Africa for a number of reasons and factors such as vulnerable borders, vast areas spiraling out of security control, the prevailing desert landscape, as well as ethnic divisions, cultural and religious strife, destitution, scarcity of job opportunities, and marginalization of most local citizens. All these factors allured extremist groups, particularly ISIS, to move their destructive activities to Africa, establish branches, alternate bases and strongholds, and create safe hubs for their leadership, trainees, and recruits. These factors have contributed to the free mobilization of these groups, making alliances among themselves and with domestic groups, in addition to the recruitment of large numbers of young people who do not only believe in their ideology but also find these groups a breadwinning source alternative to the government.

Thus far, confronting the growth of these groups, limiting their spread and addressing their danger has ceased to be a luxury for countries. It has become a dire need that requires the joint efforts of African states, a comprehensive policy, and a well-established plan aimed at eliminating internal conflicts, establishing national institutions, focusing on security issues, border surveillance, cutting off support of terrorist movements, drying up the financial wellsprings of terrorism, preventing the proliferation of small and large arms, and meeting development demands to ensure social justice and stability. It is also important to coordinate international efforts alongside national efforts to root out terrorism and eliminate it altogether. Leaving these groups unattended and overlooking violent extremism shall lead to their proliferation as they would become an out-of-control threat and a disturbing nightmare for the whole world. ■

Editor-in-Chief

AtTAHALOF

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الائتلاف العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

