

**TERRORISM MITIGATION STRATEGIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA REGION****<sup>1</sup>Priscah Munyiva Mulinge, <sup>2</sup>Martin Ouma**<sup>1</sup>Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin, Germany<sup>2</sup>Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS), Nairobi Kenya

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**Abstract**

*The study sought to explore terrorism as an emerging security concern in Horn of Africa region, and the region's mitigation strategies. The study was based on the relative deprivation theory. The study utilized secondary data, by reviewing existing studies that relate to the topic of the study. The study found that terrorism manifests itself in Horn of Africa region in three forms. First, is local terrorism. Second, is local terrorism with regional association. Third is terrorism acted by international actors with regional and local associations. Different strategies have been applied by both governments and non-governmental associations trying to address the effect of terrorism on society. These include establishment of commissions, humanitarian mediation, joint effort with governments and government organizations and counterterrorism policies among others. The study concludes that the strategies have, however, not been effective, as enabling drivers to terrorism and poor governance structures give rise to terrorism which in turn affect national security through terrorist activities.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorism, security concern, mitigation strategies, Horn of Africa.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism has been defined as a criminal act that influences an audience beyond the immediate victim (Aronson, 2013). Mockaitis (2020) argues that the effectiveness of the terrorists' act lies not in the act itself, but in the public's government's response to the act. Terrorism's ultimate goal is to introduce fear, and is designed to produce an overreaction. Terrorists do not see themselves as evil, but as legitimate combatants, and deliberate their attacks in order to intimidate and cause panic to the public (Lizardo, 2015).

Terrorism crisis has transcended across borders to the extent that they have given rise to security concerns not only to the regional security of Africa, but also to the international

community. The Muslims tending to close ranks with Somalia and Northern Nigeria are some of the relevant examples. A major cause is the presence of some form of religious and societal discrimination, particularly in major towns where Muslims reside. In other cases, challenge to the pre-existing religious equilibrium brings about radicalization and extremism. Hence, the context matters a lot as the menace of radicalization has multi-layered causes and manifestation of terrorism. For instance, in Somalia the breakdown of state and international connectedness appears prominent (Hehir, 2021). In other parts of the region, people, especially the youth lost opportunities and identity and a feeling of marginalization turn to be the major causes of

terrorism. In East Africa, the Al-Shabaab group has been threatening the security of Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.

According to Ringquist (2011), certain parts of the region, such as the North Eastern and Coast regions of Kenya, Somalia, Southern Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania are vulnerable to radicalization, taking the form of either separatist or extremist ideologies. In Kenya, for instance, the country has faced many challenges since independence. Some of the challenges were experienced between the 1963 and 1968 when the ethnic Somalis in North Eastern Province tried to secede with an agenda of seeking a greater Somalia during the Shifta War (Mohamed, 2017). However, the war was suppressed but resulted in the Wagala Massacre in 1984 followed by marginalization of ethnic Somalis living in Kenya that created a feeling of resentment amongst them. After the war, the government of Kenya declared a state of emergency in North Eastern Province that persisted for almost three decades that further marginalized Somalis residing in Kenya (Botha, 2014).

This alienation coupled with repeated conflicts made North Eastern Kenya and parts of the Coast region lack services like schools, hospitals, and roads. In addition, these parts of Kenya suffer from increasing population growth, lack of employment to the youth, poverty and general insecurity. Because of these factors, resentment against the government is high leading to ingrowths of illegal groups that promise alternative income to the populace (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the relative deprivation theory. Relative deprivation theory was put forward by Ted Gurr who espouses on why people rebel. When material conditions change, attitudes, perceptions over certain

situations such as deprivation lead individuals to a political attitude then results to a material condition. Tilly argues that the major issue why people rebel is not in why they do not carry the actions quite often.

Tilly arguments are not only on the limited violence and logics of obedience. In their argument over terrorism, Ocqueteau (2019) criticized Tilly's argument on the process and relational understanding of violence rather than the conditions that lead to the outbreak of violence. This study adopted the relative deprivation theory to explain the Horn of Africa region's performance in combating terrorism; and how the region uses political systems and state capacities.

Many countries in Africa have accented many legislative and executive measures since 2002 in line with the Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001. This was followed by the enactment of Act no. 9 that took place in 2009 proceeding the Crime and Money Laundering Act in Kenya. According to Adebayo (2014), the attempts to introduce counter terrorism was in line with the Suppression of Terrorism Bill in 2003 with provisions that aim to punish those guilty of possessing items or wearing items that are associated with terrorists. This was controversial in that it was considered an attack on the Muslims and their mode of dressing. The person was supposed to provide evidence; failure to which the consequences were perceived religiously prejudiced towards the Muslim religion. This brought forth arguments from all directions, most of which came from the ethnic Somalis (Botha, 2014).

Terror attacks have taken root whereby Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) such as the Al-Shabaab have resorted to recruiting youths into carrying attacks in order to sustain themselves and to exploit the youth vulnerabilities. This however, creates insecurity due to the frequent attacks planned

and executed by these groups (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

In response to terrorism, countries such as Kenya introduced the suppression of Terrorism Bill in 2003 in parliament but the Bill had to be shelved due to widespread civil society and Muslim opposition. Appropriate legislation only took effect nine years later when former President Kibaki ascended Terrorism Act into law (Rabasa, 2015). This Act complemented separate legislations that regulated on money laundering, firearms licensing, anti-corruption and prosecution of suspected criminals. Kenya also established a national counter-terrorism centre and a dedicated unit in the Kenya Police to handle terrorism issues (the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit; ATPU). This pushed the Law Society of Kenya, the civil society and other watchdog groups to demonstrate on the streets nationwide sensitizing Kenyans to the negative provisions of the bill. Eventually, the 2003 bill ended up failing in the second reading after parliament was prorogued. However, another antiterrorism bill was proposed in 2006, but never saw the light neither was it discussed at parliament (Rabasa, 2015).

The USA became Kenya's closest partner in its anti-terrorism drive, in various diplomatic forums, most notably the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). It also provided funding and the logistics of establishing the counterterrorism centre and in training Kenyan police on counter-terrorism strategies. Pillar (2010) states that Kenya also benefited immensely from the East African counterterrorism initiative (EACTI) and also conducts joint patrols with the US military along Kenya's coastline.

Stability in any country in the Horn of Africa would have multiplier effect in other countries in the region. It is extremely urgent for the ratio of police to the population to be

bridged by hiring more police officers, while also improving the terms and conditions of service for the law enforcers besides enhancing coordination of counter-terrorism efforts so as to adequately address security problems in Kenya (Botha, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a case study design. By using this study design, the study sought to obtain in-depth information from one single bounded case or element, that is, terrorism and mitigation strategies in the Horn of Africa. A case study design also contributes to reliable generalization of findings. The study drew from secondary documentary foundations. Secondary data was collected by reviewing source materials in the form of reports, journals, documentaries, websites and books. The production of new knowledge was fundamentally dependent on past knowledge, based on discussions and observations made by past scholars. In data analysis, deductive method was used to generalize data based on past studies and documentaries, through looking at the general pattern from those studies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Terrorism Concerns in the Horn of Africa

Terrorism manifests itself in Horn of Africa region in three forms. First, is local terrorism which does not involve regional terrorism. Second, is local terrorism with regional association. Third is terrorism acted by international actors with regional and local associations. Uganda and Sudan have been casualties of the first two while Kenya and Somalia have encountered each of the three forms (Sheldon, 2016).

In the Horn of Africa, there is a change of focus from traditional referent security objects of the state to the broadened human security perspectives that is characteristic of

the post-Cold War period. Some aspects of security strategy and securitization remain ensconced in the traditional frame, which was based on national interest. Arising from the above, there are disconnects between national and regional responses to the aforementioned security challenges.

The utilization of violence with the point of making trepidation in a more extensive audience of people with a goal to keep different parties from accomplishing something, or, in actuality, to constrain them into a specific conduct, is as old as humankind. Such utilization of violence has served states and different administrations over time (Mueller and Stewart, 2014). For example, Kenya has encountered each of the four noteworthy types of terrorism i.e., leftist, rightist, ethno-patriot, and religious. The most crushing assaults have originated from ethno nationalistic and religious terrorism (Otiso, 2014). In 1998, Kenya, alongside Tanzania, endured terrorist assaults that killed more than 250 individuals and injured almost 5,000 others. At that point in 2002, another terrorist attack in Kenya murdered 13 individuals and injured 80 (Daily Nation, 2017).

Recently, the terrorism activities have been on the rise in Kenya with fresh attacks being experienced at the Kenyan Coast. This has led to some countries including the US and the UK offering travel advisories to their citizens against coming to Kenya with fears of insecurity. Prestholdt (2011) noted that about 2,500 jobs had been lost in Kilifi County in Kenya alone, which relies mainly on Italian tourists, and auxiliary sectors like handicraft makers, taxi drivers, fishermen and farmers.

The Al Shabaab group has been in existence in Somalia for quite a long time now. Both national and international actors have taken various steps to ensure that the group is eliminated (Alozieuwa, 2012; Anyadike, 2013). Militant Islamic impact has existed in

Somalia for a considerable length of time; however, did not meaningfully affect the political circumstance amid the authoritarian lead of President Siad Barre. With his topple in 1991, trailed by the aggregate fall of the focal government, various distinctive Somali powers rapidly exploited the political vacuum and extended their impact. For the first fifteen, Somali warlords held a large portion of the power, albeit different Islamic groups which turned out to be more decisive. Others, including Al Shabaab, built up a program in view of Islamic power and progressively ended up plainly subject to outside impact (Masters and Sergie, 2015).

Apart from Kenya and Somalia, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) revolt development in Uganda is another security concern in the region. There have been reports of killings, slaughters, snatchings and ambushes of civilians in the northern region of Uganda and a few sections of Southern Sudan. This has regularly fuelled a level of strain between the two neighbouring Horn of Africa countries. Sudan has blamed the Museveni government for supporting the SPLM/SPLA (Lizardo, 2015).

Studies, for example, Alozieuwa (2012) and Lizardo (2015) have argued that Islamic fundamentalists have been harboured for a long time in the Horn of Africa region, including the Sudan region. As such, the Republic of Sudan has connived with terrorists from the Arab world which in itself is a danger to world peace. Different countries charged having such connections include Libya and most as of late Somalia and by augmentation, agents in Kenya. This state of undertakings, which is global in nature and stature, is one of the key security worries in the Horn of Africa today. Surely the solid contention is that the nonattendance of a government in Somalia makes a place of refuge for terrorist activists in the region. This in itself represents a security

chance since it can be a rearing ground for undercover exercises and for the formation and solidification of terrorist cells. In September 2013, an attack on Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi took the lives of 67 individuals and most recently, in April 2015, an attack on Garissa University College which took lives of 147 innocent students.

### **Mitigation Strategies**

Different strategies have been applied by both governments and non-governmental associations (NGOs) trying to address the effect of terrorism on society. Both regional and worldwide strategies have been made towards managing security matters in the area. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) attempted a few strategies with the point of settling conflict conditions in the area. However, the performance of the OAU in the administration and general responses to conflicts in the region were to a great extent insufficient.

As indicated by Masters and Sergie (2015), despite the fact that the OAU's establishing fathers had set up the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration particularly with the goal of settling conflicts between OAU member states, they neglected to end the mainland issues that regularly fuelled conflicts. Despite the fact that a large portion of the interventions by heads of state created positive outcomes by accomplishing a ceasefire, this was essentially because of the way that conflicting groups were exhausted and were prepared for intercession yet not to destroy the issues.

The UN's responses to security issues in the Horn of Africa have been fundamentally in the side of humanitarian mediation whether in Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Notwithstanding, the failure of the UN in Somalia needed to accomplish more with the failure of security operations and of strategies

to contain the savagery on the ground. For quite a while, very little consideration was paid by the association to ceasing the violence in the country. Incidentally, this was the point at which the UN was using a lot of energy on the Bosnia emergency, provoking claims about the UN's distraction with the "rich man's war", while disregarding the "poor man's war" in Somalia. The warring groups in Somalia put such a large number of snags that the UN missions there thought that it was hard to work.

Over the last few years, the UN has authorized a logistics support package for African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) through UN Security Council Resolution 1863, but the United States continues to provide most logistics. AMISOM is instrumental in ensuring peace and stability in Somalia, and support to the organization is essential. According to Carlson and Aggarwal (2021), the UN established its support contracts, and the support now focuses on equipment, training, and troop transport. However, the African Union (AU) has stated that support from the international community remains below the optimal level required to sustainably turn around the political and security situation in Somalia.

The East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative (EARSII) is also another strategy that has been posed to respond to terrorism concerns in the region. According to Gunda and Hammawa (2021), EARSII aims to foster regional counterterrorism efforts, build partner capacity, and diminish support for violent extremism. Partner countries include Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Comoros, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mauritius and Uganda. Some military programs have been conducted in cooperation with the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (, CJTF-HOA), and part of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). As civil aviation remains a potential terrorist target in

East Africa, and four EARSI countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, and Uganda) are participants in the Safe Skies for Africa (SSFA) program, managed by the Department of Transportation and implemented by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) (Eji, 2021).

Other efforts in the area include the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), a State Department program to strengthen counterterrorism capabilities in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (Manu, 2021). Funded through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related programs (NADR), Economic Support Fund (ESF), and Development Assistance (DA) accounts, EACTI focuses on improving partner countries' police and judicial counterterrorism capabilities, as well as coastal and border security.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as a sub-regional body has also applied efforts to address unsteadiness in the Horn of Africa region. IGAD is made out of the seven states that shape the more noteworthy Horn of Africa Region. Aside from being framed with the point of battling drought and desertification in the 1980s, IGAD augmented its extension and command to incorporate guaranteeing peace, dependability and security which shape the focal requirements for improvement in the sub-region. In this way, IGAD has in the previous few years stepped forward in tending to the real security worries in the region in particular the Sudan conflict, the Somalia conflict, the rebellions in Uganda, the Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict, cross border crime and banditry, terrorism, and poverty.

Apart from such regional strategies, the United States, for instance, has been a noteworthy agent of both AU and IGAD responses to insecurity in the Horn of Africa region. Lately, the US has been dynamic in guaranteeing that African states can have the ability to handle conflict circumstances and battle global terrorism. In the mid-1990s the US was instrumental in subsidizing the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). This initiative is intended to upgrade the capacity of African powers to direct peacekeeping and humanitarian alleviation operations, in Africa as well as somewhere else in the world if called upon to do as such. Since 1996, troops from Kenya and Uganda have been trained through the program.

The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), is a multi-agency instrument primarily of security agencies intended to provide a coordinating mechanism for counter terrorism. Recently, the war on terrorism and violent extremism received a major boost, following the launch of a penal strategy on rehabilitation of violent extremist offenders, in Kenya's penal institutions (LaFree & Freilich, 2019). According to national counter terrorism centre director Joseph Opondo, the challenge in fighting violent extremism has long been in penal institutions, and the launch of a training manual for the prisons, will boost the fight against extremism and radicalization in communities.

In support to the NCTC efforts, NGOs and civil society bodies and groups have also been dynamic in handling the different security worries in the Horn of Africa region. They have done this primarily in a joint effort with governments and government organizations in the region. NGOs have been dynamic in instructing the population at the grassroots on the significance of peace and negotiations. However, in Kenya, for instance, a few NGOs have been dynamic in guaranteeing

government support in the disarmament of small arms from equipped citizens, and dairy cattle rustlers. The NGOs and the Kenya government have held joint meetings where many issues concerning security in the area have been examined.

In addition, Kenya's move in October 2012 to deploy troops in Somalia-Kenya border to eradicate the Al-Shabaab has been the country's major decision in the fight against terrorism since independence. This saw the country draft a campaign dubbed Operation Linda Nchi that was meant to spread into Somalia. However, this has had many challenges and risks with the likelihood of increasing Al-Shabaab retaliatory terror campaign on Kenyan soils and the opportunities to alleviate extremism and seek for a stable polity remain minimal and short term.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that countries with enabling drivers to radicalization and poor governance structures will give rise to terrorism which will in turn affect national security through terrorist activities.

Counterterrorism strategies and policies require accountability. Accountability here means that the approaches taken to address radicalization should be public and open for scrutiny by various institutions and the civil society. They should involve the executive and the legislative arms of government, as well as an independent, impartial and informed judiciary. Moreover, involvement of the public: non-state actors, the media and the general public is essential. Terrorism is argued as the extreme posture of radicalism. It has multiple foundations and to understand these underlying forces, security studies need to adopt more interdisciplinary

perspectives to the causes, operations as well as counter terrorism mechanisms.

Therefore, there is no reason for repudiating that counter-terrorism is solely meant to protect the state and her citizens from the threat and effects of a terrorist attack in case the plan is not interdicted. This requires greatest vigilance in safety measures, intelligence gathering, law enforcement, inter agency collaborations and finally the use of force should be a last resort. Furthermore, terrorist operated networks are not easily identified and therefore need effective and efficient security approaches to alleviate them.

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