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**Contributors**

Prosper Addo

Faten Aggad

Pierre Botha

Cedric de Coning

Britt de Klerk

Karanja Mbugua

Paul Nantulya

Senzo Ngubane

**Publisher**The African Centre for the Constructive  
Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)

Private Bag X018,

Umhlanga Rocks 4320,

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)31 502 3908

Fax: +27 (0)31 502 4160

Email: [conflictrends@accord.org.za](mailto:conflictrends@accord.org.za)Website: [www.accord.org.za](http://www.accord.org.za)**Printing**

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With reference to the article by  
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in the table on page 29 was not provided  
by the author and that any inaccuracies  
are the responsibility of ACCORD.

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COVER: Photograph by Simon Maina/AFP, 29 November 2002, Kenya



It is an undeniable fact that the world has experienced dramatic changes since the events of 9/11. It is also a fact that the international security system has seen drastic transformation since 9/11 and the subsequent events that have since occurred, which are now placed within the context of a war against terrorism. As a result of these events, it appears that a dividing line has been drawn between those who support a call to root out terrorism wherever it might appear in order to achieve global peace, and those who still think that global peace is possible without resorting to the use of force.

Certainly, the effect of the war on terrorism has been felt throughout the world, and no regional or national security approach has been left unaffected. This includes Africa, as we have seen in a number of publications and research studies, which have recently (or in the past) been published. This issue of *Conflict Trends* is, therefore, a contribution to this ongoing attempt to comprehend this approach towards a war on terrorism and the effects it has on the world at large, and Africa in particular.

The issue seeks to understand the extent to which Africa has been affected by these events but, more importantly, it also evaluates what has been Africa's response to this challenge. Africa's response is relevant simply because it is perhaps in this continent, more than any other place in the world, that it is difficult to define exactly what it is that constitutes

terrorism. Historically, the African continent and most of the modern states in Africa were forged and created through wars of liberation, some of which could have been declared terrorist. As the continent is still faced with a number of armed conflicts, a question still remains as to how modern African states and relevant bodies respond to these challenges.

The evaluation of Africa's response to terrorism is not intended to see the war on terrorism as the only important security issue facing Africa. This issue also intends to assist us in seeking alternative means of dealing with conflicts around the world. It is these alternative ways that need to be researched and discussed in order to ensure that the noble goals of universal peace and stability are realised. It is lamentable that the war on terrorism has, directly or indirectly, unleashed violence around the world; it is this violence and attempts to quell it, which might make citizens of the world conclude that there is no space for alternative ways of dealing with or managing complex conflict issues. However, options do exist, and the events that have occurred since 9/11 should propel all of us to stretch our resources so that we strengthen these alternatives. These seek to remind us and help us think of a myriad of other security challenges that still exist beyond terrorism. This is mostly relevant for Africa, where conflict issues are complex and indeed demand that we not only focus on the issue of terrorism but also on issues of people-centred security. ▴



LUKE FRAZZA/AP

PIERRE BOTHA

FEATURE

# United States **counter- terrorism** programmes in Africa: An overview

In 2003, the United States (US) Congress authorised a study on US policy towards Africa under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which appointed an Africa Policy Advisory Panel to coordinate the research. Generally, the report that followed and was launched in July 2004 in Washington placed the continent high up on the US's list of priorities. One of the chapters in the report dealt with counter-terrorism in Africa. The authors of this chapter put it unambiguously: "The threat of terror to US interests in Africa is concrete, rising and discernible. The probability of another attack on Americans on African soil is high."<sup>1</sup> The Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, US Representative, Ed Royce, who was

present at the launch of the report, as well as some other senior dignitaries such as the US Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell, mentioned that Africa is home to more Muslims than the Middle East (over 300 million), and that it "is the place where our fight against terrorism is being fought".<sup>2</sup>

It is heartening to see greater US involvement in and an upgrading of Africa's status in American national interests in its fight against terrorism. In the past, the Americans were apathetic towards Northern African problems with fundamentalist Islamism. For example, Tunisia faced a serious bout of terrorism in the late 1970s to the 1980s, and Algeria since the mid-1980s has seen more than 150 000 people killed in the latter's war against terrorist



Families hold photos of their relatives who have disappeared in the civil war in Algeria

fundamentalist Muslims. Algeria had to contend with this on its own, with no assistance from any foreign powers. It is the author's opinion that even the 7 August 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the later terrorist attack in Mombasa in November 2002, did not wake the US up to the threat of terrorism in Africa. It was only after President George W. Bush launched the "global war on terror", following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Center in New York, that this issue was made one of, if not *the*, major issue in present US foreign policy, and Africa began featuring in US counter-terrorism policy as well.

Since the important policy shift in the US, numerous counter-terrorist initiatives in Africa have been launched by the US in Africa. The following section relies heavily on the testimony of Karl Wycoff, who is the Associate Coordinator in the Office of the Coordinator of Counter-terrorism, before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, and other newswire reports on the progress that the US has been making in Africa in counter-terrorism activities and initiatives on the continent.

### The Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI)

While initially conceived by the US government as only applicable to the Pan-Sahel countries such as Chad, Mali, Niger and Mauritania, which happen to be the size of the US, where government control over border crossings is non-existent and contraband smuggling is commonplace, this US programme has expanded to include some other Maghreb North African countries, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The programme has funds of US\$7.5 million for two years, ending in 2004.<sup>3</sup>

US Army Colonel Victor Nelson, who oversees the programme for the Department of Defence's Office of International Security Affairs, during an interview in the Pentagon stated; "We have said for a long time that if you squeeze the terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and other places, they are going to find new places to operate, and one of those places is the Sahel/Maghreb."<sup>4</sup>

The European Command (EUCOM), based in Stuttgart, Germany, is responsible for fighting the global war on terrorism in North and West Africa and is funded by the US State Department.<sup>5</sup> While the PSI was launched with limited funds, it has now expanded to include Senegal,



with its large Muslim population, and possibly other countries as well, and EUCOM has requested a total of US\$125 million from Congress for this initiative over the next five years.<sup>6</sup>

The EUCOM chief of counter-terrorism, Lt. Col. Powl Smith, has explained the initiative by arguing that, to prevent America becoming a target of Muslim fundamentalist hatred, the new strategy is not to have a large US military contingent in the Pan-Sahel states but rather to provide US Special Forces training to the participating countries, and to outfit them with pick-up trucks, radios and global positioning systems.<sup>7</sup>

The Sahel region is of special concern to the US due to the states' sizes, their weak central authority and the prevalent nomadic life styles in the area, which inhibits border control and law enforcement. According to Karl Wycoff, the Sahelian traditional caravan routes are being used as illegal routes for migration, drug trafficking and weapons proliferation, as well as a hideout and staging area for criminals and terrorists. Quick reaction forces to secure the borders of this vast area are being trained by US Special Forces as part of the PSI.<sup>8</sup>

The PSI has already paid dividends and has been relatively successful in curbing terrorism. The issue of an Algerian fundamentalist terrorist organisation is a case in point. The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 2003 kidnapped 32 German tourists and demanded a large ransom, which was eventually paid by the German government. This terrorist group has known links with *Al Qaeda*. The person behind the kidnapping was Ammari Saifi who, after receiving the ransom, acquired more weapons in northern Mali. In February 2004, Algerian forces obtained information and intercepted a convoy of weapons from the north of Mali. The containment of weapons consisted of mortar launchers, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and surface-to-air missiles. Saifi also bought global positioning equipment to enable militants to create garrisons in the Sahelian sands, probably to be used later for terrorist purposes.<sup>9</sup> Other members of the GSPC were tracked down when the US sent a P-3 Orion plane to the area and relayed Saifi's position back to Mali, where they were subsequently



chased out of the country to Niger and ultimately to Chad, where, with US logistical support, 43 of the terrorists were killed or captured.<sup>10</sup> Saifi himself got away unharmed.

The lack of border control and law enforcement encourages the proliferation of weapons smuggling as well as hideouts for terrorists

### The East Africa Counter-terrorism Initiative (EACTI)

This counter-terrorism initiative is multi-faceted, and seems to include the Horn of Africa as well as East Africa. President Bush announced the programme, worth US\$100 million, in June 2003. William Pope, Deputy Coordinator for Counter-terrorism, during opening remarks at a counter-terrorism conference in Kampala, said that: "Although we are concerned about attacks anywhere in Africa, we consider East Africa and the Horn – Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Tanzania – to be at particular risk."<sup>11</sup>

The programme for these countries involves military training for border control and coastal security, initiatives to strengthen control of the movement of people and goods across borders, regional moves against terrorist financing, police training, as well as such aspects as an aviation security capacity. The EACTI also includes an important programme of education to prevent extremist fundamentalist influences from gaining the upper hand in the targeted

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in protest against terrorism after the suicide bombings that left 43 people dead in Casablanca, Morocco

ABDELHAK SENNA/AP



countries. Furthermore, the US interagency Terrorist Finance Working Group (TFWG) is working with East African countries on anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regimes in these states. The State Department's Terrorist Interdiction Programme (TIP), operative since 2003 at a number of selected airports in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, and scheduled to be expanded to Djibouti and Uganda in 2004, aims to trace the movement of potential and/or real terrorists when entering or leaving these states.<sup>12</sup>

TIP entails software packages intended to decisively impact on terrorists' freedom of movement, with state-of-the-art computer name-check networks that enable immigration officials to quickly identify suspect persons attempting to enter or leave a particular country.<sup>13</sup> The TIP programme provides a watch list, developed by individual states in collaboration with INTERPOL, which provides states with the capacity to collect, analyse and compare traveller data to help the world to understand the methods of terrorists and track their movements.

The extent of the kaleidoscope of US counter-terrorism programmes can be seen in the example of the types of assistance and training provided to Kenya, as an identified

"front-line state" in the global war against terrorism. This country is an example of the numerous programmes in existence in the US for its partners within Africa in the struggle against terrorism. The assistance comes from the State Department's budget, which allocates money for the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programme, of which Cofer Black is the head of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. This programme, funded through the S/CT NADR account, entails law enforcement training to help the state to develop its own counter-terrorism programme. As far as training is concerned, the programme's training has a section that includes detection and rendering safe explosive devices, post-blast techniques of investigation, VIP protection and senior leadership crisis management exercises as well as hostage taking negotiations, and more.<sup>14</sup>

### The West African Initiative

The potential of Islamist fundamentalism in West Africa's a matter of concern to the US, especially with the large number of Muslims in the region and the dramatic rises in anti-American rhetoric in this area. Nigeria, which has seen spontaneous pro-Bin Laden demonstrations since the 9/11 attacks, is a special

concern for the US. Northern Nigeria has a long history of radicalism and is a volatile area in West Africa and potential breeding and recruiting ground for fundamentalist terrorism. Similarly, the post-war security and reconstruction needs of Liberia are receiving close attention, as well as the stabilisation of Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire to prevent these countries from becoming springboards for terrorism in the future in West Africa.<sup>15</sup>

Dr J. Stephen Morrison, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated in July 2004 that: "[The] glaring vulnerability in the Gulf of Guinea is the lack of effective control over its maritime and coastal environment. This has encouraged levels of piracy [at sea] unrivalled in Africa (and in global terms, second only to the Malacca Straits in South-east Asia)."<sup>16</sup> This situation encourages illicit trafficking in arms as well as terror attacks against energy infrastructures, which the US is monitoring closely.

Given American expansion of oil operations and investments in the Gulf of Guinea, Morrison stated that an annual US government investment of US\$10-20 million could secure a coastal guard in the Gulf of Guinea to America's advantage and to the region.<sup>17</sup> One of the 12 universally adopted international conventions on terrorism classifies piracy at sea as terrorism.<sup>18</sup>

There is also a large pool of Muslims in the West African region, who could be recruited by Islamist fundamentalist terrorists, yet there is

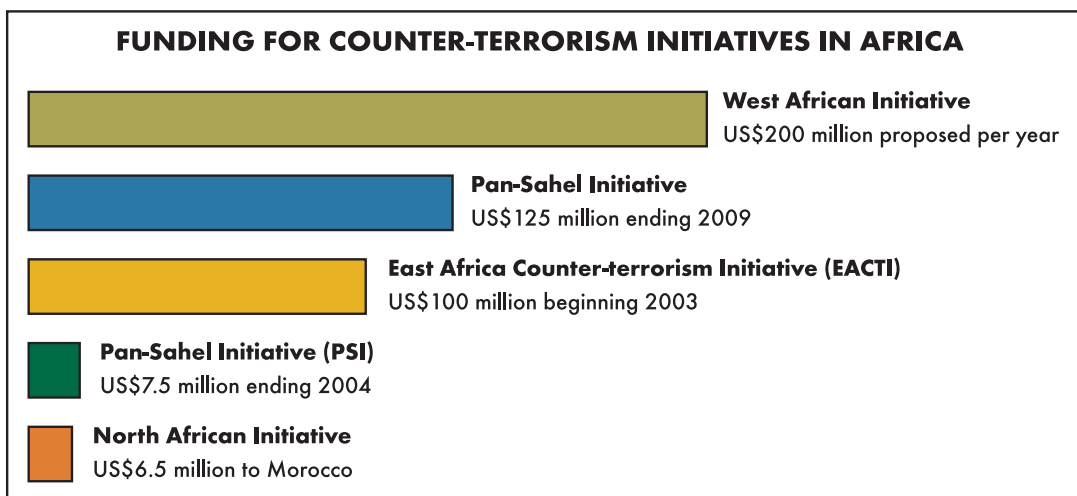
also something that America can do. Morrison and Lyman in their CSIS report came up with the suggestions that the US administration through Congress should launch a US\$200 million a year outreach programme towards Muslims through an educational programme, as well as expanding humanitarian and development assistance to these communities as a counter-terrorism measure.<sup>19</sup> It was also suggested that America place pressure on the Saudi Arabian state to regulate its flows from charitable institutions in that country to *madrasses* in Africa which could be used for non-charitable causes, and especially terrorism.<sup>20</sup>

*It is heartening to see greater US involvement in and an upgrading of Africa's status in American national interests in its fight against terrorism*

**The Southern African Initiative**

The US is also deeply involved in counter-terrorism initiatives in southern Africa, with the aim of capturing known terrorists and freezing their assets. In 2003, a major conference was held by the US in Botswana, which was attended by 13 nations from Southern Africa, and especially aimed at ways to strengthen counter-terrorism laws. A counter-terrorism legislation seminar was also held in 2002 in Washington, in which eight countries participated, and that was organised by the State and Justice Departments of America.

South Africa took the initiative to introduce its own Financial Intelligence Unit to track



terrorists' movements and assets and to freeze them. The US is encouraging South Africa to export training, intelligence and other assistance to neighbouring Southern African countries in this regard.<sup>21</sup>

**The North African initiative**

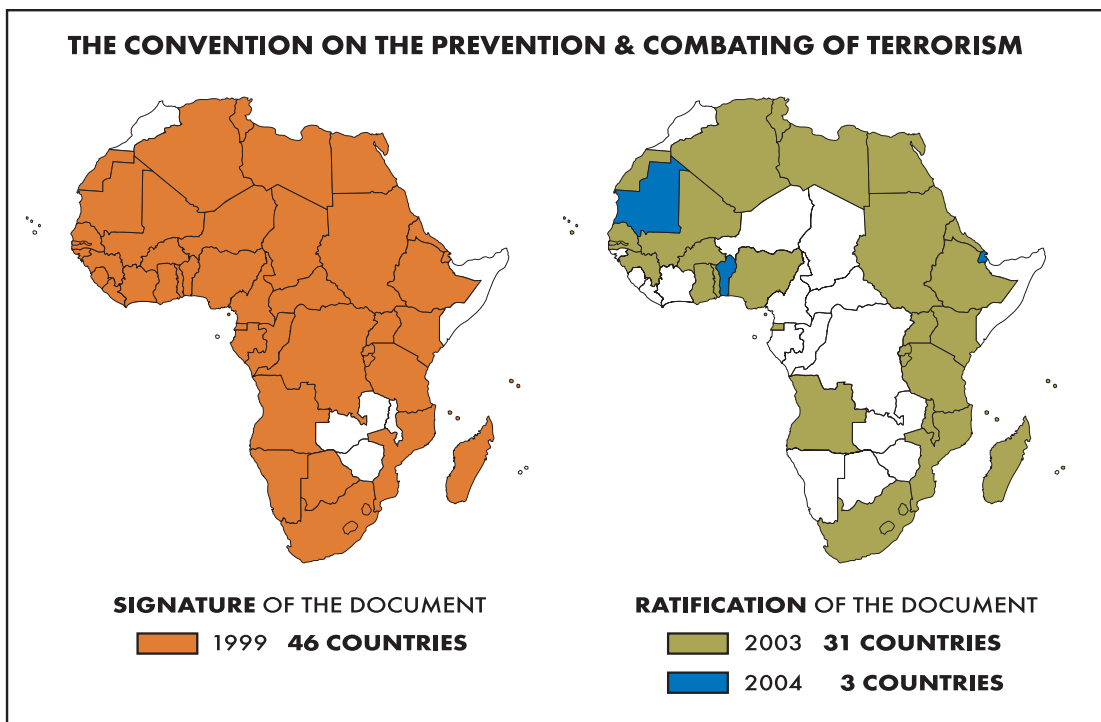
This initiative and the Pan-Sahel programme overlap to some extent. Furthermore, the countries' counter-terrorism initiatives, as mentioned by Wycoff, include only three countries. He in actual fact was referring to the Maghreb countries' fight against terrorism.

The bomb blast in Casablanca on 16 May 2003 led the Moroccan governments' security forces to uncover extremist cells in nearly every city in this state. Over 1 000 people were arrested and 800 have been convicted to date. The organisation *Salafiya Jihadiya* was found to be responsible for the bomb blasts and the further planning of terrorism in Morocco. In February 2004, terrorist cells, linked to the above-mentioned organisation, were exposed by Moroccan authorities and 37 people were detained in Fez and Meknes.

The US government is assisting Morocco in a number of counter-terrorism initiatives, such as the State Department's ATA programme and the TIP. Under ATA, so far US\$6.5 million has been allocated to this country to targeted skills of counter-terrorism, such as the programme to secure security at airports, seaports and land boundaries.<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned in passing that Morocco has a pro-Western/US policy and is seen as a "strategic partner" in the global fight against terrorism by the Americans.

In the global war on terrorism of President Bush, Tunisia has worked closely with the US in information sharing, military cooperation and tracking the financial assets of terrorist groups. This state also passed anti-terrorism legislation in 2003 and a secure passport checking system has been put in place.

As with Tunisia, Algerian cooperation with the US has increased, in terms of information sharing, military cooperation and the tracking and freezing of financial assets of terrorist organisations. Yet, as Wycoff correctly observes, a "residual terrorist threat" still remains in





Algeria and close cooperation with the US remains necessary.<sup>23</sup>

### The Anti-terrorist finance programme

The US also has a very stringent anti-terrorist financing regime in place, which it is trying to promote in Africa, as well as all over the world. By signing executive order 13224 on 24 September 2001, President Bush called on the Treasury as well as the Secretary of State to identify terrorists, their financiers, and facilitators. The aim is to cut off terrorists' financial means to implement their terror campaigns worldwide. In the US alone, some 383 individuals and entities have had their funding frozen, which amounts to well over US\$140 million. This is a substantial amount of money.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, more than 80 countries have collaborated with the US in counter-terrorism financing. The number of African countries involved is not certain at present. The 2003 report on *Global Patterns of Terrorism*, published by the State Department, notes that 173 nations have issued orders to freeze terrorist assets, and that more than 100 countries have passed legislation to curb terrorist financing.

The Department of State's Counter-terrorism Finance Unit and the interagency Terrorist Finance Working Group have assistance programmes for countries wishing to join the campaign against counter-terrorist financing, especially in Africa, which is seen as a high risk factor, because its lack of financial controls.<sup>24</sup>

### Africa and counter-terrorism

While this article has dealt with American counter-terrorism initiatives in Africa, it is deemed appropriate to also mention some of the African initiatives that fit into the world's existing framework of the global war on terrorism.<sup>25</sup> The League of Arab States, of which six African countries are members (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) already long before 11 September 2001 occurred, adopted in Cairo in April 1998 an Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, by the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Ministers of Justice.<sup>26</sup>



HOCINE / AFP

Similarly, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), later superseded by the African Union (AU), at its 35th Ordinary Session of Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 1999, adopted the Algiers Convention on Terrorism, whose full title was the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. This document had been ratified by 30 African countries by 2003, although 46 African countries signed the original document in 1999.<sup>27</sup> At the 1999 Algiers meeting, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika offered to host an African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), a proposal which was accepted by the former OAU.

A Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa was then adopted at a high-level inter-governmental meeting of African states in Algiers, Algeria, between 11 and 14 September 2002, by the AU.<sup>28</sup> The ACSRT is mentioned in the plan and it is stated that it "shall serve to centralise information, studies and analyses on terrorism and terrorist groups and develop training programmes by organising, with the assistance of international partners, training schedules, meetings, and symposia".<sup>29</sup> The Centre is sponsored by the AU, as well as the European Union, US and United Nations. It will consist of some 20 experts on counter-terrorism.

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika addresses officials from African Union governments in Algeria, 11 September 2002, on the prevention of terrorism and on a pan-African plan to deal with the problem

**Since the important policy shift in the US, numerous counter-terrorist initiatives have been launched by the US in Africa**

On 13 October 2004, President Bouteflika inaugurated the creation of the Centre.<sup>30</sup>

### Conclusion

US policies in counter-terrorism on the African continent have raised the continent's priority in US eyes. There are counter-terrorism programmes in all the regions of Africa, in addition to the fact that certain volatile countries have been singled out for special counter-terrorism training, because they have been identified as high risk countries.

African initiatives in this regard have also not fallen short. However, the issue of Africa's capacity needs to be noted. That is, Africa with its porous borders, lack of financial institutions with programmes that can trace monies for terrorist purposes, and the number of "failed states", makes international and especially US, EU, and UN assistance of utmost importance in the struggle against terrorism. ▴

*Dr. Pierre Botha is a Senior Research Specialist at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA).*

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HADAR COHEN/AFI

PROSPER ADDO

FEATURE

# The **war on terrorism** and Africa's peace and security agenda

**D**uring the Second World War and Cold War, warfare primarily occurred between the strongest states, the United States of America (US), France, Russia and China, and in several instances their proxies in the developing countries, using conventional weapons or threatening to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Current trends in the international system, however, reveal the use of unconventional weapons and tactics in warfare, not necessarily between the big powers, but rather between individuals (considered as terrorists), terrorist groups and organisations on the one hand, and the developed or developing countries and their interests on the other.

The asymmetries in warfare, though not new, have been brought to the fore since the 11 September 2001 (9/11) attacks.

The truck-bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on 19 April 1995 marked the beginning of a major attack through the use violence on the US. This attack was described as “the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil” at the time.<sup>1</sup> The 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre and other sensitive installations in the United States, however, reinforced US foreign policy towards the fight against terrorism.<sup>2</sup> Terrorism has been a sub-category of political discourse since the late eighteenth century, and eventually gaining prominence in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> The unconventional, organised and

SIMON MAINA/AFP



Local Kenyan newspapers with front page coverage on the bombing of the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, 28 November 2002

sophisticated attacks triggered after 9/11 have had a major impact on international relations and its systemic imperatives.

Africa, as a continent, has not been free of acts of terrorism, either against local or foreign interests. These attacks either take place on the continent or are launched from the continent. Terrorist attacks have taken place in various parts of the continent, including Kenya, Tanzania, Algeria, Angola, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Nigeria. Sudan, Egypt and Somalia have also been cited as bases from which terrorist acts have been launched against foreign interests.

This paper seeks to examine the war on terrorism in Africa, identifying efforts undertaken so far to address the issue. In doing this, the African peace and security agenda is reviewed, identifying the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) agenda for peace and security with special reference to the pre- and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) strategy put in place to address the issue of terrorism. The paper argues that the NEPAD peace and security agenda, backed by the AU Constitutive

Act, provides a broader, appropriate and effective spectrum or space for addressing the issue of terrorism but issues such as bad governance and its accompanying poverty, underdevelopment, huge debt burden, corruption, diseases and conflicts creates the conducive environment for terrorism to thrive. Hence the need for African governments to prioritise efforts toward a comprehensive political, security and development interface of dealing with terrorism as against a non-effective one-track diplomatic, financial and military collaborative efforts by African and foreign governments to tackle the act of terrorism.

#### **Africa's war on terrorism**

The word terrorism has been defined and interpreted in various ways, and the word has now become accepted in many quarters as being:

*... simply a word, a subjective epithet, not an objective reality and certainly not an excuse to suspend all the rules of international law.<sup>4</sup>*

Only a few European Union (EU) countries have defined terrorism in law. Britain is one such country, with its Terrorism Act of 2000,





ALEXANDER JOE/AFP



HADAR COHEN/AFP

which is the most comprehensive terrorist legislation in any EU member state. The Act defines terrorism as “the use or threat of action to influence a government or intimidate the public for a political, religious or ideological cause”.<sup>5</sup> Terrorism is also defined in some quarters as an illegal, organised, systematic manner of adopting terror activities for the aim of changing the present system and in order to serve the terrorists’ own political purposes.<sup>6</sup> The US State Department defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.<sup>7</sup>

The central meaning of terrorism reflected in most of the definitions given is “the use of terror for the furthering of political ends”. This was used by the French revolutionary government against its opponents.<sup>8</sup>

Despite these definitional conundrums, however, most scholars have argued in the literature that acts of terrorism are perpetrated in reaction to perceived injustices prevalent in the international system for which such terrorists see violence as the only means of

addressing the situation.

The wide-ranging definitions and categorisation of terrorism make it rather problematic describing what constitutes a terrorist act committed by an individual, group/organisation or states. Subjective as the term may be, and with all the definitional conundrums, a clear and easily identifiable act of terrorism is needed to make meaningful and effective the war on terrorism in Africa. In this vein, the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Elimination of Terrorism defines a “terrorist act” as:

- (a) *any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:*
- (i) *intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular*

Centre:  
The aftermath of the  
US Embassy bombing  
in Nairobi, Kenya,  
8 August 1998

PEDRO UGARE/AFP



A funeral ceremony of one of the victims of the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa

*standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or*

- (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or*
- (iii) create general insurrection in a State;*

*(b) any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organising, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii).<sup>9</sup>*

This elaborate and detailed definition in the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism gives a broad and comprehensive scope for the fight against terrorism in Africa. The AU Convention on Terrorism is reinforced by the UN Security Council Anti-Terrorism Resolution 1373 on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts mandating all states to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. With these broad guidelines, African governments have been making some effort to prevent and combat terrorism on the continent. Efforts in this direction are made at national, sub-regional and regional levels with

the needed cooperation and collaboration of partner governments and institutions abroad.

The striking and most notable terrorist attacks in Africa in recent times were the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 in which more than 250 people – mostly Africans, but also 12 Americans – were killed.<sup>10</sup> Other countries, such as Sudan, Algeria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola and Somalia, have also experienced acts of terrorism in different forms and to varying degrees.

These attacks launched either within or from the continent elsewhere have posed challenges to African governments and have initiated efforts to deal with the problem. Two major efforts worth mentioning in the fight against terrorism on the continent are a senior officials' meeting held in Algiers from 11-14 September 2002 and the 17 October 2002 African Heads of State and Government meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The Dakar meeting (reflected in the Dakar Declaration Against Terrorism) condemns any act of terrorism in Africa or any other part of the world, while urging all African countries to ratify as a matter of urgency the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and



PEDRO UGARTE/ARF

Relatives and friends mourn as coffins of victims of the attack on the Paradise Hotel arrive for a funeral ceremony in the village of Nawemi, near Mombasa

similar UN instruments, and to also take legal, diplomatic, financial, and other measures to fight terrorism at national, sub-regional and global levels.

Other collaborative efforts, including the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), Reinforcement of African Peace-keeping Capabilities (RECAMP), African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) and currently, the Global Rapid Deployment Force<sup>11</sup> (with the backing of the G8 countries), are ongoing in attempts to deal with the task.

### **Africa's peace and security agenda**

In the light of the analysis above, a review is made of Africa's peace and security agenda, by examining the OAU and pre-NEPAD security arrangements on one hand, and AU and post-NEPAD security arrangements on the other, for the prevention and combat of terrorism in Africa. This is intended to contextualise how credible efforts are towards fighting terrorism and the need to prioritise these efforts.

### **OAU/Pre-NEPAD arrangements**

Africa has experienced and is still threatened by complex emergencies and acts of terrorism.

These acts, no doubt, have negatively affected the lives and property of many individuals. This being said, a lot of effort has been made to deal with the seemingly intractable threats to state and, most importantly, human security on the continent. A series of treaties and conventions have been put in place, stemming from the OAU Charter and now the AU Constitutive Act. The OAU Charter, under its principles in Article III (5), gives its "unreserved condemnation, in all its form, of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring states or any other states".<sup>12</sup> Subsequent treaties, declarations or conventions have also been put in place to deal with the act of terrorism.

Prominent among these are the Dakar Summit Decision on a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution<sup>13</sup> (which adopted, in principle, the establishment within the framework of the OAU, and in keeping with the objectives and principles of the OAU Charter, a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution); the Cairo Declaration (establishing the Mechanism for

***Terrorism on the continent of Africa requires more than conventions, treaties and collaborative security programmes between African and foreign governments***



Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni (L) making a speech during the opening of the NEPAD meeting, 29 October 2003 at the Kenyatta International Conference Center in Nairobi, with his counterpart presidents, Mwai Kibaki of Kenya (2ndL), Paul Kagame of Rwanda (3rdL) and Tanzanian Vice-President Ali Mohamed Shein



Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution)<sup>14</sup>; the Declaration on the Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations (Tunis Declaration)<sup>15</sup>; and the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism adopted at Algiers on 14 July 1999.<sup>16</sup>

These major documents initiated efforts, based on relevant provisions of the OAU/UN Charters and other international conventions, to prevent and combat the act of terrorism. The Dakar Summit Decision adopted, in principle, the establishment within the framework of the OAU, and in keeping with the objectives and principles of the OAU Charter, the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The Cairo Declaration subsequently established the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The Tunis Declaration saw the need to assert human and moral values based on tolerance and the rejection of all forms of discrimination, injustice, extremism and terrorism. The OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism – Treaty on Cooperation among the State Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Combating Terrorism – eventually adopted a comprehensive and systematic approach to the prevention and combating of terrorism.

The Convention is the key document for preventing or addressing acts of terrorism, and it

expresses deep concern over the scope and seriousness of the phenomenon of terrorism and the dangers it poses to the stability and security of states, and the lives of innocent women and children who are mostly adversely affected by terrorism; and also notes that terrorism constitutes a violation of human rights and impedes socio-economic development through destabilisation. Article 4(1), which deals with areas of cooperation, enjoins states to refrain from acts of terrorism, either directly or indirectly, including the facilitation of safe passage and providing safe havens for terrorists. Article 4(2h) recommends arrest and trial or extradition of terrorists in accordance with national legislation or provisions of the Convention and extradition treaties concluded between the requesting state and the requested state.

The pre-NEPAD peace and security agenda thus adopted these relevant documents to facilitate the fight against terrorism in Africa, depending mainly on national security structures and legislation. Efforts towards the prevention and combating of terrorism were, however, impeded by various factors, including a lack of a properly coordinated peace and security mechanism within the OAU at the time, and alleged complicit acts by some political leaders who were signatories to the OAU Convention on Terrorism and other declarations and decisions, and the urgent need to tackle other equally





SEYDOU/AP



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important issues relating to poverty and under-development of the continent.

### **AU/NEPAD era**

The relevance of the OAU has been challenged during the post-Cold-War era, owing to the reconfiguration of power blocs from a bi-polar to a uni-polar world and shifts in states' interest, as well as the prominence gained by non-state groups as credible actors in the international system with accompanying systemic imperatives. Partly in reaction to this development, the drafting of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (by the Ministerial Meeting on 2 June 2000), led to the establishment of the African Union (AU) at the OAU Summit in Lomé, Togo, 10-12 July 2000. Following this initiative, the 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 formally adopted the strategic framework document with the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal. Inherent in the task of addressing the current security challenges facing the African continent under NEPAD is the principle of good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security, and sustainable political and socio-economic development. This principle gave the NEPAD peace and security agenda some momentum in terms of adopting a more collaborative, coordinated and updated security

institution and legislation to prevent and combat acts of terrorism, including possibilities of a review of commitments in this direction through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of the AU. In terms of NEPAD's peace and security initiative,

*... efforts to build Africa's capacity to manage all aspects of conflict must focus on the means necessary to strengthen existing regional and sub-regional institutions, especially in four key areas:*

- 1 *prevention, management and resolution of conflict;*
- 2 *peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement;*
- 3 *post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and*
- 4 *combating the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines*

Issuing from these broad guidelines, various sub-regional bodies have initiated or are reinforcing programmes or mechanisms put in place to, among other objectives, prevent and combat terrorism. In one such instances the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) organised a conference on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa (24-27 June 2003). The IGAD Secretariat took the initiative to organise the conference in

Centre: Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi (far left) delivers a speech at the opening of the two-day NEPAD conference, in Dakar 15 April 2002

Above: Rwandan President Kagame (L) and Nigerian President Obasanjo (R) open the NEPAD summit in Kigali 13 February 2004

response to increasing acts or threats of international terrorism in the IGAD region.

Central to these sub-regional efforts is the recent establishment of the African Peace and Security Council (PSC)<sup>17</sup> which as part of its objectives seeks to coordinate and harmonise continental efforts in the prevention and combating of international terrorism in all its aspects. The PSC is a collective security and early-warning arrangement put in place to facilitate a timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa. The PSC, though young, has in place an early warning mechanism linking a situation in the AU Secretariat with all the sub-regional early-warning security arrangements intended to prevent and manage conflicts, including international terrorism.

***The root causes of terrorism should be addressed through the NEPAD programme***

There is no doubt that the war on terrorism in Africa, be it individual, group, state or international terrorism, was ongoing prior to and after the sudden, horrific event of 9/11 in which 3 066 people were presumed dead or missing, including the 19 hijackers.<sup>18</sup> The challenging issue currently is whether efforts made so far have been effective or credible enough in preventing and combating terrorism, and if other equally relevant alternatives exist for dealing with terrorism in Africa given other developmental challenges faced by the continent.

The African continent is confronted with many problems, which span political, socio-economic and security issues. On the political front, there are problems of bad governance – including corruption, political exclusion from decision-making processes, and the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of political leaders. The socio-economic front presents problems of unequal distribution of wealth and resources, huge debt burdens, imbalances in trade and other activities in the international system, HIV/AIDs, and widespread poverty and underdevelopment. Conflicts – mostly intra-state – are prominent in all parts of Africa, with massive circulation of small arms and light weapons, cross-border criminal activities, massive flows of refugees

across borders, and the use of mercenaries. These problems serve, in part, to promote acts of terrorism either against national governments or foreign interests on the continent and beyond. The reason is that national and foreign governments are easily blamed for gross injustices and inequality on the continent and the world at large.

**Options for control**

Addressing the problem of terrorism on the continent of Africa, therefore, requires more than conventions, treaties and collaborative security programmes between African and foreign governments, though all these efforts are necessary. For instance, on 26 June 2003, President Bush announced a US commitment of US\$100 million over 15 months to help the Horn of Africa countries to improve their counter-terror efforts. The money will go towards improving air and seaport security, increasing coastal and border patrols, building computer databases to track terrorists, increasing intelligence-sharing, and cutting off terrorist financing. The primary beneficiaries of the programme are Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda, and Tanzania.<sup>19</sup> Such forms of collaboration are necessary, but not sufficient. The option that remains clear of any ambiguity has to do with addressing the root causes of the political, socio-economic and security problems facing the continent. Addressing these root causes through the NEPAD programme,<sup>20</sup> and with institutional backing from the PSC, backed by a genuine commitment on the part of political leaders, and using the APRM as a standard mechanism for performance appraisal, would provide a more concrete option for preventing and combating terrorism rather than reacting to it. A review of the national legislation of AU member states as recommended in the OAU Convention on Terrorism would facilitate the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa.

**Conclusion**

Terrorism and, for that matter, international terrorism has posed and continues to pose difficult challenges to state and human security in the international system. Africa as a

continent has not been left out of this challenge and has experienced an increasing wave of terrorism on the continent, especially during the post-Cold War era. The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has expressed the UN Security Council's determination to combat, by all means, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts<sup>21</sup> and the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 has reinforced Africa's war on terrorism. Its mandate for all states to cooperate in the fight against terrorism has culminated in some credible collaborative security programmes between African states and their foreign partners. This notwithstanding, the one-track diplomatic, financial and military collaborative efforts between African and foreign governments to prevent and combat the act of

terrorism in all its forms may remain, largely, a reactionary rather than a proactive means of tackling the problem. Thus, the root causes of terrorism should be addressed through the NEPAD programme, and with institutional backing from the PSC. This, backed by a genuine commitment on the part of political leaders, and using the APRM as a standard mechanism for performance appraisal, would provide a more concrete option for preventing and combating terrorism rather than reacting to it. ▽

*Prosper Addo is a Research Fellow with the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department (CPMRD) of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana.*

## Endnotes

- 1 See "The Oklahoma City Bombing" at <http://www.cnn.com/US/OKC/bombing.html> accessed on 30 October 2004.
- 2 As early as the late 1970s, the US Congress and government made terrorism a major part of its foreign policy, compiling a list of those countries that were deemed to be supporting terrorist acts.
- 3 Krieger, Joel, et al (eds). 2001. *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford), p.829.
- 4 See Whitbeck, John. *The Daily Star* accessed at <http://www.thewahhabimyth.com/terrorism.htm> on 4 October 2004.
- 5 See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1555265.stm> accessed on 3 October 2004.
- 6 See <http://www.terror.gen.tr/english/whatisterrorism/definition.html> accessed on 2 October 2004.
- 7 See <http://www.americasdebate.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=2983&st=0> accessed on 8 October 2004.
- 8 Op cit., Krieger, p.829.
- 9 The OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, Algiers, 1999, Article 1(3)(a)-(b).
- 10 Goodenough, Patrick. "Africa Meet to Discuss Battle Against Terrorism", Cybercast News Service, 12 September 2002.
- 11 The global peacekeeping operation is part of a three pronged strategy outlined by President Bush of the United States on health, and the need to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic; economic assistance, to help grow African economies through the Millennium Challenge Account; and promoting peace and stability through peacekeeping.
- 12 The OAU Charter was adopted in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- 13 AHG/Decl.1 (XXVIII) Decision on a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Dakar, Senegal, 29 June to 1 July 1992.
- 14 AHG/Decl.3(XXIX) Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Cairo, Egypt, 28-30 June 1993.
- 15 Declaration on a Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations, Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Thirtieth Ordinary Session, Tunis, Tunisia, 13-15 June 1994.
- 16 See <http://untreaty.un.org/english/terrorism.asp> accessed on 6 October 2004.
- 17 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of Peace and Security Council of the African Union, 9 July 2002, Durban, South Africa. The PSC was launched on 25 May 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Council is composed of 15 elected member states and is a permanent organ requested to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, as well as strengthening preventive diplomacy and the restoration of peace. It depends on a continental early warning system, a panel of the wise, a standby force, a peace fund and a committee of chief of staff.
- 18 *The New York Times*, 24 April 2004. Also see <http://www.nightlightfund.org/people.html> accessed on 8 June 2004.
- 19 Hon. Edward R. Royce. "Fighting Terrorism in Africa" House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Africa, Committee on International Relations, Washington, DC. Thursday, 1 April 2004. Also see [http://www.cfr.org/background/africa\\_terror.php](http://www.cfr.org/background/africa_terror.php) accessed on 3 October 2004.
- 20 NEPAD's primary objectives are to: (a) eradicate poverty; (b) place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; (c) halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and (d) accelerate the empowerment of women. For further reading, see <http://www.nepad.org/en.html>
- 21 See *The Ghanaian Amanee*, October 2000, p.5.



CRIS BOURNICLE/APP

FEATURE

CEDRIC DE CONING

# poverty and terrorism

## The root cause debate?

**T**here is a growing body of literature that argues that the root causes of terrorism are poverty, chronic underdevelopment and a deep sense of marginalisation. According to this school of thought, many people living on the periphery have lost hope of ever catching up with those benefiting from globalisation. Those opposed to this argument point out that although half of our planet's six billion people live on less than US\$2 per day, only a tiny fraction turn to terrorism, and they argue that linking poverty to terrorism is tantamount to providing terrorism with a legitimacy that it

does not deserve.

This article will explore the link between poverty and terrorism with a view to identifying whether there is a causal relationship, and if so, how that knowledge can be applied to improve global security.

### **Ending poverty is key to stability**

A growing number of voices are arguing that in order to win the war on terrorism we need to win the war on poverty. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, during his annual statement at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2004 argued that while the rich





MARCO LONGSARI/ARF

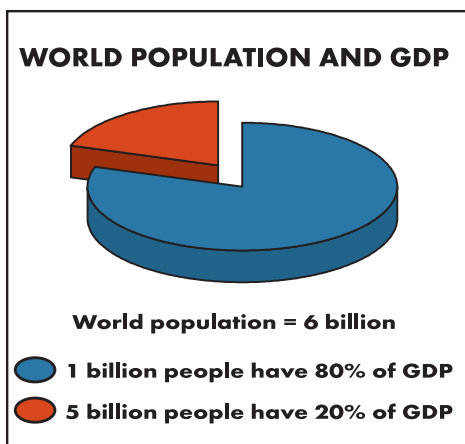
Nearly half a million people are resident in Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, one of the largest informal settlements in Africa

believed that terrorism was the principal threat and challenge to humanity, for the majority of people on the planet it was, in fact, poverty and underdevelopment.<sup>1</sup>

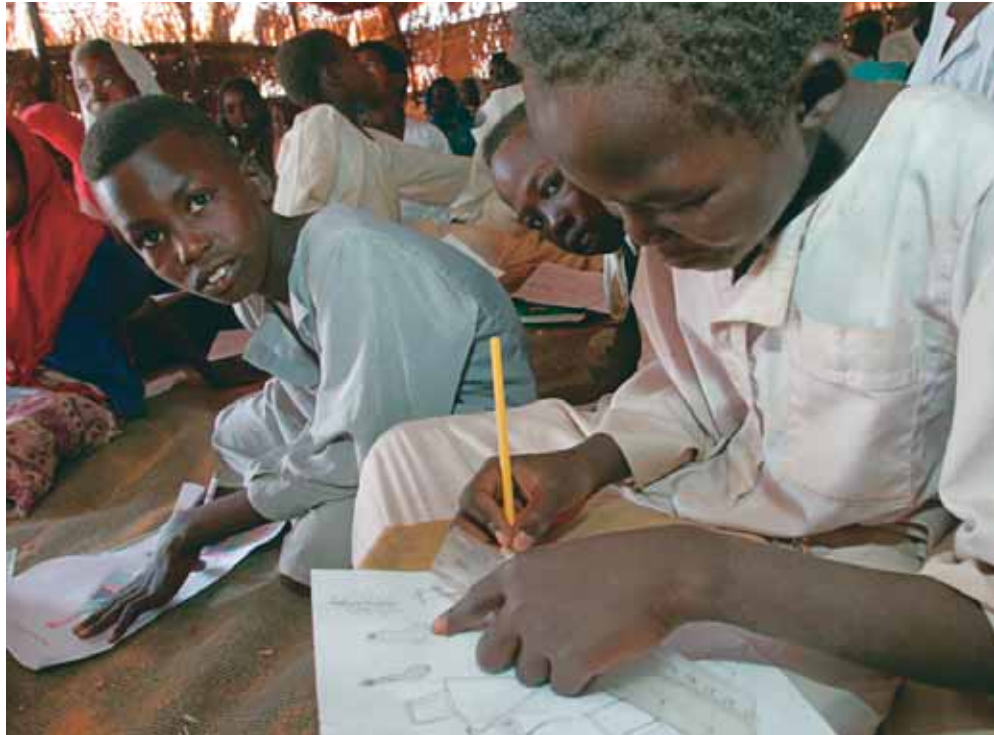
Similarly, at the recent annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank, argued that whilst we have to deal with immediate terrorist threats, we must not lose sight of the longer-term security issue that confronts us all. The greatest potential source of instability on our planet

today, Wolfensohn stated, is poverty, and the hopelessness and despair that it brings to so many in our world.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out that, in our world of six billion people, one billion have 80 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the other five billion share the remaining 20 percent. One billion people have no access to clean water, over 100 million children never get the chance to go to school, and more than 40 million people in developing countries are HIV positive, with little hope of receiving treatment. He went on to argue that over the next three decades more than two billion people will be added to the planet's population, 97 percent of them in the poorer nations. Further, too many will grow up in poverty and disillusionment with a world that they will view as inequitable and unjust.<sup>3</sup>

Al Gore also made this link when he argued in February this year that there is "another axis of evil in the world: poverty and ignorance; disease and environmental disorder; corruption and political oppression".<sup>4</sup> Ramesh Thakur's position is that the root cause of terrorism is neither religion nor poverty, but lack of liberty and freedom: "Democracy legitimates the struggle for power and provides safety valves



CRIS BOURNICLE/AFP



Inside the classroom  
of an elementary  
school in Senegal

***Poverty by itself is never enough to drive men and women (and children, let us not forget) to terror***

for group anger; its denial drives dissent underground. Sometimes the driving force behind fanatical hatred is despair born of deprivation: dehumanising poverty and spirit-sapping inequality. But poverty by itself is never enough to drive men and women (and children, let us not forget) to terror.” Thakur goes on to argue that fanaticism feeds on grievance, and grievance is nurtured by deeply felt injustice. He points out that group grievance rooted in collective humiliation provokes anger and often leads to armed resistance: “Terror is the weapon of choice by those who resent being historical victims but are too weak to do anything about it through conventional means. The US becomes the focus of grievance if its arms are seen to be propping up brutal and occupying regimes.”<sup>5</sup>

#### **Poverty is not an excuse for terrorism**

On the other hand, there are also many who argue that the link between terrorism and poverty is too weak to be considered causal,

because the one does not necessarily lead to the other. Michael Radu, for instance, argues that the search for ‘root causes’ of terrorism is futile.<sup>6</sup> He argues that this search leads too easily to the usual suspects: ‘poverty’, ‘injustice’, ‘exploitation’ and ‘frustration’, even though the data does not fit this model. Radu points out that Osama bin Laden is a multimillionaire and that the backgrounds of the 11 September 2001 (9/11) hijackers indicate that they were, without exception, privileged. In fact, he argues that terrorism, as one form of revolutionary violence, has always been the purview of the relatively privileged: “Terrorists have been middle class, often upper class, and always educated, but never poor.” To support his argument he refers to the South American Tupamaros and Motoneros of the 1970s, the German Baader-Meinhof Gang, the Italian Red Brigades, France’s Action Directe, the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua and Fidel Castro’s Cuban revolutionaries. He also predicts that the middle-class, prosperous and self-righteous composition of the anti-globalist groups will lead to a new wave of terrorism in the West.



MARCO LONGARI/AFP



MARCO LONGARI/AFP

Radu's argument does not seem to provide for the possibility that, even if one were to agree that some terrorists are middle class and educated, this does not prevent them from being motivated by the injustices, poverty and humiliation they observe being suffered by people, communities, ethnic or religious groups with whom they may choose to identify themselves.

The argument is moot anyway, because Radu concedes that to say that economic conditions are not the root cause of terrorism is not to say that there are no conditions that correlate strongly to political violence and terrorism. It is just, he argues, that they are far less obvious than poverty and much more complex to address.

**The root causes of terrorism**

An international panel of experts was convened in Oslo, Norway in September 2003 by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) to consider the root causes of terrorism, and their report seems to support some elements of both schools of thought.<sup>7</sup> The experts



KAMRER/AFP

found that there was only a weak and indirect relationship between poverty and terrorism. They echoed Radu's argument and found that, at the individual level, terrorists are generally not drawn from the poorest segments of their societies. On the other hand, they point out that poverty has frequently been used as a justification for social revolutionary terrorists, who claim to represent the poor and marginalised.

The experts who gathered in Oslo found that there is no single root cause of terrorism, or even a common set of causes. In fact, they argue that one limitation of the "root cause" approach is the idea that terrorists are just passive pawns of the social, economic and

Top left and right: A teacher writes and a scholar displays her board at the Abu Shouk refugee camp on the outskirts of El-Fasher, Sudan

Above: Children queue to attend school in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire



MARCO LONGARI/AFP



Kibera informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, where people queue to buy water

psychological forces around them. They posit that it is more useful to understand terrorists as rational intentional actors who develop deliberate strategies to achieve their political objectives. However, with these reservations in mind, the experts did identify some conditions and circumstances that give rise to terrorism. In their report they make a distinction between preconditions and what they referred to as 'precipitants'. Preconditions are structural conditions that set the stage for terrorism. However, preconditions alone are not sufficient to cause the outbreak of terrorism. Precipitants are specific events or situations that directly affect the emergence of terrorism.

The experts identified the following preconditions and precipitants. The first set of causes are preconditions and the latter causes are precipitants: a lack of democracy, civil liberties and the rule of law; failed or weak states; rapid modernisation; extremist ideologies of a secular or religious nature; historical antecedents of political violence, civil wars, revolutions, dictatorships or occupation; hegemony and inequality of power; illegitimate or corrupt governments; powerful external actors upholding illegitimate governments; repression

by foreign occupation or colonial powers; the experience of discrimination on the basis of ethnic or religious origin; failure or unwillingness by the state to integrate dissident groups or emerging social classes; the experience of social injustice; the presence of charismatic ideological leaders and triggering events such as outrageous acts committed by the enemy, lost wars, massacres, contested elections, police brutality or other provocative acts that call for revenge.

One common element of many of the preconditions and precipitants listed by the experts gathered in Oslo is an overwhelming unequal power relationship: a strong powerful group is pitted against a weak group, and at some point the latter see no realistic alternative way to forward their cause by normal political means, and they therefore turn to asymmetrical warfare. This line of argument will be familiar to South Africans, because Former South African President Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) formulated their decision to start an armed struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1961, after all peaceful means of political opposition had been blocked, in almost exactly the same terms.<sup>8</sup>

### Factors sustaining terrorism

The experts who gathered in Oslo also identified a number of factors that sustain terrorism. They found that terrorism is often sustained for reasons other than those which gave birth to it, and it is therefore not certain, in some cases, that terrorism will end when the original grievances have been addressed. Some of the factors that they identified include: cycles of revenge (violent reprisals often have the opposite effect); the need of the group to provide for its members or for the survival of the group itself (e.g. acts to force authorities to release imprisoned members); profitable criminal activities; and the lack of an alternative exit strategy (when the only alternatives may be death or long-term imprisonment).

The experts argued that many terrorist insurgencies will not come to an end before their fundamental grievances and root causes have been addressed. They recommend that particular attention should be paid to the factors that sustain terrorism and point out that, in counter-terrorism efforts, it is crucial to uphold democratic principles and maintain moral and ethical standards. The experts warn that increased repression and coercion are likely to feed terrorism and they recommend that extremist ideologies that promote hatred and terrorism should be confronted on ideological grounds by investing more effort into challenging them politically.

The experts point out that many of the causes of terrorism they have identified also cause rebellious guerrilla warfare, riots and other forms of political violence. What distinguishes terrorism from other forms of political violence is its normless character, i.e. the deliberate attacks on civilians, indiscriminate bombings, the taking of hostages, etc. They argue that these tactics would qualify as war crimes in conventional armed conflict and acts of terrorism can thus be seen as the peacetime equivalents of war crimes.

The panel of experts conclude that we need to improve our understanding of the causes and processes that result in terrorism if we are to identify possible avenues of prevention, early intervention, or ways of breaking the vicious cycle of terrorist revenge and counter-revenge.

Such understanding, they argue, does not mean accepting or justifying terrorism. Whilst the political goals of terrorism may be legitimate in some cases and unjust in others, the deliberate targeting of civilians as a tactic to achieve these goals is never acceptable.

The expert meeting was followed by an international high-level conference organised by the International Peace Academy and the Government of Norway in September 2003 in New York.<sup>9</sup> UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the discussion on terrorism by noting that nothing could ever justify its use and that terrorism defiles its purported objective regardless of how worthy that objective may be. He also argued that, whilst terrorism is not the automatic result of any one factor, it is related to social, political and economic conditions. And Annan also made the point that there can be no trade-off between human rights and the fight against terrorism, that in fact, abuses of human rights can fuel terrorism and prolong cycles of violence.<sup>10</sup>

The conference achieved broad consensus on the some of the following points: while failed states, repressive regimes, foreign occupation and lack of self-determination can be contributing factors to terrorism, no political goal or cause justifies intentionally attacking civilians; there must be no trade-off between human rights and terrorism, in fact, human rights abuses, misery, ignorance and despair fuel terrorism; while there is no simple, direct, causal link between poverty and terrorism, lack of development, poor governance and a sense of desperation, alienation and hopelessness provide conditions in which terrorism can flourish and which can be exploited by extremists; peace, security and development and respect for human rights are all essential to combat terrorism.

***The root cause of terrorism is neither religion nor poverty, but lack of liberty and freedom***

### Linking security and development

One can thus conclude that there is broad consensus that there is no direct causal link between poverty and terrorism, i.e. that the one inevitably leads to the other, but there is a correlation between conditions of extreme



poverty, injustice, hopelessness, marginalisation, political oppression and the likelihood that people may use political violence, including terrorism, to protest their fate. The likelihood of the emergence of terrorism is further increased when all peaceful avenues of political opposition are blocked.

In fact, this correlation is widely recognised and acknowledged, as is reflected in the fact that since 9/11, the linkage between aid and security has become mainstream policy in the United States of America (US) and Europe. Policy statements by the European Union, the US National Security Strategy of 2002, and United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) White Paper on US foreign aid all argue that aid is expected to contribute to counter-terrorism and security.<sup>11</sup> Even the guardian of development policy, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee, has indicated that the definition of Official Development Assistance will be expanded into the security domain.<sup>12</sup>

**Osama bin Laden is a multi-millionaire and the back-grounds of the 9/11 hijackers indicate that they were, without exception, privileged**

In fact, in some extreme cases peace instruments, such as peacebuilding, are being re-cast as instruments in the war on terrorism. For instance, in the US, nation-building was the scorn of international conflict management policy ever since the Somali debacle in the early 1990s. It used to be popular for every American presidential candidate in the 1990s to emphasise that the US would not undertake nation-building operations. Since 9/11, however, the US policy towards nation-building, or 'stability operations' in the Pentagon vocabulary, has made an about-face. The contemporary conventional wisdom in the United States and Europe is that the West cannot afford to leave failed states to their own fate as international terrorists may thrive in the lawless environments they create. The 2002 US National Security Strategy formulated it as follows: "The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet

poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."<sup>13</sup> James Traub echoes the policy thinking in Washington D.C. and Europe when he argues "we will get it right or pay the price", implying that peacebuilding takes on a new meaning when failed states may pose a danger to international peace and security.<sup>14</sup> Those who argue for a clear separation between humanitarian and development approaches on the one hand, and political and security mandates on the other, will not be comfortable when peacebuilding is presented as an instrument in the war on terrorism. The reality is, however, that this is how nation-building is being contextualised in the current dominant policy regimes in America and Europe, and it is in this context that peacebuilding is operationalised in the contemporary operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>15</sup>

The inverse argument is also true, namely that terrorism today presents, in the words of the United Nations, a global threat to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and stability.<sup>16</sup> In fact, many are concerned that the focus on the war on terror has had a detrimental effect on many other equally, if not more, deserving problems. The suffering caused by conflict and underdevelopment dwarfs that caused by terrorism. Thirteen million people live as refugees, the vast majority of them hosted by developing countries across Africa and Asia. Another 23 million live as internally displaced people within their own country. In Burundi, some 300 000 people had been killed over the past decade. In neighbouring DRC, an estimated three million people had died during the last decade, while in Rwanda 40 percent of the population has been killed or displaced since 1994. The civil war in Sudan has claimed the lives of more than two million people and has caused the greatest displacement of people in Africa. The current crisis in Darfur adds to this legacy, with more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons, and estimates of up to 70 000 deaths.<sup>17</sup>

In a report entitled "Beyond the Headlines: an agenda to protect civilians in neglected conflicts," Oxfam argues that the focus on



CRS BOURNACLE/AP

Internally displaced persons of Mourni, the largest refugee camp in West Darfur, Sudan, wait to receive food staples at a distribution point

international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction since 9/11 has left civilians trapped in the world's forgotten conflicts more vulnerable than before.<sup>18</sup> The report points out that the international community's focus on terrorism has resulted in aid flowing to countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, while neglecting the plight of civilians caught up in less strategic conflicts such as those in Liberia and Burundi. In most cases, these conflicts have caused much more death and destruction than terrorism. For instance, in June and July 2003, more than 200 000 people fled from the outskirts of Monrovia to the city centre as rebels overran camps for displaced people on the outskirts of the city and advanced into its western suburbs. The violence killed over 1 000 people in less than two months. The Oxfam report argues that the focus on terrorism has resulted in donor governments diverting their humanitarian aid away from the people who most need their assistance. This has undermined the independence and impartiality of humanitarian aid. The Oxfam report points out that nearly half of all the funds given by donor

governments in 2002 to the UN's 25 humanitarian appeals went to just one country, Afghanistan. It admitted that Afghanistan was a desperately poor place, but noted that in 2002 it was also top of the list of priorities in the "war on terror". Oxfam's core argument, echoing I suspect most people in the humanitarian community, is that the international response to humanitarian crisis should be determined by need, not by strategic interests such as the war on terror.

### Conclusion

Ramesh Thakur captures the essence of this debate when he points out that "in the insistence on 'decontextualising' terrorism so that no grievance or cause can possibly be seen as justifying it, Washington lost sight of the dual need to be tough on terrorists and tough on the causes of terrorism. In calls to condemn and kill terrorists in the name of moral clarity, the balance between short-term military measures and long-term political remedies was lost. In tackling today's priorities

***The likelihood of the emergence of terrorism is further increased when all peaceful avenues of political opposition are blocked***

ABDELHAK SENNA / AFP



Approximately 7 000 young sub-Saharan live in adverse conditions at an informal settlement in the Spanish enclave Melilla, situated on the northern coast of Morocco

in the 'war on terrorism', there is a tension between identifying, apprehending, trying and punishing the terrorists and adopting a holistic approach for 'draining the swamp of terrorism'.<sup>19</sup>

Efforts to improve our understanding of what causes terrorism should not be confused with an attempt to justify or legitimise terrorism. Terrorism can never be justified on political, philosophical, ideological, racial, religious or ethnic grounds. At the same time, we can not ignore the fact that there is a correlation between conditions of extreme poverty, injustice, hopelessness, marginalisation, and political oppression, and the likelihood that people may take up terrorism as a means to

protest their fate, especially when all peaceful avenues of political opposition are blocked. There is no direct causal link between factors such as poverty and terrorism, i.e. the one does not inevitably lead to the other. One should perhaps rather refer to a 'proneness' in that terrorism is more likely to occur where conditions of poverty, injustice, marginalisation and

political oppression prevail than in environments where there is a hope for a better future, relative prosperity, rule of law and political freedom.

If so, it would make sense for the international community to recognise the feelings of powerlessness, marginalisation and humiliation that many communities express, and to formulate programmes that will address the consequences and root causes of these inequalities. This is possible at three levels: the first is in countries where terrorism has already emerged, the second is in countries where the preconditions and precipitants identified above can be observed, and the third is at the global level, where many existing policies and practices add to global inequalities that, if left unaddressed, will threaten the long-term stability of the world.

To a degree, the international community has started to address the latter through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs consist of eight goals that are targeted to be met by 2015: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve

***The international response to humanitarian crisis should be determined by need, not by strategic interests such as the war on terror***

maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. All indications are, thus far, that unless the international community radically increases its investment in development assistance, by at least US\$50 billion, the MDGs will not be met by 2015.<sup>20</sup>

However, if the international community, and especially the industrialised North, is serious about addressing global inequalities, it would have to go beyond a developmental approach. If we want to create a more equal world we will have to address the structural causes of global inequality, and that would require a re-ordering of the global political and economic order. It would require the reform of the United Nations Security Council, not only

on the basis of the value of contributions (adding Germany and Japan), as many currently suggest, but on the basis of an equitable representation of both the developed and the developing world in the Council (adding Brazil, India and South Africa and addressing the power of the veto). And it would necessitate the transformation of the world trade system, including removing the structural inequalities that are built into the current trade regime that protect developed economies, expose developing economies, and result in the net outflow of capital from the developing to the developed world. ▀

*Cedric de Coning is a Research Fellow at ACCORD and the Editorial Advisor of Conflict Trends.*

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- 10 See Annex I of the Conference Report for a copy of the Secretary-General's speech.
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KARANJA MBUGUA

CASE STUDY

# East Africa

## A haven or hapless victim of international terrorism?

Since 11 September 2001 (9/11), when the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States of America (US) were attacked, East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia) have featured prominently in the war against international terrorism.

This is not to say that there were no terrorist attacks in East Africa prior to 2001. On the contrary, there have been a number of terrorist attacks over the last three decades against Western and Israeli interests in this region. In 1973, for instance, a shadowy organisation assassinated Cleo A. Noel Jr., the US Ambassador to the Sudan, and his deputy chief

of mission, George Curtis Moore, in Khartoum. Thereafter, on 31 December 1980, a suspected Palestinian radical group was implicated in the bombing of a hotel in central Nairobi owned by a Jewish family,<sup>1</sup> and in 1993, 18 American soldiers were killed in Mogadishu, Somalia, during an attack that some analysts attributed to Islamic terrorists.<sup>2</sup>

But it took two coordinated bombings and the foiling of a third attempt by Ugandan authorities to ignite a lot of soul-searching in East Africa. The first was the bombing of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on 7 August 1998, in which 291 East Africans died and more than 5 000 were injured. The second was the bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel in the Kenyan seaside



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resort city of Mombasa in November 2002, in which 15 people died; and the firing of missiles at an Israeli jet taking off from the Mombasa airport.

These attacks, which were blamed on the *Al Qaeda* terrorist network, raised a fundamental question: Is East Africa in general, and Kenya in particular, a haven or a hapless victim of international terrorism?

**State security and terrorist networks**

In May 2003, the Kenyan government admitted that a key member of the *Al Qaeda* terror network was plotting an attack on Western targets, thus confirming *Al Qaeda's* local presence.<sup>3</sup> Although the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi demonstrated the presence of terrorist groups, the Kenyan

government appeared to be slow in acknowledging the presence of this threat. Yet, since the 1980 bombing of the Norfolk Hotel, international terrorism experts have regarded Kenya as a soft target for international terrorism.

Indeed, evidence unveiled during the trial in New York of four men linked to the August 7 bombing reveal that a terror network had been flourishing in Kenya for a long time.<sup>4</sup> The core leadership of this network consisted primarily of citizens of the Gulf States, Somalia and the Comoros Islands, who had assimilated into local cultures along the Indian Ocean seaboard. They, in turn, gradually recruited local Kenyans. These foreigners took advantage of lax immigration and security laws as well as corruption in the system to obtain local citizenships. With local identification documents, they set up small businesses and Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In the wake of the 1998 bombings, the government, working with the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Interpol, made an effort to destroy this *Al Qaeda* terrorist cell. It apprehended several suspects in Nairobi and Mombasa. In July 2001, for example, police arrested eight Yemeni and 13 Somali nationals. Similarly, police arrested more than 20 people suspected of having links with *Al Qaeda* in Lamu in November 2001.

But there are fears that indigenous Kenyans could be involved in the international terrorist movement. The coordinated assault on the Paradise Hotel actually confirmed the terrorists' deep local links and illustrated their ability to evade Kenyan security while transporting arms such as the surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) used in the attack.

There is also fear that suspected terrorist cells in Kenya have links with *Al Ittihad al Islamiya*,

a radical Islamic group that is involved in humanitarian work in Somalia. With 2 000 members, *Al Ittihad* is the most powerful radical grouping in the Horn of Africa. Western intelligence sources have also claimed that the Daadab refugee camp on the Somalia-Kenya border serves as a training ground for extremists, through *Al Haramain*, a Muslim charity, which has established religious schools and social programmes.<sup>5</sup>

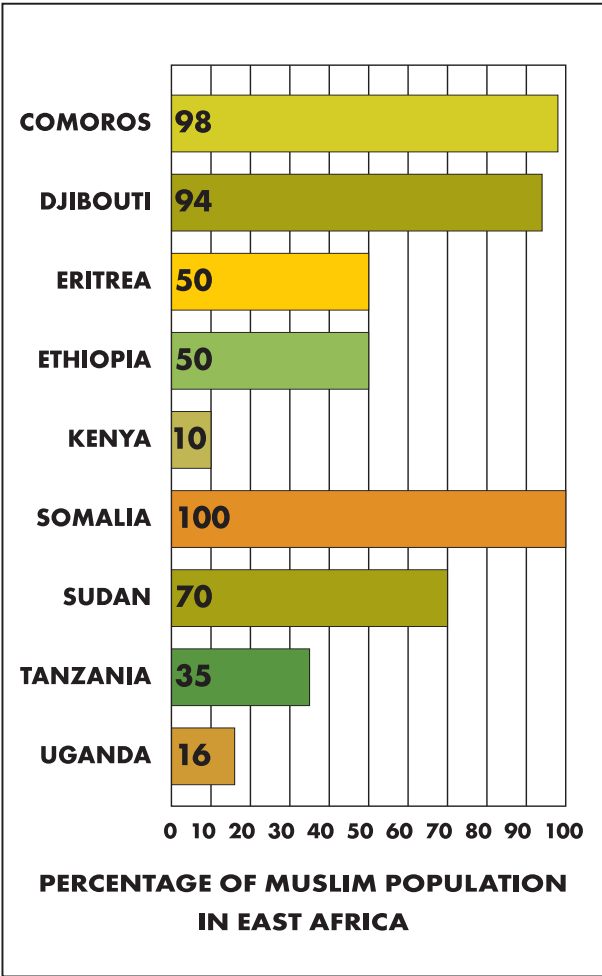
In Uganda, the terrorist threat has not been as severe as in Kenya, and the government says it has dealt with the problem of terrorist threats on its own. Its attempt to link the rebel movement in the north, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), to international terrorism has, however, come to naught. But the government has supported fully the US-led war on international terrorism.

In Tanzania, the August 1998 bombings were followed by a terrorist scare in the archipelago of Zanzibar and Pemba in January 2003, hardly a month after the Mombasa bombing. The scare led to the closure of hotels and the sacking of over 6 000 workers, thereby dealing a lethal blow to tourism, one of Zanzibar's main sources of income. Like Kenya, the Tanzanian coast is feared to harbour *Al Qaeda* cells.

**Why East Africa is a target**

The East African region has become a target of international terrorism for several reasons. First, East African countries are poor, with high levels of social injustice and political alienation. The environment created by poverty, social injustice and political alienation enhances the ability of religious extremists to export their philosophy and of terrorists to find local support for their nefarious acts. Though poverty is not a direct cause of terrorism, when coupled with low wages for immigration and security personnel, it significantly increases the prospect of widespread corruption that, in turn, creates a climate amenable to terrorism. Indeed, poverty weakens structures of governance, and weak institutions provide a fertile environment for terrorism to prosper.

Closely related to this is the problem of the political alienation of the (mostly) minority Muslim communities in a Christian-dominated



East Africa. The percentages of the Muslim population in the Horn of Africa are as follows: Comoros (98%), Djibouti (94%), Eritrea (50%), Ethiopia (50%), Kenya (10%), Somalia (100%), Sudan (70%), Tanzania (35%) and Uganda (16%).<sup>6</sup> The Muslim community in East Africa mostly resides along the Indian Ocean coastline and in the far-flung north-east that borders Somalia. This community feels alienated from the mainstream political establishment and has increasingly looked to Islamic agencies funded by Persian Gulf donors to provide education, health, social welfare, and security.<sup>7</sup>

This has enhanced the local legitimacy of Muslim social activism. At the same time, it has

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PEDRO UGARTE/AFP



Above: Investigators search for clues at the site of the Paradise Hotel

Centre: People help rescue one of the people injured when a bomb exploded near the US embassy in Nairobi, 7 August 1998

provided the means to mobilise anti-US and anti-Western sentiment and has created havens for militant actors who endeavour to act in solidarity with militants. At times, differentiating among legitimate social welfare action, rhetorical posturing, and support for international terrorism, is difficult.

Secondly, East Africa has historic ties with the Arabian Peninsula, the source of many of today's militants. As a matter of fact, a large percentage of East Africans residing along the Indian Ocean coast trace their ancestry to the Arabian Peninsula. It is also easy to move between the Persian Gulf states and East Africa by air and sea. The governments are virtually incapable of monitoring the lengthy coastline, while the land borders between all the states are quite porous. This makes it easy for would-be terrorists to move across borders.

Thirdly, there is the weak state security apparatus, which is hardly capable of effectively maintaining a monopoly over the means of violence and controlling the entire territory of the country. While the border areas and the slums of the big cities are possible areas of hiding, the security

forces' training and equipment are entirely insufficient. The problem is compounded by a large informal economy that makes capital transactions and trafficking in weapons, raw materials and consumer goods possible, without which terrorist networks would be unable to function.

And lastly, there are internal conflicts and failed neighbouring states. In Uganda, conflict in the north, between the government and LRA, has been raging for the last 18 years. Though both Kenya and Tanzania have maintained relative stability, Somalia has been without a central government for the last 14 years and is thus vulnerable to terrorists. Such internal conflicts prevent governments from exercising full control over their territory, providing easy access to weapons. Moreover, the eroded state power in Kenya has hampered efforts to control the north-east part of the country, which borders Somalia, thereby impeding control of trade and the movement of people across the Somali-Kenya border.

**Operational and legislative responses**

Responses to international terrorism in East Africa are similar. After 9/11 Uganda firmly

**Is East Africa in general, and Kenya in particular, a haven or a hapless victim of international terrorism?**



STR/AFP



MARCO LONGARI/AFP

backed the US counter-terrorism actions. The country has also enacted a Suppression of Terrorism law – which prescribes the death penalty for terrorists – as well as anti-money laundering laws. Uganda has also ratified all 12 international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. However, the country has given priority to local rebel movements such as the LRA and Allied Democratic Front, while the US is focused on international terrorist organisations such as *Al Qaeda*.

In Kenya, the initial slow government response to terrorist threats grew from a denial based on the perception of Kenya as a victim, rather than a source, of international terrorism. This denial originated from the perception that the country was targeted partly because of its pro-Western ways and the inability to acknowledge the wider context of terrorism: the erosion of governance structures, notably weak enforcement and gate-keeping institutions. Moreover, the government feared alienating the minority Muslim community.

After 9/11, however, there was a marked shift in policy. The country began to address the institutional weaknesses that impede its ability to respond to terrorist threats; and in April 2003, the government published the

Suppression of Terrorism Bill. But this law has not been passed by parliament because it attracted opposition from human rights groups who argued that, as written, it contravened the Bill of Rights. Other laws enacted include the Witness Protection Bill of 2004<sup>8</sup> to protect those who testify in terrorism cases. The government also formed a police unit to deal with money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The country is also an active participant in the Terrorist Interdiction Program, and has ratified all 12 international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols.

The long-term viability of this pro-active approach, however, hinges on fundamental reforms in the security services, immigration and governance structures. But the much-anticipated reforms have slowed down following political wrangling and policy conflicts within the ruling coalition. There have also been suggestions to boost the capacity of the Kenyan Navy to patrol the Indian Ocean coastline. At the moment, the government has stationed two army battalions on the Kenya-Somalia border, and its army has held joint exercises with US marines.<sup>9</sup>

Adoud Rogo Mohamed and three other suspects on trial for the murder of 15 people in the bombing of the Israeli-owned Paradise hotel on 28 November 2002 in Mombasa, Kenya

***There are fears that indigenous Kenyans could be involved in the international terrorist movement***



CASE STUDY

MARCO LONGARI/AFP



Islamic pray-time in a house in Mombasa, Kenya

Tanzania, for its part, has close collaborative relations with the US, which assisted the country in arresting those responsible for the 1998 bombing of the embassy in Dar es Salaam. In 2002, Tanzania enacted the Prevention of Terrorism Act, a law that criminalises support for terrorist groups operating in Tanzania. The country has signed seven of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

Jointly, the East African governments share information on terrorism activities, and the US-East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) has dedicated US\$100 million for military training for border and coastal security

programmes to strengthen control of the movement of people and goods across borders, aviation security, assistance for regional programmes to curb terrorist financing, police training and an education programme to counter extremists' influence.

The US government has also installed a computer system for select airports in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Djibouti and Ethiopia, which provides security network that enhances the control of movement. In addition, the US funded a police development programme in Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia, and a training equipment programme and forensic laboratory

**TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN EAST AFRICA**

<b>1973</b>	US Ambassador to Sudan and his Deputy Chief of Mission both assassinated.
<b>1980</b>	Bombing of the Norfolk Hotel owned by a Jewish family in Nairobi, Kenya.
<b>1993</b>	18 American soldiers killed in Mogadishu.
<b>1998</b>	Bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi: 291 dead, more than 5000 wounded.
<b>2002</b>	Bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, Kenya: 15 dead.
<b>2002</b>	Missiles fired at an Israeli jet taking off from Mombasa airport.
<b>2001</b>	8 Yemeni and 13 Somali nationals arrested.
<b>2001</b>	Police arrest +20 people suspected of having links with Al Qaeda in Lamu.



for Kenya and Tanzania respectively. Also, the three states are part of the Commonwealth programme that seeks to build the capacities of the security sector and the police in particular.<sup>10</sup>

### Conclusion

In his celebrated book *Blowback: Costs and Consequences of the American Empire*, Chalmers Johnson argues that, “The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001, did not attack America, as political leaders and news media in the United States have tried to maintain; they attacked American foreign policy. Employing the strategy of the weak, they killed innocent bystanders (at least in the case of the New York office workers) who became ‘enemies’ only because they had already become victims.”

Similarly, it can be argued that those who have been involved in a series of attacks in East Africa have not been attacking the East Africans; they have been attacking American foreign policy. The American embassies and Israeli business interests are the faces of this policy. Therefore, and as Mahmood Mamdani notes in his latest book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: An African Perspective*, the US must take responsibility for the dark side of its

foreign policy, which has brought international terrorism to East Africa.

That means it must premise its anti-terrorism strategy on the fact that East Africa is primarily a soft target, which has, in turn, sown the local seeds of terrorism. Its policies must, therefore, meet the challenges of a soft target and deal with the source. The first entails protective and preventive policies that aim to deny terrorists opportunities to exploit current vulnerabilities. The second entails institutional changes that have resonance beyond protection. This implies that measures to stop the recruitment of terrorist cells must recognise the difficulties of quick results in states with weak institutions. Enormous resources must, therefore, be committed to rebuilding local institutions and addressing the host of cross-border, refugee, and immigration issues that are central to an effective anti-terrorist policy. ▴

*Karanja Mbugua is a researcher and an independent media practitioner based in Nairobi, Kenya.*

**The US must take responsibility for the dark side of its foreign policy, which has brought international terrorism to East Africa**

### Endnotes

- 1 The attack on Norfolk Hotel was actually a double-edged sword. On one side, it attacked Jewish interests in Kenya. And on the other side, it was thought to be revenge on Kenya for the country's earlier decision to support Israel when it struck Uganda and rescued Israeli hostages held by Palestinian militants at Entebbe airport, Uganda, in July 1976.
- 2 The American soldiers were part of the United Nations humanitarian and peace-keeping mission deployed in response to severe humanitarian crisis caused by vicious civil war between various clan-based militia groups. The heavily armed militias provoked clashes with UN troops, and US troops initiated operations to capture one of the warlords, Gen. Mohamed Farah Aideed, and his lieutenants. This led to the so-called “black hawk down” incident in which 18 US soldiers were killed, and subsequently the withdrawal of US forces. UN forces withdrew completely by 1995.
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- 8 See Kenya's *Daily Nation*, Thursday, 24 September 2004.
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JOEL ROBBIN/AP

CASE STUDY

FATEN AGGAD

## Challenging terrorism in

# North Africa

**N**orth Africa has been dealing with Islamic fundamentalism since the late 1950s. Such fanaticism was previously successfully contained, hence avoiding the emergence of violence. It was not until the late 1980s that the region found itself confronted by a violent Islamic movement, which manifested itself in the form of terrorism. The phenomenon emerged in a particular international context, which was naturally reflected at the national level. The strong links between some North African countries and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) rendered difficult the transition from a bipolar to a multipolar world (or a unipolar one, depending on one's perception of the current international balance

of power). Political and economic transitions became a necessity, leading entire systems to collapse. The lack of readiness to undertake such reforms left its mark on the social sphere. The weakening of the social sphere in its turn provided a fertile ground for the emergence of terrorism. Furthermore, the Afghan conflict as well as the Iranian-Russian war of the late 1980s left a number of veterans who, following the end of the conflicts, moved to North Africa, hence establishing a basis for the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism.

North African countries have reacted differently to the phenomenon of fundamentalism. In order to give a clear picture of the terrorist experience in North Africa, four case studies will be used: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco

and Tunisia. All of these countries have been affected by terrorism at one stage or the other. Using the aforementioned case studies, this article will mainly give an overview of the way in which North Africa has dealt with terrorism, highlighting the different strategies used in these countries.

### Algeria

Algeria is without doubt the African country hit hardest to date by Islamic fundamentalism. Over the previous decade, the country suffered from major terrorist activities, which led to the deaths of 150 000 people. The atrocities were led by a number of groups, notably the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Army of the Islamic Salvation (AIS), the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The initial targets of these groups were army officials, intellectuals, journalists and politicians. However, the target soon broadened to include civilians.

The terrorist movement in Algeria, contrary to the general argument by a number of academics, did not emerge following the cancellation of the 1992 election, which arguably could have brought the religiously-based party, the Islamic Salvation Army (FIS) to power.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the activities of the Islamist<sup>2</sup> movement in Algeria can be traced back to the early 1980s. Indeed, the MIA, which proved to be particularly active alongside of the GIA in the early 1990s when the political conflict started, was created in 1981 under the leadership of Mustapha Bouyali. Between 1984 and 1987, Bouyali attempted to wage a struggle in the Algerian countryside before being neutralised by security forces.<sup>3</sup> Bouyali has based his call for combat on a document published by the subsequent leaders of the FIS, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj. The document stipulated 22 commandments to guide the fight against the political establishment. The text was widely used in the early 1990s.<sup>4</sup>



On 27 November 1991, a military base in Gueemar, South of Algeria, was attacked by Islamists, leading to the death of

more than ten soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Keeping these events in mind, it can be argued that, although the nullification of the 1992 elections triggered the crisis from which the country suffered during the 1990s, the emergence of terrorism in Algeria should not be merely attributed to the cancellation of the election. Rather, a broader approach incorporating the development of the movement should be taken into consideration.

The Algerian government took a number of measures to fight against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Besides legislative changes to help counter terrorism, notably in terms of money laundering,<sup>6</sup> the country used a number of other techniques, which can be categorised into two groups: the first falls under the government's structures, while the second took a social form.

***The terrorist movement in Algeria, contrary to the general argument by a number of academics, did not emerge following the cancellation of the 1992 election***



Egyptian students brandish copies of the Koran at the Al-Azhar University campus in Cairo

## 1 Establishing governmental groups for counter terrorism

In order to successfully tackle terrorism, the Algerian government created new support branches that would work side by side with the army and the police. These groups are the *Brigade Mobile de Police Judiciaire* (BMPJ), *Groupe d'intervention Rapide* (GIR), *Groupe d'intervention Spéciale* (GIS) and *la Garde Communale*.<sup>7</sup>

The BMPJ was established due to the realisation that there is a need to create a brigade focusing on the terrorism file. Across the country, 200 brigades were established. The task of such groups was to treat, classify and analyse all the information related to terrorism.<sup>8</sup>

The GIR and the GIS for their part are specially trained forces, which have intervened on the ground. The *Garde Communale* was active in rural areas. This unit fulfilled the role of an auxiliary between the security services specialised in the fight against terrorism and the civilians in the areas where the unit operated.<sup>9</sup>

## 2 Civil anti-terrorism groups

Two key groups were encouraged by the government to fight against terrorism. These are the *Groupes de légitime-défense* (GLD) and the *Patriotes*. Both groups have considerably facilitated the work of the security forces in rural areas.

What should be noted is that the government has armed the GLD on the condition that such arms are used only in the event of an attack against the village. Hence, this group has played a key role in keeping security in isolated Algerian villages.<sup>10</sup> The government has proceeded with the disarmament of such groups since 2000. Furthermore, no incidents of an abusive use of these arms have been registered so far.

The *Patriotes*, on the other hand, were not armed. This group was constituted of those who fought during the Algerian liberation war against France. Hence, their knowledge of their areas was valuable. They often served as guides to the security forces.

Another crucial strategy that the Algerian government used in order to handle the issue of terrorism is the *Concorde Civile*, or the Amnesty, which was in line with the initiative of President Liamine Zeroual of 1995 as well as President Bouteflika's electoral campaign of 1999. The law was adopted following a national referendum in 1999. The Amnesty was promulgated with the aim of encouraging the surrender of terrorists who had committed minor offences, and giving them the chance to be reinserted into society.<sup>11</sup> This law proved to be successful. In the first year of its adoption alone, 1 500 terrorists surrendered.<sup>12</sup>

The security situation in Algeria has since calmed down. The number of terrorist acts has considerably reduced, and the very few incidents are now limited to remote areas of the country. A new trend, which appeared in 2003 when it

seemed that terrorism was developing in the Southern part of the country, was also brought under control due to stricter border control. The country's recovery from the terrorism years is also reflected economically and politically, in the sense that Algeria is currently witnessing a growing economy and a more stable political situation.<sup>13</sup>

**Egypt**

By the 1970s, the Islamic movement in Egypt had organised itself in a number of active groups, notably the *Takfir Wa Al Hijra* and *Al-Jihad*.<sup>14</sup> The latter is the group behind the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, as well as several assassination attempts against government officials in the 1990s. Other minor groups include the *Jund Allah* (soldiers of God) as well as the *Jaysh al-Tahrir al-Islami* (the Islamic Liberation Army).<sup>15</sup>

The late 1980s witnessed a vocal Islamic movement in Egypt. The groups have carried out a number of violent attacks. It is estimated that since 1981 terrorist activities in Egypt have claimed the lives of 1 251 victims.<sup>16</sup> Terrorist activities continued throughout the 1990s. In April 1996, 18 Greek tourists were killed in Cairo and 14 were wounded. In November 1997, the Luxor drama left 59 tourists dead.<sup>17</sup> From 1997, the security situation in Egypt stabilised. Several factors have contributed to



this. First, in 1997 an Islamist leader called for a ceasefire, which was publicly supported in 1998 by *Al Gama'at's* spiritual leader, Omar Abd Al Rahman.<sup>18</sup> Following this development, the government freed 5 000 members of *Al Gama'at* in 1998 alone. In 1999 it released another 1 200 members.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, a number of measures were taken by the government in order to counter the disastrous impact of terrorist activities. A security campaign was launched against

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT	
<b>1970's</b>	Active Islamic groups <i>Takfir Wa al Hijra</i> , <i>Al-Jihad</i> ; <i>Jund Allah</i> and <i>Jaysh al-Tahrir al-Islami</i> .
<b>1980's</b>	Violent attacks.
<b>1981</b>	Government official, Anwar Sadat assassinated by <i>Al-Jihad</i> activists.
<b>1990's</b>	Terrorist activities continue including attempted assassinations of government officials.
<b>1996</b>	18 Greek tourists killed and 14 wounded in Cairo.
<b>1997</b>	59 tourists dead in the Luxor drama.
<b>1997</b>	Security situation stabilises. Islamist leader calls for ceasefire.
<b>1998</b>	Islamist spiritual leader, Omar Abd Al Rahman publically supports ceasefire.
<b>1998</b>	5,000 <i>Al Gama'at</i> members freed.
<b>1999</b>	1,200 <i>Al Gama'at</i> members freed.
<b>2002</b>	94 <i>Al Wa'ad</i> members prosecuted. 26 <i>Islamic Liberation Party</i> members on trial.
<b>2003</b>	43 <i>Al-Jihad</i> and 12 <i>Takfir Wa al Hijra</i> members arrested.
<b>2004</b>	15 presumed <i>Al-Jihad</i> members detained.



Walid Nawar (L, first row), the brother of 24-year-old Nizar Nawar, who allegedly carried out the 11 April 2002 bombing that left 21 dead at the Ghirba synagogue on the Tunisian resort island of Djerba, at the Lyon courthouse



Islamist organisations. In 2002, 94 members of the *Al Wa'ad* group were prosecuted. In September of the same year, 26 members of the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP) were brought for trial before the Supreme State Security Court.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, 43 members of the *Al-Jihad* group were arrested in January 2003, and 12 members of the *Takfir Wa Al Hijra* group were also arrested.<sup>21</sup> In April 2004, the Egyptian security forces detained 15 presumed members of the *Al-Jihad* group.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to several legislative adjustments, notably in terms of money laundering,

Egypt is also fighting the phenomenon multilaterally. Within this context, it has signed nine international conventions and protocols dealing with terrorism.

#### Tunisia and Morocco

Tunisia and Morocco are recent victims of Islamic fundamentalism in North

Africa. The former was faced with the bombing of a synagogue in the island of Djarba in April 2002,<sup>23</sup> and the latter with the attacks in Casablanca, which left 41 people dead.<sup>24</sup>

The countries have reacted differently.

Morocco chose the classical route of counter-terrorism; that is, trials<sup>25</sup> and legislative changes.<sup>26</sup> Tunisia's strategy was more interesting. Besides legislative changes and international cooperation, the country focused on the social dimension to the fight against terrorism. This strategy has been followed in Tunisia since the 1980s. The government continues to encourage the national reconciliation process during which the society would discuss the form and shape of the country.<sup>27</sup> Regardless of whether the popular demands are met or not, it should be recognised that in principle this tactic is crucial. If conducted democratically, it allows the government to become aware of the popular view and hence to address the concerns before they are exploited by Islamist movements in their recruitment.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the Tunisian government has distinguished itself as an *état laïque* (secular state). The term is derived from the principle adopted in France, which advocates a state that is detached from religion. Thus, religious symbols are even prohibited in, for instance, public schools or government institutions.<sup>29</sup> This measure has proved to be successful in the Tunisian case.

#### Conclusion

North African countries' have been fairly

**Tunisia's strategy was more interesting. Besides legislative changes and international cooperation, the country focused on the social dimension to the fight against terrorism**

successful in reducing terrorist activities on their territories. The countries' success can, however, not only be attributed to the internal measures they have taken. Rather, a range of other factors should also be taken into account. Undoubtedly, the changing international opinion about this type of conflict (terrorism) has had a positive impact in terms of limiting the free movement of terrorists. As a matter of fact, the European Union sheltered a number of terrorists/leaders of terrorist groups as political refugees due to its belief that Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa was a political issue.

The second crucial contributing factor is the

shrinking of the support network of terrorists, especially in the case of Algeria. Indeed, being the main victims of terrorist activities, the populations have turned their backs on terrorist groups, hence reducing both their moral and financial support.

Despite the favourable factors that help North Africa in its fight against terrorism, the countries will have to continue to be vigilant as religious-based terrorism continues to expand in the world today. ▴

*Faten Aggad is a Junior Researcher at the North Africa Desk of the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA).*

## Endnotes

- 1 The FIS wanted to remove the political establishment of the time and replace it with a conservative Muslim government modelled on the Taliban government.
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# VERBATIM

“ Terrorism is a global threat, and it can never be justified. No end can give anyone the right to kill innocent victims. On the contrary, the use of terrorism to pursue any cause – even a worthy one – can only defile that cause, and thereby damage it. ”

**KOFI ANNAN**, *delivering a speech at the conference 'Fighting Terrorism for Humanity: The Roots of Evil', in New York, 22 September 2003*

“ ...terrorism does not come out of the blue. It has its prerequisites, breeding-grounds and causal factors. However, there is no – absolutely no – justification for taking innocent children hostage and killing them... ”

**PETER SCHIEDER**, *President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, delivering a speech at the opening of the fourth part of the 2004 Ordinary Session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, 4-8 October 2004*

“ These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. ”

**GEORGE W. BUSH** *United States President, 20 September 2001*

“ ...I believe violence will only increase the cycle of violence. But how do we deal with hatred and anger, which are often the root causes of such senseless violence? This is a very difficult question, especially when it concerns a nation and we have certain fixed conceptions of how to deal with such attacks.... ”

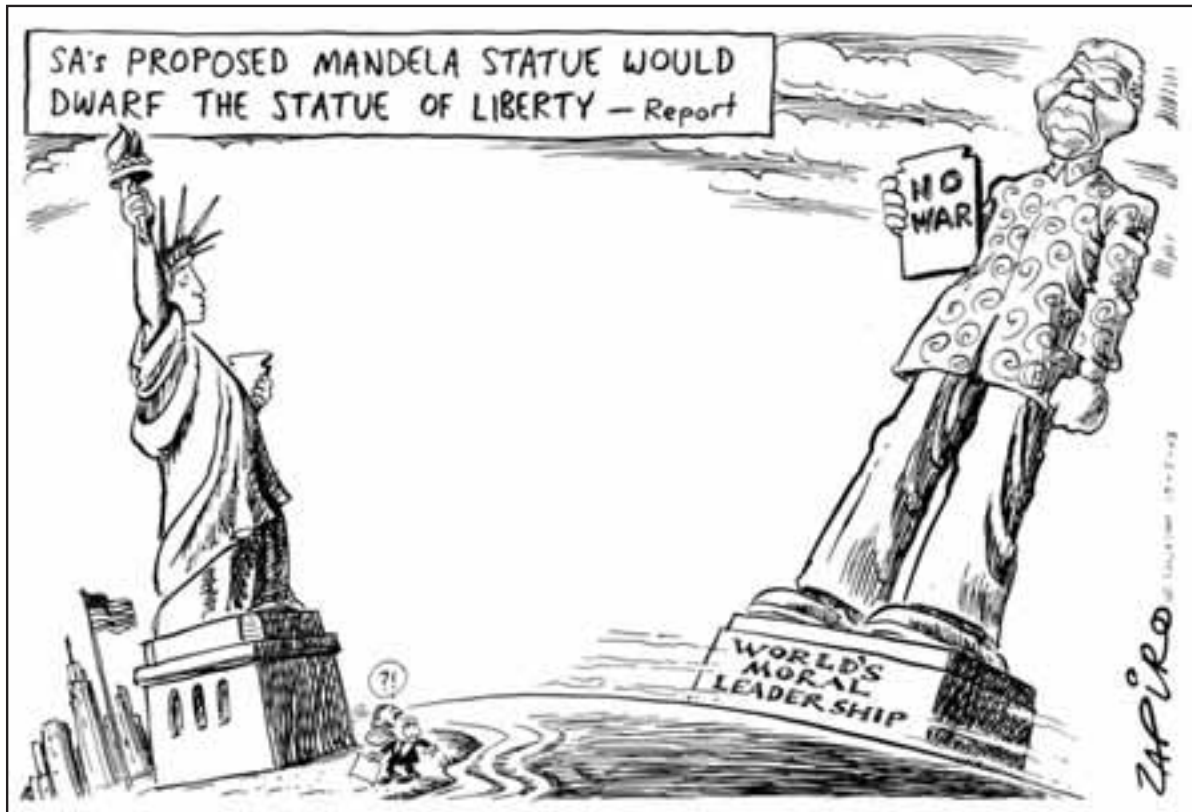
**HIS HOLINESS THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DALAI LAMA**, *in his letter to the United States President, George W. Bush following 9/11*

“ Whatever the dangers of the action we take, the dangers of inaction are far, far greater. ”

**TONY BLAIR** *British Prime Minister delivering a speech at a Labour Party Conference, 2 October 2001*

“ Terrorism is a very irresponsible way for expressing one's dissatisfaction. It uses indiscriminate violence. It doesn't discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. That's why we oppose terrorism. ”

**YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI**, *Ugandan President meeting with George W. Bush at The White House Office in New York, 10 June 2003*



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“ Non-violence is the law of the human race, and is infinitely greater than, and superior to brute force. ”

**MAHATMA GANDHI**

“ May the Lord remove from the heart of man every trace of resentment, of hostility and of hate, and open him to reconciliation, to solidarity and to peace.... Let us pray so that the ‘culture of love’ may be established all over the world. ”

**HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II,**  
*extracted from the Prayer at the beginning  
of the Hora Tertia for the one month  
memorial of the terrorist attack of 9/11,  
11 October 2001*

“ ...All states must work together to preserve a democratic, secure and open society. That is how we will defeat terrorism. But we must also admit, we will never be successful if we fail to defeat the causes of terrorism.... ”

**GÖRAN PERSSON,** *Prime Minister of Sweden delivering a speech at the opening of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly, 21 September 2004*

“ There is no future without forgiveness. ”

**DESMOND TUTU,** *South African Archbishop, delivering a speech on terrorist at George Mason University, 2001*





**VERBATIM**

“ To fight terrorism, we must not only fight terrorists. We have to win hearts and minds. To do this, we should act to resolve political disputes, articulate and work towards a vision of peace and development, and promote human rights. And we can only do this effectively if we work together, through multilateral institutions – first and foremost, through the United Nations. ”

**KOFI ANNAN**, *delivering a speech at the conference 'Fighting Terrorism for Humanity: The Roots of Evil', in New York, 22 September 2003*

“ Our aim is that the struggle against terrorism will lead to increased security, and to enhance understanding, openness and tolerance between cultures and religions. As part of the international struggle against terrorism it is vital that political leaders also focus on the roots of terrorism. ”

**KJELL MAGNE BONDEVIK**, *Norwegian Prime Minister, 10 September 2003*

“ The evil must be punished ... but we should not liken ourselves to bandits who strike from behind. We must weigh up our decisions and make them on the basis of proven facts. ”

**VLADIMIR PUTIN**, *Russian President speaking at a news conference*

“ The powerful will also make the additional determination that terrorism and war constitute the central and principal threat and challenge that human civilisation faces. They will make the determination that because, almost by definition, the terrorists target them simply because they are the powerful, they have no logical choice but to identify terrorism as the central and principal threat and challenge they face, and to which they must respond. ...However, the disempowered, who are also the poor of the world, will also make the additional determination that poverty and underdevelopment constitute the central and principal threat and challenge that human civilisation faces. ”

**THABO MBEKI**, *President of South Africa addressing the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, 22 September 2004*



SENZO NGUBANE

COMMENTARY

# Managing conflict in the century of extremes

**A**t the time of writing this article, the African leadership was still engaging in various attempts to bring about peace and stability in different parts of the continent. These attempts to find political solutions to conflicts facing the continent still, however, exist side-by-side with violence and war, which seems to be setting the process backwards. In the Sudan, the political negotiations in Kenya to end that country's decades of civil war seem to be overshadowed by the bloodletting in Darfur. In Cote d'Ivoire, political attempts to end the recent civil strife seem to be failing due to a lack of a proper mechanism to implement and honour the agreements signed. In the case

of Burundi, steps towards eventual peace and stability could be overshadowed by the absence of a cease-fire with the last remaining rebel group, the Front for National Liberation (FNL).

The above examples illustrate two main challenges for conflict resolution in Africa, and perhaps for the whole world. First, there is hardly a straight path towards finding a politically negotiated settlement to a conflict. This is further illustrated by the fact that the history of conflict resolution in Africa does not have a good track record of conflicts which have been brought to an end through a negotiated settlement. This already weak background of ending conflict through negotiations and thereby peaceful means is, arguably, more



A patient is treated at a hospital in Bujumbura after an attack at the Gatumba camp

under pressure now than ever before.

This appears to be the case since the dominant debates in the world today seem to be militaristic in nature. That is, the focus of the world's approach towards bringing about change seems to be driven and influenced by the concepts of the 'War against Terrorism'. It is this approach that could fuel an assumption that the only way that change could be brought about is through the barrel of a gun. One of the challenges facing institutions, centres and individuals whose sole focus is on finding political solutions to conflicts, is how to maintain support for alternative solutions that entail peaceful negotiations, political mediation and sustainable agreements.

***It is even more difficult in an age when the maxim that 'might is right' seems to have gained ground, and now seems to be the defining principle that governs interaction among states, and between states and non-state actors***

Other questions still remain. For instance, how should the world engage in and coordinate its efforts towards such alternative means of bringing about an end to conflicts? There are no easy answers to such a question, especially when it is clear that the world finds itself in an age where there seems to be a blank cheque to engage in military action whenever it suits those with the capacity and control of the means of violence. The 'War against Terror', and any war for the matter, will take many turns which were not intended when a decision was made to go to war. For example, the ongoing war on

terror, and the idea of effecting regime change from above, could have unintended consequences which further complicate the ways and means of bringing an end to a conflict. One such consequence is that the world seems to have lost any hope for finding means and ways of peaceful settlements of disputes.

We continue to live in a world of paradoxes. In most approaches to end conflicts, even within those that claim to be rooted in political settlements, there always appears to be a sacred place at the altar of negotiation tables reserved for those who are armed and who decide to use violence to effect change. This inevitably leads to an unfortunate assumption that in a conflict situation the only way to gain recognition and power is through resorting to the use of arms. This assumption has robbed humanity of the progress gained by the decades spent attempting to resolve conflicts peacefully. Such an approach has also created a situation where those who are at the receiving end of these conflicts, namely the people, have been sidelined. This, for instance, is what we are seeing in the case of Nigeria and the challenges in the Ogoni state. A previous attempt to effect change peacefully was violently crushed by the erstwhile regime of Sani Abacha and those who in the present day are calling for change in the Ogoni state have, rightly or wrongly, taken up arms to further their cause. It would seem that such armed groups are now being listened to, not because the government believes in the legitimacy of their cause but simply because they have taken up arms. It is this pervasive tendency to turn to violence that ought to be changed if genuine mechanisms to bring about peace are to be found around the world.

A negotiated settlement to a conflict is an approach that seeks to prevent violence and armed conflict, and presupposes a number of things. These include the willingness of the parties to negotiate and the acknowledgment of the reality that their conflict cannot be resolved in any other way but through a negotiated settlement. To secure even this belief becomes



GIANLUIGI GUERCI/AFP

Congolese who took refuge in Burundi due to instability in Eastern Congo

difficult in an age where actors involved in a conflict might feel pressured to take up arms. It is even more difficult in an age when the maxim that 'might is right' seems to have gained ground, and now seems to be the defining principle that governs interaction among states, and between states and non-state actors.

Furthermore, the challenge of finding peaceful settlements seems to be weakened by how the media plays its role, and there is therefore a need to re-examine the impact of the media in this day and age. A question should be, to what extent do the media play a destructive role in this age of war and regime change? For those who reside outside the many theatres of conflicts, such as Israel and Palestine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Sudan, the only images they have of these territories is one portrayed by the media, which portray them as places that only know violence. The only time that Burundi, for instance, takes centre stage in the mainstream media is when mass killings or some violation of basic human principles has occurred, thus fuelling a stereotype, at least to ordinary citizens of the world, that nothing happens in these places other than war and violence. Such images in the

mainstream media confirm views that there is a section of the population that still lives and conducts their interaction as human beings through violent means alone. Such images rob the rest of the world of knowing about the alternative reality that exists in many of these situations. It undermines the efforts by people to re-build their communities and to mend human relations, which are continuously being challenged by the war. Such images undermine the efforts of many civil society initiatives to bring about change via political settlements. It ignores for instance, the combined efforts by many women in Burundi to open up dialogue among themselves in order to change their plight. It undermines, for example, the efforts of Somali women, united under the banner of Save Somali Women and Children, whose efforts seek to strengthen relations at a community level as a building bloc for peace at a national level.

A fair balance by the media is necessary and the 'other' reality needs to be reported. If the battle over 'might is right' is to be won, the many successful efforts to bring about change must receive coverage through the mainstream media. This must be done in order to show the





DRC refugees occupy a camp in the Burundian village of Rugombo

extent to which ordinary people, who do not have the means and access to arms and who choose not to resort to violence, are seeking creative ways of finding solutions to their conflicts. It is such efforts that ought to be supported. It is these people that need to be empowered and their efforts publicised in order to ensure that world opinion, which is partly shaped by the mainstream media, shifts towards acknowledging that it is still possible to effect political change without resorting to arms and the use of force.

Let us turn to the ongoing approach of the war on terrorism and its effects on the

non-violent attempts to transform conflicts. The war on terrorism has shifted the approach on how to engage with conflicting parties in a conflict. Among other things, one of the challenges is the negative connotations that such a label carries for those who are viewed as terrorists. The point is not so much about who is a terrorist or what an act of terror is, but the focus of non-violent peace actors lies somewhere else. The issue is that for those who intend to work towards a peaceful settlement of disputes, which presupposes inclusivity, such connotations limit the work that can be done in attempting to bring about an end to a conflict in a non-violent manner, since engagement with those who have been branded terrorists runs the risk of those actors being accused of undermining state-sanctioned decisions. For instance, the regional initiative in the Great Lakes region recently declared the FNL a terrorist organisation following a massacre in the Gatumba refugee camps in Burundi. Now what does this mean? Does it mean that any political attempt to find a solution to the current crises which involves the FNL could no longer be pursued? Worse still, does this give the government a blank cheque to then pursue the FNL militarily since it has been branded a terrorist body? To be sure, one could argue that such decisions are meant to put pressure on the party, to isolate it and thereby hope that it would accept the principle of negotiating. However, what happens if such a decision pushes the party further away from seeing a need to engage in political negotiations? The argument being made is that the ideology of a war on terrorism somewhat de-legitimises alternative ways of dealing with a conflict.

To be sure, the argument here is not against decisions made by states to deal with present danger; rather it is about the implications that such decisions have for finding peaceful ways of dealing with a conflict. Africa has its own examples of how such decisions further perpetuate a war and limit any effective engagement for a political situation. A case in point is Angola, where the regional leaders declared the late leader of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) a war criminal due to his role in that country's destructive and protracted



AGACIO FRANCO/AP

Angolan President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos (L) and UNITA rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi (R) shake hands during the cease fire agreement 31 May 1991 as former Portuguese Prime Minister Cavaco Silva looks on

civil war. This decision immediately resulted in two outcomes. First, it gave the government of Angola a reason to intensify its war efforts against UNITA and its leader, since it had been accepted at an international level that Jonas Savimbi was a war criminal. Secondly, it discredited or at least limited any role that the regional leadership in the form of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could play in finding a solution, since in the eyes of UNITA, the leadership had taken sides with the government. Thus, an unintended consequence of this decision was that the war continued in Angola. With the benefits of hindsight, one could argue that such a decision was appropriate since a war was brought to an end, but the question is at what price and at what human costs. Also, the outcome of such a decision further perpetuates a culture of violence and war. For instance, what would convince the government of Angola not to do the same thing with the rebel movement in the case of the Cabinda Enclave?

Perhaps this is the right time to concentrate all efforts on calling for an alternative approach to the use of violence to bring about change. It is necessary to focus efforts on building a movement of people that seek to achieve peace without resorting to violence. It is this

movement that must be reflected in the efforts of civil society actors who continue to mitigate conflicts in different parts of the world in non-violent ways. There is a need to build a culture of peace, and a negotiated settlement should be the only way to govern interaction among conflicting parties. Such an understanding can only be formed through effective coordination of efforts among all the relevant players in a conflict situation. Such effective coordination can probably occur through two means. First, there is a need to engage in thorough appraisals of the constraints and challenges faced by different interventions that seek to end conflict through politically negotiated approaches. It is through such a process that the world can better appreciate how to strengthen such interventions. Secondly, there is a need to properly record and document those experiences where non-violent approaches have worked, especially in Africa, in order to ensure that such successes and challenges are shared with different actors. ▴

***It is necessary to focus efforts on building a movement of people that seek to achieve peace without resorting to violence***

*Senzo Ngubane is the Editor of Conflict Trends and Researcher at ACCORD.*



COMMENTARY

PAUL NANTUYA & BRITT DE KLERK

# Sudan:

## The challenge of

# Darfur

**D**arfur may serve as a test case for Africa's political commitment to peacekeeping and peace enforcement as enshrined in the provisions of the recently established Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union. In response to a massive humanitarian disaster as a result of the conflict between the Sudanese government and the rebel movements, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and actions by the Janjaweed militia, the continental body has pledged a peacekeeping force to be sent to Darfur for a one-year period.

The announcement indicates a clear departure from the dogmatic commitment of the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

to the notion of non-interference. As we speak, the African Union (AU) has agreed to increase the protection force from 390 to over 3 000 troops and civilian police. There are currently over 300 Rwandan and Nigerian troops in Darfur deployed to help protect the AU ceasefire monitors currently on the ground. The additional troops aim to transform the AU ceasefire monitoring team into a fully fledged and robust peacekeeping force.

At the same time, the regional response to the situation in Darfur has been positive. The East African Community (EAC) agreed to send a combined a peacekeeping force to foster peace once an agreement is signed. The EAC is a regional grouping bringing together Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Rwanda and Burundi



have also applied for membership. These fresh developments have serious implications for the future peace and security architecture in Africa. Individual defence forces of independent countries are now starting to speak with one voice. Defence leaders are now starting to make statements that view regional security threats as a common challenge.

As would be expected, the government of the Sudan feels threatened by these latest developments in East Africa. All along, the Sudanese authorities have insisted that the situation in Darfur does not warrant the deployment of an AU peacekeeping force. Their view is that the security of the region is an internal responsibility. That stated position is, however, coming under increasing pressure, given that the robust East African position is bolstered by a string of tough United Nations (UN) statements, including one from the Security Council, and others from the United States Congress and the United Kingdom government – all calling for the Sudanese government to disarm the militias who are accused of causing the carnage in Darfur. Clearly, the concern for human rights is now superseding the preoccupation with state sovereignty.

Given the tragic state of affairs in Darfur, this surely is an encouraging sign. Leaders can no longer invoke the notion of sovereignty to escape scrutiny of gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Had the former OAU adopted this strategic approach to international relations, a lot of suffering could have been avoided. The tragedy in Darfur is a case in point in that because Africa and the world were not at the time united in their approach to the conflict, the violations of human rights and other abuses in the Darfur region over many years went largely unchallenged and unreported in the world media.

That is now starting to change, and the world seems to be taking a stand. This concern may be attributed to two factors – a fear of not repeating the mistake of inaction during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the active role of the regional and international media in focusing attention on the conflict. In that spirit, the UN presented a 30-day deadline to the



Rebels of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) occupy the northern part of the western Sudanese Darfur region



DESREY MINIKOU/AFP



DESIREY MINKOH/AFP



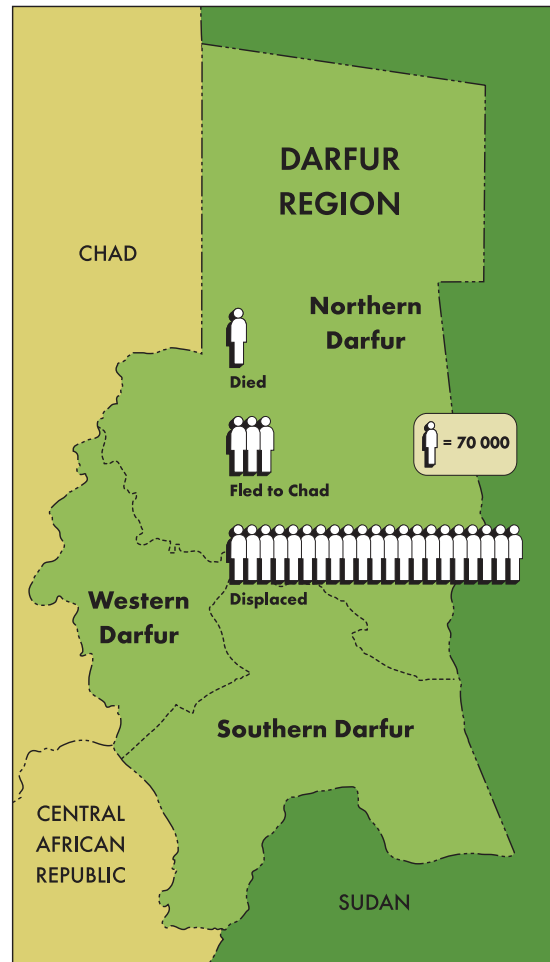
Rebels of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), patrol the northern part of Darfur

DESIREY MINKOH/AFP



Awa and her two children escaped being massacred in Sudan's Darfur region

Sudanese government on 30 July 2004 in which to address the humanitarian situation and improve security in the region. Since February 2003, it is estimated that about 70 000 people have died, 1,45 million have been displaced, and 200 000 people have fled to Chad. As we speak, the deadline has already expired.



Despite the resolution to impose economic and travel sanctions on Khartoum should the provisions of the resolution not be met, there has been little action on the ultimatum. Africans are waiting to see how the Security Council will respond, given that all the latest UN reports point to a lack of progress in finding a solution to the conflict.

Parallel to the military response to Darfur are the peace talks taking place in Abuja in Nigeria which are hosted by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo in his capacity as chairman of the African Union. The talks have been marked by a series of 'stops and starts' since they began in August 2004 and no agreement has been reached between the Sudanese government, the SLA and JEM.



DESIREY MINKOH/APF

***Leaders can no longer invoke the notion of sovereignty to escape scrutiny of gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights***

At this point, it would be advisable for the UN and the rest of the international community to follow the lead of the East African leaders by treating the conflict in Darfur as posing a serious national security problem to the immediate region. It would be a mistake to view the crisis as an isolated case. At the same time, the events in Darfur should not be viewed in isolation from the wider conflict context of the Sudan and in addressing the former, attention should not be diverted from the peace talks and developments under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). If the international community responds to Darfur on this basis, a solution might well be possible, no matter how unsettling for the regime in Khartoum. ▀



MARCO LONGARI/APF

*Paul Nantulya is the Head of Political Engagement in Africa at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, South Africa. Britt de Klerk is the Programme Officer on the Preventive Action Programme at ACCORD and Assistant Editor of Conflict Trends.*

More than 80 000 displaced people at the Mornay camp who have escaped violence in the Darfur region of Sudan

## From Warfare To Welfare

Edited by Marie Muller and Bas De Gaay Fortman.

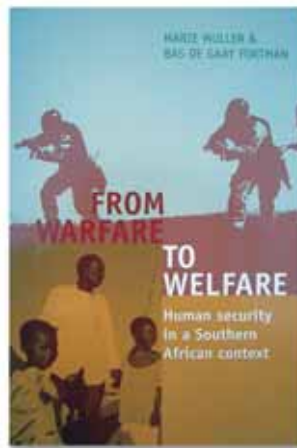
Published by Royal Van Gorcum, 2004

118pp, ISBN 90232 4043X

Undoubtedly, the question of security in Southern Africa will continue to be one of the main issues for discussion around regional cooperation among member states that belong to the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This is the case for a number of reasons. These include the fact that the sub-region does not seem to have been able to define in clear and concrete terms what approach it ought to take when it comes to its security. Or, where attempts have been made to define that approach, the responsible policy makers and other relevant actors have not been able to take the necessary steps to ensure implementation. This reviewer has argued elsewhere that, among other challenges that exist around the discourse on security in Southern Africa, there seems to be a gap between the academic thinking on the one hand and the policy approaches and decisions on the other. To put the matter differently, there is a plethora of academic thinking about a need for an alternative approach to security in the region. Such a gap is found specifically within the concept which has come to be known as human security.

The maxims that it is the people and not a state that ought to be protected; that the idea of security involves protection from want; and that poverty and economic destitution lead to insecurity, need to filter from the academic to the policy level. To be sure, a great number of statements have been made by policy makers about such an approach to security; however, it would appear that not much has been done to translate such statements into policy.

It is perhaps for this reason, and because of this apparent gap, that the academic thinking has not yet ceased about a need to entrench a human security idea for and in the sub-region. Therefore, this edited book is seen as a contribution to this ongoing attempt to further explain, expand upon and advocate a



human-centred approach to security.

It does this through different articles by some of the foremost thinkers on security in Southern Africa. It contains articles that seek to clarify and simplify the concept of human security and those that seek to link it with other equally important issues such as development and human rights. It has articles that reflect on how the concept is applicable to Southern Africa and how it could be operationalised. It features thought-provoking information about the glaring divisions between the developed and the developing world; of how commitments are made on paper without any evident political will to implement them. It contains analysis on the evolution of the concept of security in the region and how state actors, and primarily SADC as a regional body, have attempted to adapt themselves to the changing international political context. In this sense, the book offers another interesting glance not just at the challenges facing SADC on security matters, but also at the means and possibilities for creating an environment conducive to human security in Southern Africa. To this extent, the book makes an important contribution to this ongoing discourse.

For those who are interested in anything new about the issue of human security in Southern Africa then there would a need to look elsewhere, since this book does not bring anything new to the debate. However, it serves to reinforce the concepts of human security and the necessity to make it practically applicable in Southern Africa. Seeing that the book was preceded by a workshop where the articles were first presented as papers, it would be fair to state that one would have expected more policy-relevant and concrete recommendations on how such ideas and arguments as contained in the book could find themselves implemented in the policy corridors of the regional security apparatus. ▀



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\* *Provisional Title*



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