

# Working paper 34

**MARCH 2015**

## **THE DILEMMAS FACED BY THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE AL- SHABAAB TERRORIST GROUP**

George Nderitu, Embassy of Kenya, Tel Aviv



**International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)**

# **The Dilemmas Faced by the Kenyan Government in the Fight Against the Al-Shabaab Terrorist Groups**

George Nderitu, Embassy of Kenya, Tel Aviv

## **I. A Brief Overview**

The Kenyan government decided to send its defense forces to fight against Al-Shabaab, (ICG Africa Report, 2012) in Somalia in 2011, in what was intended to be a brief operation. Kenya's incursion into Somalia was precipitated by the frequent kidnappings of tourists on Kenyan soil along the coast region in Mombasa. Two foreign aid workers were also kidnapped by Al-Shabaab in the Dadaab refugee camp. In response, Kenya launched Operation 'Linda Nchi' ("protect the country"), aimed at flushing out Al-Shabaab from its safe haven in Somalia where the group had operated since 2006 (Little, 2012, pp190). The Kenya government launched the operation with high hopes and prospects for a viable, extremist-free future neighborhood, Jubaland, a semi-autonomous state within Somalia, according to Centre for Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (CDMHA) (Kassilly, et al., 2012). The operation was hurriedly organized, seemingly without much adequate preparation for retaliatory attacks. This involvement by the Kenya government in Somalia was partly motivated by a desire to immunize the northeastern province of Kenya that borders Somalia from chaos, ease the huge refugee burden, and curtail the radical influence of Al-Shabaab (Little, 2012). Notably, the population in the northeastern region of Kenya is predominantly made up of Somalis who subscribe to Islam as their main religion.

In response to Kenya's actions, Al-Shabaab released a propaganda video declaring war on Kenya. The video was released by Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali, the self-proclaimed de facto leader of Kenyan Al-Shabaab fighters in Somalia. In the video recording titled, "If they seek your help in religion, it is your duty to help them", Sheikh Ali said that war or jihad should now be waged in Kenya in response to the military operation in Somalia (Mayoyo, 2012).

Kenya has experienced a painful history of terrorist threats since the mid-1990s, from a number of extremist groups that operated in Somalia (Kassilly et al., 2012). These groups carried out or facilitated terrorist attacks not only in Kenya but also within the East Africa region. The first group was Al-Ittihaad Al-Islami (AIAI), a Somali Islamist and nationalist political group with longstanding ties to Al-Qaeda that aimed to establish an Islamic emirate in the Somali-inhabited territories of the Horn of Africa, Kenya, according to the Military Intervention Crisis Group (ICG Africa Report, 2012). Its strategy relied upon regional and international networks linked to the Somali diaspora. Members travelled freely between Kenya and Somalia and elsewhere in the region, and built considerable infrastructure for recruitment, fundraising and communication among the Somali populations in Nairobi, Mombasa and the north-eastern province. In the mid-1990s, the AIAI claimed responsibility for several terrorist attacks in Ethiopia. Following Ethiopian retaliatory raids on its Somali bases in early 1997, however, the AIAI's military and political command structure was dismantled, and the movement formally disbanded after failing to attain its objective of a pan-Somali, Salafist emirate. By 2005, it had essentially ceased to exist as an organisation, although many of its leaders re-emerged in the Union of Islamic Courts, according to the International Crisis Group Briefing No. 45, Somalia: "The Tough Part is Ahead", (ICG Africa Report, 2012).

Some AIAI leaders remained active and may have played a supporting role in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi. The August 7, 1998 twin attacks on the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were carried out by Al-Qaeda in East Africa, based in Somalia (Shinn, 2012, p. 205). The group's Somali connections were instrumental in planning and executing the attacks, which killed a total of 225 people and wounded over 4,000 more. Twelve of the dead were US citizens; the vast majority were citizens of Kenya or Tanzania. Increased international attention led to the capture or killing of a number of the group's leaders, but it remained a serious threat and on December 28, 2002, the group attacked the Paradise Hotel, a beachfront lodge in Kikambala, Kenya, owned by Israelis and frequented by Israeli tourists, killing fifteen people and injuring about 80 others (ICG Africa Report, 2012). Another mass attack occurred on July 11, 2010, when bombings in Kampala killed 85 civilians and injured dozens more. The attack was attributed to Al-Shabaab, a successor to AIAI, although most participants were East Africans.

The attack confirmed longstanding fears that the group could become a regional threat and came after several explicit warnings that it would “bring war to Uganda and Burundi” in revenge for their contribution of troops to AMISOM in support of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and for civilian casualties caused by AMISOM shelling (ICG Africa Report, 2012). In the wake of these threats, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) was justified in its defensive and pre-emptive attack to protect against Al-Shabaab terrorism (Kassilly et al., 2012).

## **II. Research Question, Research Assumptions and Methodology**

This paper intends to analyze the terrorist attacks carried out in the republic of Kenya by Al-Shabaab, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, which prompted an incursion by the Kenya Defense Forces into Somalia with the aim of flushing Al-Shabaab militants out of their comfort zone in Somalia and cutting off their source of economic dependence on the Kismayo Port (Little, 2012). As expected, Al-Shabaab responded to Kenya’s military intervention with threats and attacks. The terrorist group demanded that Kenya withdraw its defense forces from Somalia or else terrorist attacks would become the order of the day for Kenya. Al-Shabaab released a propaganda video declaring war against Kenya. The video was released by Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali (Mayoyo, 2012).

Al-Shabaab has since made good on its threats and inflicted deep pain among the Kenyan civilian population, which has suffered many deaths in Al-Shabaab attacks. The worst attack, to date, was the Westgate Mall attack in the city of Nairobi in September 2013 (Mayoyo, 2013). The Kenyan opposition has echoed sentiments similar to those espoused by Al-Shabaab that there is an urgent need to withdraw Kenya Defense Forces from Somalia in order to avoid terrorist attacks, as reported in Kenya Nation newspaper (Nzioka, 2014). The main opposition party, Coalition of Reforms and Democracy (CORD), has repeatedly demanded and exerted pressure on the government for a military withdrawal in order to stop further terrorist attacks against Kenya. Recently, the CORD leader and former Prime Minister of Kenya participated in a major public rally demanding the unconditional withdrawal of Kenya Defense Forces from Somalia, according to an interview in the Kenya Daily Newspaper (Gaitho, 2014).

This leads to this paper’s research question: Should Kenya heed to Al-Shabaab’s demands and threats, and remove Kenya Defense Forces from Somalia? This paper will analyze the historical

situation that precipitated the deployment of Kenya Defense Forces in Somalia and the dilemmas involved in such an operation, and will examine whether forces should withdraw prematurely or remain in Somalia until the job is done, and what the best option for the Kenya government would be.

The frequent attacks by Al-Shabaab have led not only to spirited criticism by the opposition party but have threatened the very cohesion of Kenya's multi-ethnic population. Majority Leader, Aden Duale, accused CORD of "speaking the same language as Al-Shabaab" in opposing the deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces in Lamu and asking for their withdrawal from Somalia, according to the national newspaper (Ngirachu, 2014). This demonstrates the dilemma over the suitability and timing of the incursion of the Kenya Defense Forces into Somalia. Furthermore, this paper will analyze various strategic policy options and their impacts on the fight against Al-Shabaab, as well as examine the history of Al-Shabaab attacks on Kenyan soil. This paper seeks to find a way forward instead of an abrupt withdrawal with no projected gains.

### **III. Theoretical and Historical Background**

After the collapse of the last Somali government of Siyad Barre in 1991 and the bitter clan fighting that took place throughout the 1990s, Mogadishu fell under the control of warlords who terrorized civilians. Somalia remained without a functioning government for a long time, a fact that contributed to the success of terrorist groups in finding a haven in the country (Hassan & Lefkow, 2007), making it possible for them to operate freely.

The terrorist attacks that took place in Kenya since the 1990s were all linked to Somali-based terrorist groups (Kassilly et al., 2012). The most remarkable terrorist attack was the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Nairobi and Tanzania, carried out by Al-Qaeda. On August 7, 1998, between 10:30-10:40 am local time, suicide bombers in trucks laden with explosives parked outside of the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, and detonated almost simultaneously. 213 people were killed in the Nairobi blast while 11 were killed in Dar es Salaam. An estimated 4,000 people in Nairobi were wounded and another 85 were injured in Dar es Salaam. The vast

majority of casualties were local citizens; 12 Americans were also killed, including two Central Intelligence employees in the Nairobi Embassy (Kassilly et al., 2012).

Since the 1990s, the United States has supported the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), a rather weak government that was led by an alliance of warlords. In 2006, the TFG was overthrown by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which appeared to be more organized (Hassan & Lefkow, 2007). The ICU was a coalition of businessmen, Mogadishu clan elders and militant Islamists, mainly drawn from the capital's dominant Hawiye clan, which unexpectedly defeated many of the warlords, some of whom were members of the Transitional Federal Parliament. Many Mogadishu residents welcomed the security brought by the ICU but the strict, Islamist tendencies of some of its leaders and the threat that they posed to the weak TFG alarmed regional and international observers. The US claimed that some members of the ICU had provided shelter to the suspects responsible for the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania (Hassan & Lefkow, 2007), raising fears that Somalia was fostering Islamic radicalism.

As a result, the United States backed Ethiopian forces to oust the ICU, leading its radical wing, Al-Shabaab, to regroup by drawing on strong nationalist appeal and traditional anti-Ethiopian imperialism sentiment (Hassan & Lefkow, 2007). With the invasion of Ethiopian forces and their occupation of Mogadishu until January 2009, the radicalization of Islamic politics and the strength of Al-Shabaab, which by then had captured the strategic port of Kismayo, grew to the point that it occupied and administered most of southern Somalia right up to the border of Kenya (Little, 2012). This posed a major threat to Kenya and a cause for concern.

These events marked the beginning of Al-Shabaab's relevance as a serious threat within the East Africa region. The terrorist group mounted a huge resistance to Ethiopian and TFG forces, which they viewed as part of a western plot against Islam (Shinn, 2012). The fighting between the insurgency and Ethiopian forces caused massive human suffering and led to a huge influx of refugee in Kenya (Menkhaus, 2007).

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a new approach was adopted in which the global definition of a 'terrorist' was more or less defined by the United States administration (Marchal, 2007). The result of this change could be seen in early 2006 when the foreign media referred to members of the Islamic courts in Mogadishu as Islamic extremists assumed to have connections to Al-Qaeda. To a large extent, this global description of terrorism was based on events that took place far away from Somalia with little or no consideration for internal Somali politics, constructed the narrative that was used after December 20, 2006 to justify the Ethiopian and US military intervention in Somalia (Marchal, 2007).

The state is currently under the security provided by the AMISOM forces. Civil wars are being waged by the militia under various warlords, demonstrating that the state is unable to perform its noble duty to protect its people. AMISOM and TFG forces are only present in Mogadishu.

This is indication that Al-Shabaab is a force to be reckoned with and that it poses a big threat to East Africa region. According to Durch (1996), terrorism in Somalia received a boost from bin Laden when he moved Al-Qaeda fighters from the battle against the Soviets in Afghanistan to help Al-Shabaab fight against the TFG in Somalia. Al-Shabaab, backed by Al-Qaeda, then used the lawlessness in Somalia to stage attacks there and in other parts of the region (Daniel, 2012). Al-Shabaab has caused enormous suffering for the locals. In 2009, four Somalis who had converted to Christianity and were working for an NGO providing help to Somali orphans were beheaded by Al-Shabaab (Daniel, 2012).

Piracy along the coastline has also been on the rise; Somali pirates use modern technology to launch attacks many hundreds of miles away (Daniel, 2012). With such a large range of attack, business and the free flow of ships within the region have been impacted and the loot plundered in these attacks has been used to finance terrorist activities. On July 11, 2010 Al-Shabaab made international headlines after the group bombed a World Cup finals viewing party in Kampala, Uganda, killing 80 people, including an American (Wafula, 2014). The attack highlighted the group's desire to have an impact beyond its "local" struggle and to force Uganda's military to withdraw from the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia

(AMISOM). In October 2013, Al-Shabaab waged an attack on Kenya's Westgate Mall, killing over 60 people (UNHCR Report, 2013).

At this point, it is important to note the reason that led Kenya Defence Forces into Somalia in 2011. Was the Kenyan government justified in deploying defense forces to Somalia? Indeed, this was a big gamble considering its geographical position and the huge Somali population in both nations, which counted approximately two million people according to the 2009 census (Teyie, 2010). The Somali population in Kenya has had risen tremendously, increasing by 140% within ten years, according to the census report (Teyie, 2010), a fact that can only be explained by the influx of illegal Somali immigrants who acquired citizenship through dubious means. Moreover, UN Security Council Resolution 1725 (ICG Africa Report, 2012) prohibited bordering states from deploying in order to avoid the conflict of interest that can arise from a shared population and present a huge dilemma for the government.

The justification and reasons behind Kenya's invasion of Somalia in October 2011, with the stated aim of protecting the northeast border with Somalia and its important coastal tourist industry, is debatable, whereas military incursions are not a secret (Little, 2012). However, Kenya was faced with a different scenario when it was attacked. The Somali kidnappings in Kenya of a French tourist, who eventually died in captivity near Afmadow, Somalia, and two Spanish Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) workers in Dadaab, as well as the killing of the kidnapped French tourist's husband, led most international media outlets to raise concerns over regional security and war (Little, 2012). Kenya needed to defend itself from such external aggression.

For the African Union (AU), the incursion of Kenya Defense Forces and their subsequent quick gains was a game changer in the quest for stability in Somalia (Onuoha, 2013). The AU subsequently made a request to the Kenyan government that the Kenya Defense Forces be integrated into AMISOM, including the incorporation of its objectives within the AMISOM mandate. The legal requirements for the integration were met and the Kenya Defense Forces in Somalia were formally integrated into AMISOM on February 22, 2012 after the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2036 (2012). The Resolution also increased the number of

AMISOM forces from 12, 000 to 17,731. Kenya is one of the five troop contributing countries (TCCs) to AMISOM, which has forced Al-Shabaab to retreat from the Somali capital, Mogadishu, as well as other strongholds since 2011. The Kenya Defense Forces accounts for 26% of AMISOM forces (Onuoha, 2013).

Intervention in Somalia was deemed a noble idea to stabilize the region, but the memory of the infamous and tragic “Black Hawk Down” incident in 1993, which led to the violent polarization of Somalis against US and U. troops and to protests by some Somalis against the Ethiopian occupation and the increased number Al-Shabaab supporters that followed, casts a different picture (Little, 2012). The dilemma revolves around the need for an international solution to the situation in Somalia that will undoubtedly require a strong diplomatic strategy involving representatives from countries other than Kenya as well (Little, 2012).

Since the Somali state’s collapse in 1991, military offensives by foreign troops, including US, UN and Ethiopian forces have been perceived locally as invasions by occupying forces with disastrous results. Therefore, there is every indication that a prolonged invasion by the Kenyan army would have had similar results in terms of the strengthening and popularity of radical groups' intent on armed conflict and terrorism. Furthermore, the arrival of AMISOM forces only strengthened local perceptions that foreign occupiers were the main allies of the TFC. The complexity of the situation also included a religious element since the occupying forces, now including Kenya, could be portrayed by Al-Shabaab as Christian crusaders and "infidels" who wanted to defame Islam and its followers (Little, 2012).

According to the International Crisis Group (ICG) working to prevent conflict worldwide (ICG Africa Report, 2012), the KDF had considered and broadly prepared for an incursion into Somalia for at least several years. As early as 2010, a plan was drawn up by the staff of the Eastern African Standby Brigade to capture Kismayo at the behest of AMISOM. Kismayu was a strategic source of income for Al-Shabaab (Little, 2012). Since then, several regional plans for a military intervention in Somalia, with a possible Kenyan military role, were apparently considered but none were implemented because of objections from major Western allies over leaders’ concerns that they would not succeed. The Kenyan Minister of Defense, Yusuf Haji, said

that "the Kismayu question is for the international community to decide; Kenya was not going to fix the entire Somalia problem since it has been a failed state for 20 years" (Little, 2012). This underscored the importance that AMISOM attached to the capture of Kismayo and indicated that the operation was not going to be easy.

Since Operation 'Linda Nchi' began, Al-Shabaab vowed retaliation against the Kenyan authorities. According to Reuters, at the militant group's urging, a significant and increasing number of terrorist attacks in Kenya have since been carried out by local Kenyans, many of whom are recent converts to Islam (Mayoyo, 2012). According to a special report in "In Africa, a Militant Group's Growing Appeal" (Ahmed, et al., 2012), Kenyan fighters were estimated to comprise approximately 10% of Al-Shabaab's total forces in 2012. Referred to as the "Kenyan Mujahideen" by Al-Shabaab's core members, the converts are typically young and overzealous, poverty having made them easier targets for the group's recruitment activities. Because Kenyan insurgents have a different profile from Somali and Arab militants, which allows them to blend in with the general population of Kenya, they are also often harder to track. Reports suggest that Al-Shabaab is attempting to build an even more multi-ethnic generation of fighters in the larger region (ICG Africa Report, 2012). One such recent convert who helped carry out the Kampala bombings, but is now cooperating with the Kenyan police, believes that Al-Shabaab is essentially trying to use local Kenyans to do its 'dirty work' while its core members escape unscathed. According to diplomats, Muslim areas in coastal Kenya and Tanzania, such as Mombasa and Zanzibar, are vulnerable for recruitment (ICG Africa Report, 2012).

Kenya's invasion of southern Somalia merely added another layer of complexity to a wretchedly intricate and seemingly intractable crisis (ICG Africa Report, 2012). It also reminds us that outside interventions have not worked in Somalia nor are they likely to work in the future, especially a prolonged invasion by a neighbouring country, keeping in mind that Somalia had remained without a functional government for several years (Rotberg, 2004).

Al-Shabaab released a propaganda video declaring war on Kenya. The video was released by Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali, the self-proclaimed de facto leader of Kenyan Al-Shabaab fighters in Somalia (Mayoyo, 2012). In the video titled, "If they seek your help in religion, it is your duty to

help them”, Sheikh Ali says that war or jihad should now be waged in Kenya in response to the military operation in Somalia. On several occasions, leaders of Al-Shabaab have pledged the group’s allegiance to Al-Qaeda. Muktar Robow, Al-Shabaab’s spokesman, stated that “Al-Qaeda is the mother of the holy war in Somalia... We are negotiating how we can unite into one... We will take our orders from Sheikh Osama bin Laden because we are his students” (Fletcher, 2008). Similarly, a January 2010 communiqué by Al-Shabaab stated that the “jihad of Horn of Africa must be combined with the international jihad led by the Al-Qaeda network” (BBC, 2010). This highlights another dilemma by which the war against Al-Shabaab changes dimension and casts a religious ideology since Kenya has a substantial, large Muslim population.

This declaration by the Al-Shabaab seemed to have set Kenya on a collision path with terrorists. On September 21, 2013 Kenya recorded its deadliest terrorist incident since the 1998 Al-Qaeda bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi. At least 70 people were confirmed dead, 175 more were reported injured, and several others were held hostage when a group of Islamists fighters stormed Kenya’s high-end Westgate Mall in Nairobi and randomly opened fire on weekend shoppers. The Islamist fighters reportedly shouted in the local Swahili language that Muslims would be allowed to leave while all others were subjected to their bloodletting. At least 18 foreigners were killed in the horrific attack, including citizens from Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, Peru, India, Ghana, South Africa and China (Agibiboa, 2014).

The exact number and identity of the attackers involved in the Westgate attack remain unclear but Al-Shabaab posted on one of its twitter accounts the names and nationalities of nine of the alleged attackers before the account was suspended (Onuoha, 2013). This was the fourth time that an Al-Shabaab account was shut down during the course of the Westgate attack. Indeed, the concern is that Al-Shabaab is able to recruit members from other countries, including Western countries, for its operations and can use this capability to inspire future “lone or coordinated attacks outside Somalia” (Onuoha, 2013).

Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, including Al-Shabaab, have maintained a presence in East Africa for almost 20 years, although the extent of their operations there has varied over time. The

region's porous borders, proximity to the Arabian Peninsula, weak law enforcement and judicial institutions, and pervasive corruption, combined with almost 20 years of state collapse in neighbouring Somalia, have provided an enabling environment for violent extremist groups (Blanchard, 2013).

Since Al-Shabaab splintered from the ICU in 2007, the former has carried out nearly 550 terrorist attacks, killing over 1,600 people and wounding over 2,100 more, according to the National Consortium for The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START, 2013). The number of attacks attributed to Al-Shabaab has increased rapidly from less than 10 in 2007 to more than 200 in 2012. The number of casualties caused overall by Al-Shabaab attacks has increased at an even greater rate; however, the number of deaths per attack has declined slightly over time (START, 2013). That is Al-Shabaab is carrying out more attacks that are less lethal. As Al-Shabaab's operations in Somalia have increased, the group has also expanded its activity into Kenya in retaliation for the intervention of Kenyan forces in Somalia. By 2012, 22.7% of the group's attacks took place within Kenya, primarily in Garissa (13 attacks), Nairobi (eight attacks), Wajir (four attacks), Mandera (four attacks), and Ifo (four attacks) (START, 2013), all of which are Kenyan regions bordering Somalia with a predominantly Somali ethnic population.

Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for several terrorist attacks in Kenya. According to Global Terrorism Database figures, the types of attack carried out by Al-Shabaab included: bombings/explosions (38.14%), armed assaults (34.49%), hostage takings/kidnappings (16.24%), assassinations (5.29%), unknown (3.10%), facility and infrastructure attacks (2.37%) and hijackings (0.36%) Between 2008 and 2012, 65% of all terrorist attacks in Kenya were attributed to Al-Shabaab (START, 2013).

Al-Shabaab's attacks and continuous threats have posed a real challenge to Kenya's struggling economy, which relies heavily on tourism. Major embassies, such as those of the United States and Britain, have threatened to reduce their staff over the security threats posed by Al-Shabaab. In a statement made by the US Ambassador to Kenya, Robert F. Godec, he said that the "United States was preparing to cut staff levels at its Nairobi embassy, because of the

mounting threat of attacks in Kenya by Islamist militants and was continuously reviewing and updating its security measures, and expects to take additional steps in coming days,” (Godec, 2014).

The response by the KGF to terrorist attacks within the country has often been criticised heavily by both Muslim communities and human rights groups, as it is usually seen as ploy to target and profile the Somali ethnic group, according to Daily Nation media (Wafula, 2014). A section of MPs threatened to seek international intervention over rising insecurity and also accused security agencies of using excessive force. This has raised a huge dilemma in terms of balancing human rights issues with the need to flush out terrorists from their hideouts, especially within the city suburbs. In the recent past, the government’s screening of illegal immigrants in Eastleigh, referred to as Nairobi’s “little Mogadishu” due to its large Somali population, painted the government in a bad light and was viewed more as radicalising than aiding the operation to flush out the terrorists from the area.

Al-Shabaab terrorists use propaganda as an effective tactic for mobilizing political support for their cause (Chelumo, et al., April 2013). They focus their interest more on southern Somalia, where they claimed to enjoy support, and they attack STG and African Union Mission forces in the hopes of provoking a counter-terrorist response that would radicalize the population and increase support for the extremists at the expense of a moderate faction. Al-Shabaab’s propaganda and the Kenyan government’s response, helped make Al-Shabaab’s violent discourse seem justifiable, through an effective Mass Media campaign that reached into the deepest parts of Somalia and discrediting those who spread rumours by neutralization of the malicious effects (Chelumo, et al., April 2013). Al-Shabaab's network and decentralization enhances its propaganda and recruitment of those who meet their internal standards.

It is quite clear that a withdrawal of Kenya Defence Forces from Somalia is unlikely to stop terrorist attacks as Al-Shabaab is already deeply entrenched in Kenya, according to a new report on national security status published in the Daily Nation newspaper (Ndurya, 2014). Instead, the report proposes that Kenya’s ongoing commitment should be focused on enhancing global and local initiatives to stabilize Somalia since exiting Somalia at this time may

deprive Kenya's national security managers of vital information required to protect Kenya's domestic and regional interests. Although concern over whether Kenya should withdraw from military operations alongside other AMISOM members, as a result of Al-Shabaab threats and Kenya Defence Forces fatalities, are legitimate according to Think Security Africa (TSA), this position affirms the Kenyan President's stance on the deployment of Kenya Defense Forces to remain in Somalia until their job is accomplished (Ndurya, 2014).

East Africa is the most vulnerable to terrorism of all regions in sub-Saharan Africa, and Kenya has been the victim of many terrorist acts, as stated exhaustively in this paper. Therefore, the main focus should not be withdrawal but rather the implementation of measures by the Kenyan government in order to deal with the terrorist threat posed by Al-Shabaab. In deciding on such measures, the Kenyan government must take into account the factors that make Kenya vulnerable, focusing on the radicalization of the youth and ideological extremism that aided in Al-Shabaab's success. Therefore the main question should be, what should Kenya do instead of just withdrawing and abandoning its international obligation to ensure peace and security?

According to the Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia, (ICG Africa Report, 2012), Kenya should clearly articulate measurable goals and an exit strategy for its intervention in Somalia, ensuring that any major offensive is accompanied with a political strategy aimed at winning the support of local clans. The goal of this is to win the hearts and minds of the local population, and help them be seen as a liberator rather than an enemy occupier force. Local peace and reconciliation conferences should be established immediately and developed into larger conferences after most local disputes have been resolved. A plan should be developed with regional and international partners, as well as with genuine representatives of local clans and social groups (ICG Africa Report, 2012).

It is imperative to take into account the feelings of the local population in Somalia when assessing the success of the operation. Nothing could be more gratifying than the honest words of a local cleric in Somalia, Sheikh Mohamed in Afmadow, who acknowledged that the "KDF is helping us a lot, they have sacrificed their lives and left their homes to die for us, we thank the government of Kenya for deploying them, they have salvaged the country from Al-Shabaab. As

a result of peace in Afmadow, four schools have re-opened and have admitted more than 800 students. Business is also booming. A number of NGOs that had fled the area have expressed interest to return. An American NGO also wants to assist in the rehabilitation of Afmadow airstrip which has re-opened after a five-year closure, but is in bad shape.” (Barasa, 2014).

## DATA & ANALYSIS

Figure 1

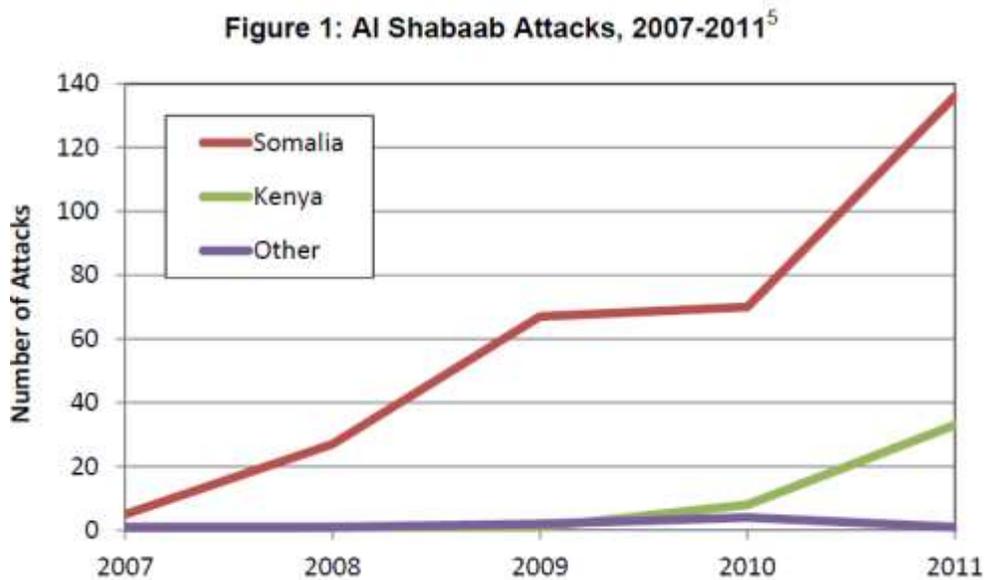


Figure 2

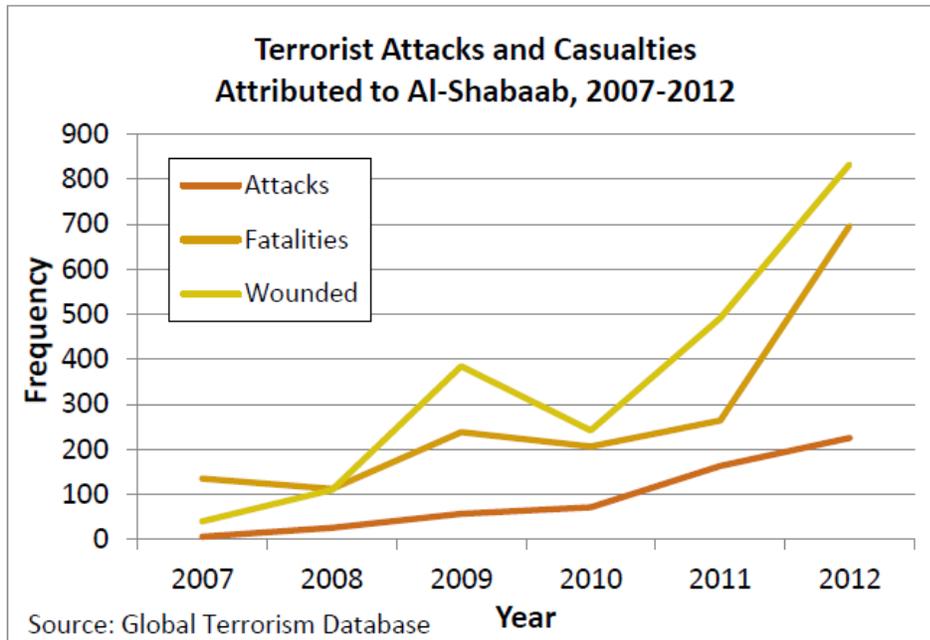
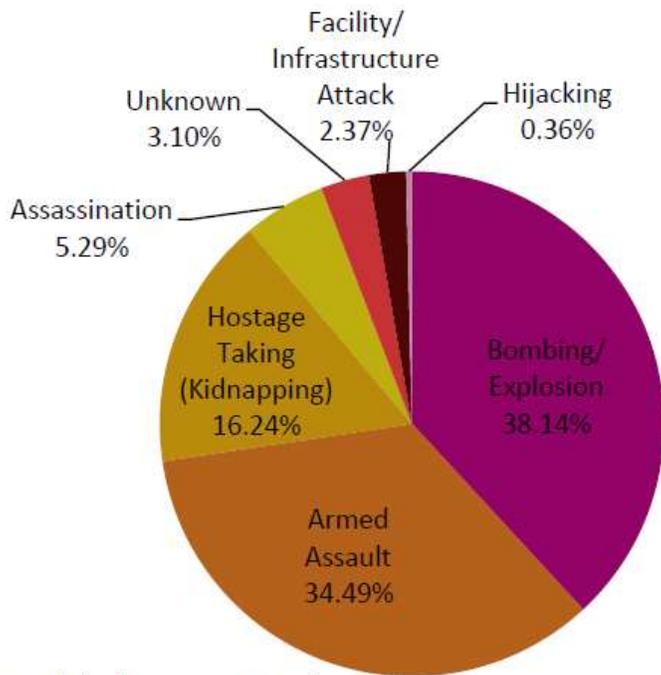


Figure 3

### Al-Shabaab Attack Types, 2007-2012 (n=548)



Source: Global Terrorism Database

The above data was taken from the Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START, 2013).

### **CONCLUSION**

Kenya Defense Forces, in partnership with AMISOM, should not leave Somali until Al-Shabaab is defeated and the Somali government is capable of providing security to its citizens and guaranteeing the security of its neighbouring states. According to a 2014 report by Think Security Africa (TSA), a withdrawal of Kenya Defense Forces would be a disaster by providing Al-Shabaab with a sense of victory and perpetuating further deterioration of the security situation. Kenya needs to enhance its capacity to govern and to equally distribute its resources to all of its citizens in order to avoid marginalizing some of its communities. The porous border should be checked to curb the free flow of terrorists from Somalia and a thorough screening of illegal immigrants should be undertaken.

Kenya's security forces must appear to be winning the war against terrorists at home in order to reduce the risk of losing the public's support for the country's military action in Somalia. The opposition is calling for the withdrawal of Kenyan troops despite the gains that have been made in restoring peace to large areas of the neighbouring country and in cutting off key sources of economic support for Al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab's attacks targeting civilians send the signal that terrorists will stop at nothing to intimidate the population in the hope of making the Kenyan military campaign in Somalia unpopular. That is why the security agencies must do more to prevent attacks and all agencies, including foreign ones, should be encouraged to share intelligence with the security forces in order to prevent attacks. These operations should be carried out in a manner that will not spark public anxiety, but rather win the hearts and minds of the Somali population in both states. There is a need for greater collaboration between Kenya and its western partners if the fight against terrorism is to be won.

Policy makers should appreciate that only a small number of people in and beyond the coast region have embraced militancy. Therefore, current counter-terrorism policies based on the blanket suspicion of Muslims are counterproductive. In place of identity-oriented profiling, a more sophisticated investigatory apparatus rooted in community engagement, local intelligence, and a respect for human rights is imperative (Presthold, 2014).

## **BILIOGRAPHY**

- Agibiboa (2014) The West Gate Terrorist and Transformation of Al Shabaab: Global Perspective, Davis Papers African series, no. 3; March 2014
- Ahmed, M.; Khamis, N & Maclean, William (2012) In Africa, a militant group's growing appeal Garissa, Kenya; May 30, 2012
- Bachmann, J. & Hönke, J (2012) The Kenyan military intervention in Somalia 'Peace and Security' as Counterterrorism? The Political Effects of Liberal Interventions in Kenya Africa report n°184; African Affairs, 109/434, 97–114 *Oxford University Press*; February 15, 2012
- Barasa, L. (2014) The Sheikh Who Would Have Fought Al Shabaab at West Gate Daily Nation media; April 27, 2014
- Benjamin, D. (2008). "Strategic Counterterrorism" Foreign Policy at Brookings Policy Paper 7. pp. 1-17; October 2008

- Bergen, Peter, Hoffman, Bruce and Tiedemann, Katherine. (2011). "Assessing the Jihadist Terrorist Threat to American Interests." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34 (2), p. 74.
- Berman, E. & Laitin, D. (2005) "Hard Targets: Theory and Evidence on Suicide Attacks." NBER Working Paper, No. 11740. Available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11740>.
- Blanchard, L. (2013) Terrorist Attack in Kenya: In Brief Specialist in African Affairs. CRS Report for Congress *Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress*; November 14, 2013
- Botha, A. (2013) Assessing vulnerability of Kenya Youths to Radicalisation and Extremism Institute for Security Studies Paper (ISS)
- Chelumo S; Kassilly, J; Maito, Thomas; Oboka, W; Odhiambo, Elijah; & Onkware, K; (2013) Al-Shabaab Terrorists Propaganda and the Kenya Government Response *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 3 No. 7*. Masinde Muliro University of Science Technology, Kenya Dept. of Criminology and Social Work, Masinde Muliro University of Science Technology, Kenya; *April 2013* 125
- Chomeb, N. & Willis, J. (2013) Marginalization and political participation on the Kenya Coast: The 2013 elections a Department of History, Durham University, Durham, UK Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- Daniel, C. (2012) Somali Piracy and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa
- Durch, J. (1996) Introduction to Anarchy; Humanitarian Intervention and State Building In Somalia
- Edmund, B. & Richard L. (2013). "Islamists claim Gun Attack on Nairobi Mall." *Reuters*, September 21. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/21/us-kenya>
- Failed States Index (2013) <http://global.fundforpeace.org/index.php>
- Fletcher, M. (2008). "How the War on Terror Pushed Somalia into the Arms of Al-Qaeda." *Times of London*; November 18, 2008
- Gaitho, M (2014) Raila Odinga: We are Not Seeking Regime Change Daily Nation media July 9, 2014
- Godec, R. (2014) Let's Not Allow Conspiracy Theories to Divert Our Attention from Insecurity Daily Nation Media 2014 *USA Ambassador Nairobi*

- Hassan, H. & Lefkow, L. (2007) Caught in a Quagmire: The World Today, Vol. 63, No. 12, pp. 6-8  
Published by: Royal Institute of International Affairs; December, 2007. URL:  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40477917>
- ICG (International Crisis Group Working To Prevent Conflict Worldwide) Africa Report no 184,  
2012) The Kenya military Intervention in Somalia UN Security Council Resolution 1725  
Prohibited Bordering States From Deploying Troops in Somalia; December 6, 2006
- Joselow, G. (2011) "Grenade Attack in Kenya Follows Threats From al-Shabaab", VOA; October  
23, 2011 <http://www.voanews.com/content/grenade-attack-wounds-13-in-kenya-132429548/147096.html>
- Kassilly J; Maito, L; Ntabo, O; Oboka, W; Odhiambo, E; Onkware, K; Wakhungu, J. (2012)  
Kenya's Pre - Emptive and Preventive Incursion Against al – Shabaab in the Light of  
International Law. Centre for Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance  
(CDMHA) Masinde Muliro University of Science Technology, Kenya Dept. of  
Criminology and Social Work, Masinde Muliro University of Science Technology, Kenya
- Kimunguyi, P. (2014) Terrorism and Counter terrorism in East Africa *Research Fellow, Global  
Terrorism Research Centre and Monash European and EU Centre Monash University*
- Little, P. (2012) On the Somalia Dilemma: Adding Layers of Complexity to an Already Complex  
Emergency Emory University *African Studies Review*, Volume 55, Number 1 (April  
2012), pp. 191
- Lochery, E. (2012) Rendering Difference Visible: The Kenyan State and Its Somali Citizens African  
Affairs, 111/445, 615–639 Oxford University Press Publication 11 September 2012  
*Journal of Eastern African Studies*
- Macharia, J. (2014) Bombings Threaten Kenya Growth Goals, Open New Strains With Wary  
West Daily Nation Media; June 1, 2014
- Marchal, R. (2007) Warlordism and Terrorism: How to Obscure an Already Confusing Crisis? The  
Case of Somalia International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-),  
Vol. 83, No. 6, Africa and Security (Nov., 2007), pp. 1091-1106: Royal Institute of  
International Affairs

- Mayoyo, P. (2012) Al-Shabaab propaganda video declares Jihad against Kenya. Daily Nation Media; January 9 2012
- Menkhaus, K. (2007) *The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy In Five Acts* Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of Royal African Society. *African Affairs*, 106/204, 357–390, 2007.
- Ndurya, M. (2014) KDF Withdrawal from Somalia ‘Will Not Stop Attacks’ Daily Nation Newspaper; August 17, 2014
- Ndzovu, H. (2012) *The Politicization of Muslim Organizations and the Future of Islamic-Oriented Politics in Kenya* Author(s): Source: *Islamic Africa*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (SPRING 2012), pp. 25-53 Northwestern University Press
- Ngirachu, J. (2014) “Al Shabaab” Remark Sparks Anger Daily Nation media; July 24 2014
- Nzioka, P. (2014) Cord Unveils 13-Point Agenda or Change. Daily Nation Media; July 7 2014
- Onuoha, F. *Westgate Attack: Al-Shabaab’s Renewed Transnational Jihadism* Al Jazeera Center for Studies *Research Fellow, Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria.*
- Onuoha, F. (2013) *Westgate Attack: Al-Shabaab’s Renewed Transnational Jihadism.* Al Jazeera Center for Studies *Research Fellow, Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja*
- Prestholdt, J. (2014) Kenya at the Precipice: Al-Shabaab and the Coast Crisis Daily Nation Media; July 18, 2014
- Rotberg, I. (2004) *When States fail causes and consequences.* Princeton University Press
- Shinn, D. (2012) *Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia.* Elliott School of International Affairs George Washington University
- Teyie, A. (2010) Kenya: 2009 Census Delayed Over Somali Numbers. The Star media; January 9 2010.
- Wafula, C. (2014) MPs accuse State of using undue force. Daily Nation media
- START (2013) *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism;* September, 2013
- UNHCR Report (March, 2013) <http://data.unhcr.org/somalia>
- UNSC (R.2013) <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia>