Strategic Approaches to Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa

SYLLABUS

Washington, D.C.

5-9 August 2019

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA

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S Y L L A B U S

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ABOUT THE AFRICA CENTER

Since its inception in 1999, the Africa Center has served as a forum for research, academic programs, and the exchange of ideas with the aim of enhancing citizen security by strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of African institutions, in support of U.S.-Africa policy.

VISION

Security for all Africans championed by effective institutions accountable to their citizens.

Realizing the vision of an Africa free from organized armed violence guaranteed by African institutions that are committed to protecting African citizens is the driving motivation of the Africa Center. This aim underscores the Center's commitment to contributing to tangible impacts by working with our African partners – military and civilian, governmental and civil society, as well as national and regional. All have valuable roles to play in mitigating the complex drivers of conflict on the continent today. Accountability to citizens is an important element of our vision as it reinforces the point that in order to be effective, security institutions must not just be "strong," but also be responsive to and protective of the rights of citizens.

MISSION

To advance African security by expanding understanding, providing a trusted platform for dialogue, building enduring partnerships, and catalyzing strategic solutions.

The Africa Center's mission revolves around the generation and dissemination of knowledge through our research, academic programs, strategic communications, and community chapters. Drawing on the practical experiences and lessons learned from security efforts on the continent, we aim to generate relevant insight and analysis that can inform practitioners and policymakers on the pressing security challenges that they face. Recognizing that addressing serious challenges can only come about through candid and thoughtful exchanges, the Center provides face-to-face and virtual platforms where partners can exchange views on priorities and sound practices. These exchanges foster relationships that, in turn, are maintained over time through the Center's community chapters, communities of interest, follow-on programs, and ongoing dialogue between participants and staff. This dialogue—infused with real world experiences and fresh analysis—provides an opportunity for continued learning and catalyzes concrete actions.

MANDATE

The Africa Center is a U.S. Department of Defense institution established and funded by Congress for the study of security issues relating to Africa and serving as a forum for bilateral and multilateral research, communication, exchange of ideas, and training involving military and civilian participants. *(10 U.S.C 342)*

Introduction

Overview:

Terrorism and violent extremism in Africa are on the rise, but responses have not kept pace with the evolving threat. While African governments have acted to confront this escalation, their responses risk having limited effect without strategic planning. Furthermore, Africa's evolving security landscape demands a shift from ad hoc approaches to more coordinated and strategic responses. States would benefit from developing comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and counterterrorism (CT) strategies. To succeed, these strategies should be aligned with regional strategies, as well as security initiatives provided by international partners. To this end, this workshop convenes governmental and non-governmental defense/security and civilian leaders from more than a dozen African nations, along with representatives from (sub)regional bodies, multilateral actors, and external partners, in order to share experiences, insights, practices, and lessons, among countries and across regions.

The discussions will address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism as well as provide insight into how violent extremist organizations are governed, provide services, and cultivate popular support. The need to have a contextual understanding of the nature and dynamics of violent extremist movements themselves, types of their activity, and the processes and patterns of recruitment is key to helping African countries and their international partners tailor strategic responses to these challenges. This workshop provides an opportunity to learn and share the lessons learned in the CT/CVE field over the past few years.

Program Objectives:

1. Participants demonstrate increased familiarity with applicability of evidence-driven insights related to P/CVE and CT.

2. Participants appreciate the relevance and value of effective strategic approaches in addressing terrorism and violent extremism.

3. Participants join a network of African professionals dedicated to advancing strategic solutions related to P/CVE and CT.

Academic Approach:

This workshop will feature interactive plenary sessions, focused small group discussions, and case study exercises. The discussion groups, which will be facilitated by scholars and practitioners, will be organized around case studies designed to equip African practitioners with tools for confronting and preventing terrorism and violent extremism on the continent.

The seminar will be conducted in English and French. Discussions will be conducted under a policy of non-attribution, in order to foster frank discussions and create trust among participants.

The Syllabus

This syllabus provides an overview of academic goals and key policy questions related to national security strategy development in Africa. For each session, we provide a brief introduction and list questions for discussion. We also include selected articles, whose primary purpose is to help frame the issues within the context of available scholarship and policy documents. The syllabus likely covers more issues and materials than can be sufficiently discussed in the available time. We hope that you use these materials as resources even after the program concludes.

We encourage you to bring questions and suggestions about the materials and the course in general to our attention. The quality of our programs and courses has greatly benefited from the enthusiastic willingness of past participants to offer constructive criticisms and suggestions. We are quite willing to discuss specific topics with you. We encourage you to call upon them, as we also encourage you to read the assigned material and actively participate in your discussion groups.

Map of Africa
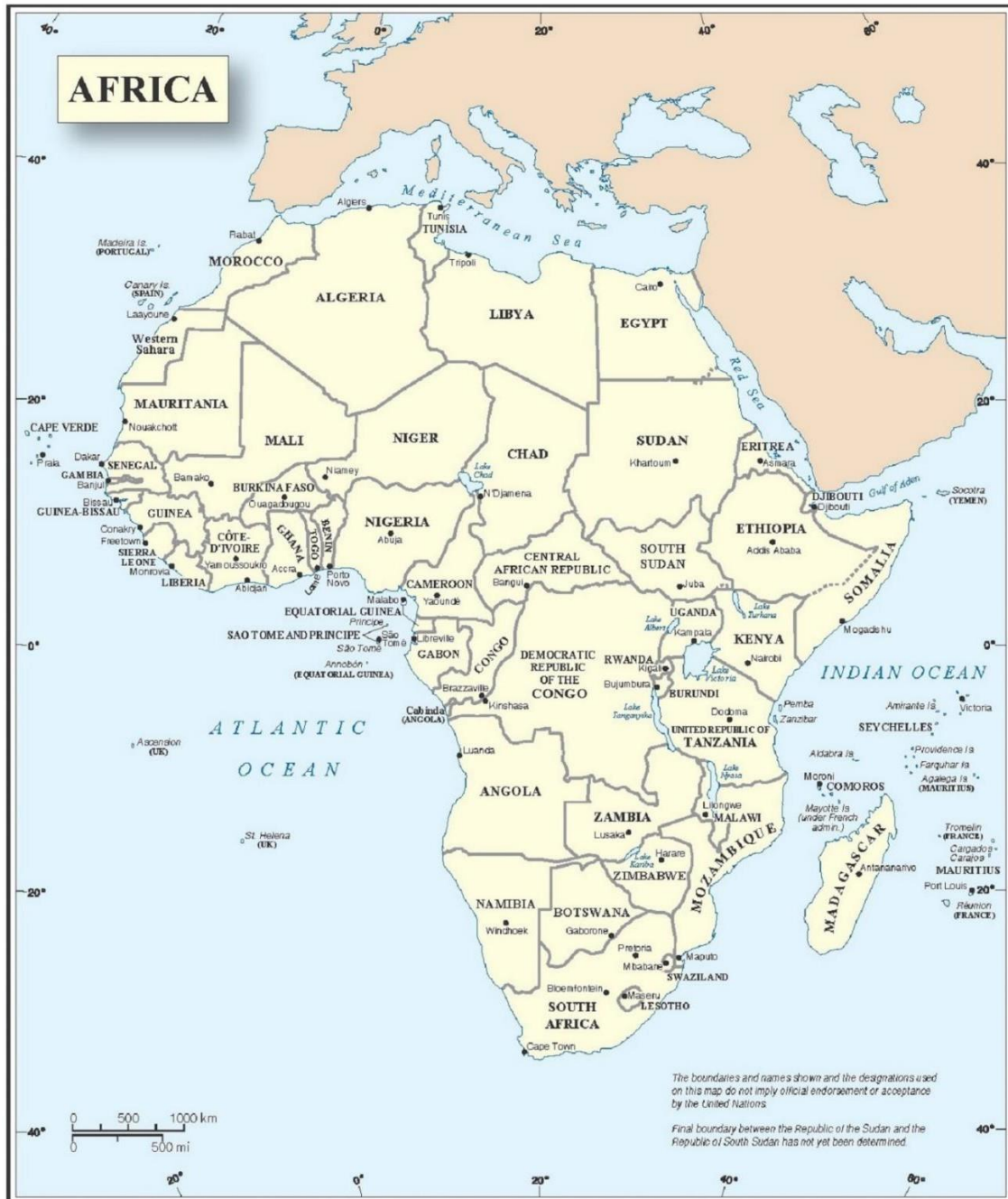
Session 1: Evolving Threat: Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the nature and scope of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.
- Unpack the most determining factors that account for the endurance and proliferation of violent extremist organizations (VEOs).
- Explore the implications of the growth and expansion of violent extremism for African security.

Background:

Violent extremism continues to be one of the most significant challenges to peace and security in Africa. What makes this state of affairs particularly frustrating is that despite the extraordinary sacrifice and enormous amount of blood and treasure that Africans and their international partners have spent, violent extremist groups (VEOs) have still been able to flourish and expand their reach into different zones and regions. Even in theaters where they were described as vanquished or in their final throes, VEOs have grown stronger and deadlier. The resilience and proliferation of these organizations is puzzling because their objectives and methods are far more radical than the people they claim to represent. Surveys and available data show that the vast majority of Africans oppose violent extremism and terrorism. Yet, al-Qaeda-linked groups, Islamic State affiliates, and other violent extremist groups continue to attract recruits and financing, shrewdly exploiting opportunities created by state fragility, exclusionary governance, and local conflicts. From the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin to East Africa, violent extremist groups have infiltrated existing local conflicts and aligned themselves with local causes. In areas where they have managed to control territory, groups such the Islamic State in West Africa Province have focused on delivering basic forms of governance and social services to the rural population of the Lake Chad area. In other theaters where they could not completely supplant the state, VEOs exploit and stoke political instability, inter-communal tensions, and socio-economic grievances.

As violent extremist groups establish new footholds and seek to expand elsewhere in Africa, it is critical to assess how these groups operate, recruit and muster resources. Administration of justice and governance operations have become a critical part of the VEO toolkit. As such, it is vital to understand how and when these strategies are used, as they help provide insight into how these organizations are governed, provide services, and cultivate popular support. The growth and expansion of violent extremist organizations in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and East Africa illustrate that their resilience and potency stems from more than military prowess alone.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the number of violent extremist organizations on the rise?
2. What are the dynamics of radicalization and violent extremism in Africa?
3. What are the conditions and incentives that can make average citizens in your country or sub-region support violent extremist groups?

Readings:

"The Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," UN Development Program, September 7, 2017, https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf

Anouar Boukhars, "The Paradox of Modern Jihadi Insurgencies: The Case of the Sahel and Maghreb," Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, July 15, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/07/15/paradox-of-modern-jihadi-insurgencies-case-of-sahel-and-maghreb-pub-76875

Ali, Abdisaid M. "Islamist Extremism in East Africa." Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2016. Also available in French and Portuguese. https://africacenter.org/publication/islamist-extremism-east-africa/

Session 2: Defining and Distinguishing Concepts

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Discuss definitions of concepts such as radicalization, extremism, violent extremism, counter-terrorism, and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE).
- Create shared clarity of concepts and labels used in preventing and countering violent extremism.

Background:

The spread of violent extremism and the evolution of VEOs in Africa continue to challenge policy makers, security officials and practitioners to better understand the contextual drivers of violent extremism and evaluate current P/CVE intervention approaches. Despite the progress made in learning and sharing lessons about "what works—and what does not" in addressing violent extremism, several hurdles remain. These include persistent ambiguity on key terms and concepts such as radicalization, extremism, violent extremism, counter-terrorism, and preventing/countering violent extremism. For example, there is still no explicit definition of terrorism, radicalism, or violent extremism. Some are value-laden terms. There is also little clarity on the difference between countering violent extremism (CVE) and preventing violent extremism (PVE). Development actors tend to avoid the use of the term "countering violent extremism," fearing that such terminology is closely linked in some contexts to security-led agendas and approaches. The UN states that its Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism encompasses "not only ongoing and essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures that directly address the drivers of violent extremism at the local, national, regional and global levels." The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) prefers to use "Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism" (P/CVERLT).

The proliferation of terms is not merely an academic problem. The language and concepts that policy decision-makers, donors and practitioners use carry serious implications for the formulation of policy to reduce the threat of violent extremism. Some pitfalls include the tendency to over-emphasize the role of ideology at the expense of identifying and addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism. Other oversimplifications reside in the peril of associating specific groups, ethnicities, or religions with violent extremism. In analyzing the phenomenon of violent extremism, policymakers and stakeholders must ensure that the language they use is not informed by unfounded assumptions and, importantly, does not alienate local communities. Policies aimed at countering violent extremism must be expressed in a vernacular that resonates with local communities and their priorities.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do the definitions, policy labels and words used about terrorism, violent extremism and P/CVE matter?
2. How might African nations develop the appropriate language and analytical and conceptual framework necessary to explain, inform, and formulate P/CVE policies and programs?

Readings:

Eric Rosand, Emily Winterbotham, Michael Jones, Franziska PraxlTabuchi, "A Roadmap to Progress: The State of Global P/CVE Agenda," The Prevention Project and Royal United Services Institute, September 2018. http://www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GCCS_ROADMAP_FNL.pdf

Sebastien Feve and Mohammad Elshimi, "Planning for Prevention: A Framework to Develop and Evaluate National Action Plans to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism," Global Center on Cooperative Security, June 2018. http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GC_2018-June_NAP.pdf.

Roland Marchal et Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem, "La « radicalisation » aide-t-elle à mieux penser?" Politique Africaine, 2018/1 (n° 149). https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-africaine-2018-1-page-5.htm

Session 3: Understanding Root Causes and Drivers of Violent Extremism Across the Sahel

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Identify the characteristics of violent extremism in the Sahel.
- Provide contextual understanding of the conditions that allow violent extremist organizations to thrive.
- Assess the nature and dynamics of the violent extremist movements in the Sahel.

Background:

The case of VEOs in the Sahel reveals the paradox at the heart of violent extremist movements. These groups have not won any of their insurgencies yet they remain the most adaptive and resilient of all insurgent groups. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine, and al-Mourabitoun have shown remarkable staying power, defying predictions that their military rout in 2013 in Northern Mali would be a crippling blow. Indeed, since the French-Chadian Operation Serval (now Operation Barkhane) commenced in January 2013, violent extremist groups have grown in number, size and lethality. Worse, the terrorist threat is no longer confined to northern Mali but has spilled over into central Mali, north-eastern Burkina Faso and western Niger. The formation of powerful new insurgent groups such as *Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin* (the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, or JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) threatens to expand the geographic reach of terrorism into West Africa's coast – namely in the countries of Benin, Ghana and Togo.

The continued growth of extremism in the Sahel demonstrates that VEOs remain a determined, tough and resilient adversary. These groups quickly adapt to battlefield setbacks, cleverly exploiting the societal and political fault lines that pervade the Sahel. The challenge for Sahelian states is how to stem the spread of violent extremism in their countries and regions. The good news is that there is growing awareness among governments of the need to have a contextual understanding of the factors that drive violent extremism and the populations that are most vulnerable to radicalization. Policymakers, practitioners and experts are also increasingly sensitive to the necessity of understanding the nature and dynamics of violent extremist movements themselves, including types of activity, and the processes and patterns of recruitment. The need for contextualized research and knowledge on what fuels radicalization and recruitment is key to developing an effective strategy to countering violent extremism. Luckily, more evidence-based knowledge is available to help Sahelian countries identify the relevant drivers and conflict dynamics that enable violent extremist groups to flourish.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does violent extremism persist and continue to spread in the Sahel?
2. What are the factors and incentives that drive young people in this subregion to join or collaborate with violent extremist groups?
3. Why are some communities in the Sahel more vulnerable than others to violent extremism?

Readings:

"If victims become perpetrators: Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel," International Alert, 2018, https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Sahel_ViolentExtremismVulnerabilityResilience_EN_2018.pdf

In French: "Si les victimes deviennent bourreaux Facteurs contribuant à la vulnérabilité et à la résilience à l'extrémisme violent au Sahel central," International Alert, 2018, https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Sahel_ViolentExtremismVulnerabilityResilience_FR_2018.pdf

In French: Mathieu Pellerin, « Les trajectoires de radicalisation religieuse au Sahel », IFRI, Février 2017, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pellerin_radicalisation_religieuse_sahel_2017.pdf

Reda Benkirane, ed., What 800 Sahelians have to say on radicalization, violence and (in)security, The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue / United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016, https://sahelradical.hypotheses.org/nine-research-reports

In French: "Ce que disent 800 sahéliens. Études des perceptions des facteurs d'insécurité et d'extrémisme violent dans les régions frontalières du Sahel," sous la direction de Réda Benkirane. Centre pour le dialogue humanitaire / Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD), 2016. https://radical.hypotheses.org/files/2017/06/I_Etude_PNUD-HD_perceptions_Sahel_Resume_ex%C3%A9cutif.pdf

Session 4: Assessing National, Regional and International Responses

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the multiple military and diplomatic initiatives currently implemented against terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives.
- Recommend concrete actions to improve the coordination and effectiveness of these various national, regional and international strategies in the Sahel.

Background:

The persistence and expansion of violent extremism in the Sahel necessitates a rethink of national, regional and international responses. One of the most important lessons gleaned from a decade of counterterrorist operations in the Sahel is that military operations alone cannot stop the spread of violent extremism. Even when successful in clearing areas of VEOs, governments that fail to improve local governance and provide social services end up unable to sustain their military gains. The case of Mali is illustrative in this regard. The momentum created by the liberation of the country's northern cities and towns by French and Chadian forces in early 2013 soon evaporated, as the post-intervention phase failed to ameliorate the region's abysmal living and security conditions. Without the implementation of promised political, institutional, and economic reforms, conflict and instability have persisted in large swaths of Malian territory.

As elsewhere in the Sahel, insecurity and violent extremism thrive on the failures of governance, including in the security sector. Indeed, there is ample evidence that real or perceived state abuse and stigmatization of specific communities is directly driving young men into the orbit of violent extremist organizations. The 2017 UNDP report on the journey to extremism in Africa provided "startling new evidence of just how directly counter-productive security driven responses can be when conducted insensitively." So it is vital that affected countries commit to enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of security institutions. The security sectors in several Sahelian countries feel beleaguered by manpower shortages, poor training, and lack of adequate equipment. But strengthening security institutions requires more than just training and equipping armed forces and other security providers. Effective management and accountability of the security sector is just as crucial for the provision of security and creation of an environment conducive to socio-economic growth. Ultimately, fostering popular trust in state services is key to countering violent extremism.

Given the transnational nature of the threat, affected countries need to strengthen cross-border intelligence sharing and military cooperation mechanisms. This is one of the reasons why ad hoc security initiatives, forged to combat specific transnational threats, are

gradually becoming key features of the security landscape in the Sahel. Proponents of such regional efforts see them as potentially consequential in shaping the patterns of interaction and military cooperation among affected states. Ad-hoc coalitions such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force allow for the adoption of an issue-specific approach, which yields a tailored engagement strategy that is limited in terms of goals and geographical reach. They also have several institutional and operational advantages over formal regional or continental security mechanisms, many of which are large and unwieldy. Indeed, part of the appeal of these collective defense mechanisms lies in their flexible and adaptive design. These advantages do not mean that these coalitions of the willing will necessarily be efficient. The success of the G5 Sahel Joint Force is dependent on its ability to secure sustainable funding. It must differentiate itself in a crowded security market, while coordinating action with the African and Western military forces present in the region. For instance, the question of cooperation between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which provides 35 percent of the troops assigned to MINUSMA, is not yet fully settled. Another major challenge for the G5 Sahel Joint Force is to gain the support of local populations. This is also applied to all international partners engaged in CT/CVE activities in the Sahel.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it that despite substantial investments by national, regional, and international actors, the security environment in the Sahel remains volatile and precarious?
2. What lessons can be gleaned from the efforts to neutralize violent extremism in the Sahel?
3. How should strategies to stabilize the Sahel be successfully designed, implemented, and coordinated at national and regional levels?

Readings:

James Rupert, "Amid Rising Sahel Violence, Burkina Faso Builds a Response," USIP, May 16, 2019, https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/05/amid-rising-sahel-violence-burkina-faso-builds-response

International Crisis Group, "Finding the Right Role for the G5 Sahel Joint Force," *Report No. 258*, December 12, 2017. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/258-force-du-g5-sahel-trouver-sa-place-dans-lembouteillage-securitaire

In French: International Crisis Group, « Frontière Niger-Mali : mettre l'outil militaire au service d'une approche politique » [en ligne], Rapport Afrique, n° 261, 12 juin 2018, https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/west-africa/mali/261-frontiere-niger-mali-mettre-loutil-militaire-au-service-dune-approche-politique

Session 5: Understanding Root Causes and Drivers of Violent Extremism in the Lake Chad Basin

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the factors that enable the emergence and growth of violent extremist groups in the Lake Chad Basin.
- Analyze the processes of recruitment and systems of governance that VEOs establish in the territories that they control.
- Explore why some areas and communities are more susceptible than others to radicalism and recruitment by violent extremist groups.

Background:

The Lake Chad region has long been plagued by poor governance, underdevelopment, marginalization and environmental pressures. This context of historical neglect, deprivation, and economic inequality, exacerbated by elite corruption, has provided fertile ground for the emergence of extremist groups who present themselves as challengers to a venal and unsalvageable status-quo. As elsewhere on the continent, confronting the threat with a heavy-handed military approach tends to backfire by inflaming local grievances and conflicts, which in turn end up boosting violent extremist recruitment.

Today, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* (JAS), also known as Boko Haram, and its Islamic state splinter faction, represent a determined, dynamic and adaptable threat. To be sure, their resilience has been seriously tested by Nigerian and allied military pressure, as well as the groups' own internal power struggles. Over the past decade, Boko Haram has been riven by personality clashes, ideological disputes, and contrasting strategies. Since the group's founding in 2002, Boko Haram has experienced two splits. The first occurred in 2012 and led to the creation of *Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan*, better known as Ansaru. The second break-up happened in 2016 with the establishment of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which has also seen its own factional leadership struggles. Ironically, the failure to sustain organizational coherence has not seriously affected the groups' operational capabilities. Their resilience and ability to regenerate is amply demonstrated by their continuing capacity to mount deadly attacks in Nigeria and neighboring Lake Chad Basin countries.

ISWAP, in particular, has increased its influence. Despite its use of coercive measures to induce compliance, the group has strategically avoided violent recruitment tactics or the indiscriminate targeting of civilians. Unlike Boko Haram, which continues to target local populations it deems not supportive enough of the group, ISWAP prioritizes the improvement of relations with Muslim civilians, focusing its attacks on security forces and military structures. Since 2018, the group has overrun dozens of military bases in Nigeria

alone and killed scores of soldiers. ISWAP has also distinguished itself by its governance operations that prioritize the provision of goods and services in the Lake Chad basin, a large area long marginalized by state authorities. These include seeds and fertilizer, digging wells, securing pastureland for herders, and running slaughterhouses for the cattle. Several studies have also shown how ISWAP fighters construct legitimacy in the places they control by portraying themselves as security providers as well as defenders against the alleged abuses of custom agents, law enforcement, or local chiefs. In other words, they buy the sympathy and obedience of local populations by exploiting local grievances and responding to peoples' immediate needs. This focus on protection and service provision as well as the desire to establish a social contract with locals is what makes ISWAP and other militant organizations much dangerous and difficult to tackle. Indeed, among the lessons learned over the past few years are that violent extremist groups thrive in areas where governments are unable to address existing gaps in governance.

Discussion Questions:

1. How and why is the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), a splinter of Boko Haram, regaining ground in the Lake Chad Basin?
2. How do violent extremist organizations in the Lake Chad Basin attempt to gain legitimacy with local populations they are trying to win over?
3. What are the factors that influence individuals and groups to join violent extremist organizations?

Readings:

"Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province," Crisisgroup, May 16, 2019, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province

Omar S Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, "Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram," ISS report, July 2018, https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-07-06-research-report-2.pdf

Session 6: Assessing National, Regional, and International Responses

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the current strategies that Lake Chad states are using to neutralize VEOs.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.
- Consider what could be done to improve their effectiveness.

Background:

Violent extremist organizations continue to bedevil the Lake Chad states. Governments have tried to confront this formidable challenge by imposing states of emergency, supporting vigilante networks, and launching economic projects. Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria have imposed severe restrictions and, at times, total bans on local trade of certain products such fish and red pepper to choke off financial flows to Boko Haram and its splinter group, ISWAP. The countries' armies and security services have also closed routes to cut the groups' supply lines for weapons, fuel, vehicles, and motorbikes. Unfortunately, these security measures have had the unintended consequence of strangling critical sources of livelihood for locals. This has antagonized local communities, pushing some to try and circumvent government prohibitions, at times with the assistance of the same violent extremist groups the bans were designed to strangle.

The challenge for governments is therefore how to undermine VEO's sources of income and economic resilience without endangering civilians' livelihoods. Governments can gain public trust by stepping up their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, ensure public safety, and launch economic projects. Equally important is the necessity for governments to do more to strengthen security sector governance. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's decision in 2017 to appoint a panel to investigate the alleged abuses by security services is an important step forward. Now, the Nigerian government needs to implement the recommendations that the panel delivered in December 2017.

At the regional level, the transnational nature of the threat posed by Boko Haram and its splinter factions has pushed the countries of the Lake Chad basin to enhance their collaboration. In April 2012, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, and Benin expanded the mandate of the Multinational Joint Security Force that the Lake Chad Basin Commission first established in 1994. In 2014, they renamed it the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF). The mandate of the force has been to blunt the asymmetrical advantage of terrorist groups, dislodge them from their strongholds, and facilitate the restoration of state authority. The MNJTF has accomplished some of its goals. Nevertheless, it has much more to do to augment the force's capacity, reclaim terrorist-held territory, stabilize these areas, and deliver desperately needed services to the affected populations..

Other daunting challenges remain, including addressing the situation of the significant number of persons incarcerated in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria who are believed to be associated with Boko Haram and ISWAP. In this regard, the work of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) on developing a coherent regional strategic framework for rehabilitation and integration is crucial. The LCBC needs the support of national institutions, the African Union, and the United Nations in order to lead effectively and coordinate this effort at disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. So far, the most important case of rehabilitating and reintegrating ex-combatants into society is Operation Safe Corridor, a Nigerian intergovernmental program that combines vocational training, psycho-social therapy, and religious reeducation. This program, however, is still too small and seems to focus too much on ideology. The LCBC and international donors can assist Nigeria and other regional governments further develop and harmonize the legal and policy procedures for screening, prosecuting, rehabilitating, and reintegrating defectors.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can the Lake Chad states improve their interventions to diminish the appeal of VEOs?
2. How can affected African nations and the international community improve the regional and multilateral response to violent extremism?
3. Are there any good practices and innovative approaches that have emerged from your own experiences that might serve to improve the targeting of CVE programs in the Lake Chad basin?

Readings:

Omar S Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, "Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods," ISSAfrica
https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2018-07-06-research-report-1.pdf

Saskia Brechenmacher, "Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram," Carnegie, May 2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brechenmacher_Nigeria_final.pdf

Fonteh Akum, "The reintegration enigma Interventions for Boko Haram deserters in the Lake Chad Basin,"
https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/car13.pdf

Session 7: Understanding Root Causes and Drivers of Violent Extremism in Somalia and East Africa

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the factors behind al-Shabaab's continued resilience and expansion beyond Somalia.
- Analyze the relationship between local militants and al-Shabaab.
- Assess the factors and dynamics that influence the vulnerability of individuals and groups to violent extremism in East Africa.

Background:

The terror threat in East Africa is as strong as ever. Al-Shabaab, al-Qaida's affiliate in East Africa, remains lethal in Somalia and dangerous outside it. Until very recently, the conventional wisdom among Somali officials and the international community was that al-Shabaab was receding, having suffered significant losses of territory and influence in Somalia. Today, even if guarded optimism is still the general tone, experts concede that the group is once again resurgent, and prospects for its defeat appear distant. Al-Shabaab has demonstrated the ability to regain lost territory, bolster recruitment, and raise revenues from taxation and extortion to fund its lethal asymmetric war against the 22,000-strong African Union mission (AMISOM) and Somali forces. Indeed, the group remains as determined as ever to capture power and impose its own version of Islamic rule in Somalia.

Disturbingly, al-Shabaab has expanded its areas of operations beyond Somalia and the countries that have deployed forces to fight it, cementing alliances and relationships with militants in Tanzania and, recently, Mozambique. Tanzania initially served as both a safe sanctuary for members of al-Shabaab's Kenyan affiliate, al-Hijra, and as a pipeline for recruiting aggrieved youth to fight in Somalia. In recent years, and particularly since 2015, Tanzania has seen a spike in attacks on houses of worship and police stations. Whether it is al-Shabaab that is responsible for the assaults, as the authorities assert, or local militants, violent extremism is on the rise in Tanzania, and since October 2017, in Mozambique as well. There is no consensus on the exact ties that link local militants to al-Shabaab, nor is there much clarity about how these groups operate, raise funds, and recruit. In that light, it is critical that policy-makers and experts strive to fill the gaps in understanding how violent extremist groups continue to make inroads in places such as southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique. Context matters in understanding the nature and dynamics of violent extremist movements as well as the conditions that allow these groups to flourish.

Discussion Questions:

1. What explains the resilience of al-Shabaab?
2. How do militants govern territories they control in Somalia?
3. What are the operating mechanisms and recruitment patterns of VEOs in East Africa?

Readings:

"Al-Shabaab Five Years after Westgate: Still a Menace in East Africa," Crisis Group, September 2018, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/265-al-shabaab-five-years-after-westgate.pdf

Gregory Pirio, Robert Pittelli, and Yussuf Adam, "The Many Drivers Enabling Violent Extremism in Northern Mozambique," ACSS, May 20, 2019, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-many-drivers-enabling-violent-extremism-in-northern-mozambique/

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Session 8: Assessing National, Regional, and International Responses

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Examine the actions, campaigns, and strategies currently implemented against terrorism and violent extremism in East Africa.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.
- Recommend concrete actions East African nations could take to improve their current strategies.

Background:

Al-Shabaab has proven to be highly resilient. To confront such nimble networks, East African governments have had to learn and adapt. The Kenyan experience is revealing in this regard. By showing an ability to learn from past failures, the authorities recognized the need for change and initiated mid-course corrections in their approach to tacking terrorism. After the deadly 2013 terrorist attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall, the security services conducted a sweeping crackdown on militant networks. In the process, however, the authorities cast what the International Crisis Group described as too wide a net that "fueled Muslim anger and accelerated militant recruitment." In 2015, Kenyan officials smartly reversed course, employing a more intelligent and targeted security approach that involved local communities in the fight against militancy. For example, devolving power and responsibilities to localities and placing locals in security positions of high prominence and visibility have helped improve intelligence gathering. The promise of empowering historically marginalized communities in Kenya deprives violent extremists of one of their best propaganda weapons. Indeed, this is one of the main lessons for all East African countries threatened by violent extremism. The most effective policies are those that empower local officials, engage with local communities, and seriously address grievances.

Since violent extremism endures as a region-wide problem, it makes sense for engaged regional actors and international partners also to intensify their efforts at stabilizing Somalia, the nerve center of al-Shabaab. With the scheduled withdrawal of peacekeepers from the African Union Mission in Somalia *(AMISOM)* in 2021, there are rising concerns that Somalia still lacks the capacity to sustain hard-fought gains. So far, the Somali National Armed Forces (SNA), Somali Police Force (SPF), and National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) have struggled to hold territory vacated by AMISOM. Unless international donors and concerned stakeholders apply a more coherent and coordinated approach to security sector reform, the chances of successful transfer of security responsibilities appear rather grim. The necessity to rethink stabilization in Somalia also requires the enactment of a 'whole of society' approach that seriously address the complex and intertwined drivers of political violence. It is nearly impossible to tackle the root causes of violent extremism in Somalia without addressing political and communal conflicts that have hampered

international stabilization efforts.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it that, despite regional and international military engagement, al-Shabaab remains a formidable menace in East Africa?
2. What lessons can be drawn from countering the al-Shabaab insurgency?
3. What should East African countries and their international partners do to improve their campaigns and strategies designed to tackle the threat of terrorism?

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Neil Melvin, "The Foreign Military Presence in the Horn of Africa region," SIPRI, April 2019, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/sipribp1904.pdf

Session 9: Perspectives on Regional Strategies

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Review continental and sub-regional efforts for preventing and countering violent extremism.
- Assess the strengths and deficiencies of the interventions.
- Consider what improvements need to be undertaken to make collective action more effective.

Background:

The transnational nature of terrorism in Africa necessitates a unified and coordinated response. This where the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) come in. Indeed, both the continental body and its regional groupings have worked to develop frameworks and strategies for countering violent extremism. The AU, in particular, has recognized the importance of developing comprehensive continental counter-terrorism plans of action as early as 1999 with the Algiers Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The 2004 Protocol to that convention, which entered into force in 2014, further codified common standards, norms, and legal measures for countering terrorism. It is only fair to recognize, as the Institute for Security Studies put it, the "impressive strides" that the AU has made in developing a relatively "comprehensive continental counter-terrorism strategy."

The challenge for the AU has been how to translate its counter-terrorism framework into effective action and influence. So far, the organization has had little discernible effect on containing the growing threat of terrorism. The AU has struggled to align policies and practices at the state and regional level. There have also been complications in terms of harmonization and co-operation with the REC's. The African security architecture envisages outsourcing of responsibilities to the different various sub-regional organizations, but such divisions of labor and responsibilities have not worked as well as hoped. The principle of 'subsidiarity' remains ill-defined in terms of decision-making processes and implementation. Divergences in the norms and capabilities of states and regions are further complicating factors. For example, the AU's policy implementation process is hindered by the reluctance of states to embrace the sensitive but critical parts of the AU's counter-terrorism framework, namely those dealing with member States' human rights obligation in countering terrorism. Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and other states impacted by terrorism have not yet ratified the 2004 Protocol to the 1999 AU Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. An appreciable number of states have also failed to embrace the AU's legal framework against terrorism.

The REC's have also struggled to gain traction in the area of countering violent extremism.

ECOWAS has developed a strong regional counter-terrorism strategy and plan of action with implementation instruments such as the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit, an arrest warrant, a black list of terrorist and criminal networks, and a Counter-Terrorism Training Manual. If operationalized and implemented at the national and regional level, the strategy and its provisions have the potential to bolster cross-border cooperation. The perennial challenge, however, has been for member states to muster the political will to implement the strategy at all levels, including the actions that call for the promotion of just, accountable and inclusive state programs and institutions.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has also been at the forefront of a regional action plan on CVE. Its Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) serves as important resource for research and capacity building for all stakeholders interested in countering violent extremism. Like the AU and ECOWAS, IGAD also faces several key challenges in its efforts to help member states develop and implement national action plans for CVE. Producing successful regional and national action plans require such plans to be comprehensive, inclusive, and multisectoral. In this regard, strong political will is vital for implementation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the lessons learned about "what works — and what does not" in the field of preventing/countering violent extremism?
2. How can the proliferation of ad hoc security initiatives established to counter violent extremism be properly coordinated within regions and at the African Union level?
3. How can the AU and REC's make their response mechanisms as nimble and adaptive as the violent extremist organizations they try to counter?

Readings:

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Session 10: Looking Ahead: Impacts of Future Trends

Format: *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

Objectives:

- Identify likely trends in terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.
- Identify the conditions and factors affecting future trends.
- Recommend concrete actions African nations and their international partners could take to mitigate the conditions of violent extremism.

Background:

The threat of violent extremism in Africa evolves into complex forms such that countering it requires a more coherent and comprehensive approach. The continent is confronted by a number of structural pressures such as poor governance, horizontal inequalities, the youth bulge, uncontrolled urban growth, and climate change. The evolution of these challenges will likely determine the future trajectory of violent extremism on the continent. The warning signs are already apparent in some parts of Africa. In the Sahel, where thirty-three million people are food insecure and population growth shows no signs of slowing, the shifts in climate have worsened the region's existing vulnerabilities. It is therefore critically important that African countries and their international partners recognize and anticipate the impacts of present and future conflict trends across the continent.

The good news is that more policymakers and practitioners are cognizant of the importance of evidence-based research and the necessity of adopting a participatory and multi-sectoral approach toward seriously addressing the conditions that are conducive to violent extremism. The willingness of a growing number of African states to work on aligning their national plans with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) is encouraging. This global roadmap represents consensus that countries and conflict areas cannot attain security without effective and inclusive institutions, people-centered development and environmental sustainability. In fact, most of the 17 goals of SDGs, including reducing inequalities (Goal 10), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16) are critical to tackling violent extremism. The cases of the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, and East Africa demonstrate how violent extremists exploit fragile and conflict-affected states to recruit and expand their footholds.

Enhancing opportunities for collaboration between policymakers, development actors, and local civil society is key to formulating and implementing context-sensitive strategies that deprive violent extremist actors of the oxygen they need to flourish. Achieving such an integrated approach, however, demands strong political will from governments. It also necessitates improved partnership and greater coherence among and between African governments, businesses, civil society, and all other relevant international stakeholders. So far, coordination among donors has been lagging behind. National governments barely

involve local authorities, communities, or civil society in the development and implementation of CVE programs and policies. This naturally hinders the effectiveness of CVE national action plans and their implementation. There is plenty of research that date that show that CVE interventions that lack understanding of the local context and synchronization between donors and local governmental and civil society partners fail in implementation.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would Africa's evolving political, economic, and security landscape impact CT/CVE trends?
2. To what extent would global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) impact future CT/CVE trends?
3. Identify opportunities and approaches for cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration to P/CVE

Readings:

Eelco Kessels and Christina Nemr, "Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance Identifying Synergies, Obstacles, and Opportunities," Global Center on Cooperative Secuirty, February 2016. https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Feb-2016-CVE-and-Development-policy-brief.pdf

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Case Study One: The G-5 Sahel

Background:

G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – face a plethora of complex challenges, including the growing threat of violent extremism, governance deficiencies, climate change and demographic growth. The interconnectedness of these challenges have made it imperative that countries coordinate their efforts to promote regional development and tackle cross-border insecurity. The G5 Sahel, which is an inter-governmental organization established in 2014 in Nouakchott was intended to do exactly that. So far, however, the response of the involved countries has been largely dominated by a security focus.

In 2017, the G5 Sahel launched a Joint Force (Force conjointe du G5 Sahel, FC-G5S). This concept of joint military operations was not new in the Sahel. Rather, this collaboration sought to resurrect a short-lived joint Malian-Mauritanian experiment that had taken place in 2011. In Operation Benkan (Unity), the forces of both countries collaborated to dislodge militants of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) from their base in the Wagadou forest on the Malian side of their border. In 2013, the Nigerian, Malian and French armies conducted Operation Roussette on the border between Mali and Niger. After Operation Roussette, a handful of cross-border military operations were carried out in early 2014 by hundreds of troops from the five armies concerned. Each army operated on its side of the border, but had a right of hot pursuit, and was assisted by French troops who provided support in terms of planning, logistics, intelligence, air cover, and medical evacuations.

After a year of coordinated military action in which the practice of coalition warfare proved promising, the necessity for the affected states to institutionalize their military consultation, planning, and operations became more pressing. On November 4, 2015, the G5 Sahel heads of state signed the Military Cross-border Cooperation Partnership, which regulated the actions of G5 Sahel cross-border military operations. On November 20, at a meeting in Chad, they announced their intent to create their own joint force.

After months of debates about the structure of the joint military force and its possible operations, the heads of state opted in a February 2017 summit in Bamako for a modest approach with a limited aim. The G5 Sahel Joint Force was not to police the whole G5 Sahel region—at least not initially. Its main task was limited to securing the borders of the eastern sector of the Sahel involving Niger and Chad, the central sector involving Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and the western sector involving Mauritania and Mali. The G5 Sahel Joint Force's first military operation, Operation Hawbi, occurred in November 2017 in the border area of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The second, Operation Pagnali, took place in January 2018 in the border area between Mali and Burkina Faso.

Discussion Questions:

1. Examine the characteristics of the G 5 Sahel and its armed force, the FC-G5.
2. Assess the strengths and deficiencies of the G5 initiative, and the narrower FC-G5 project?
3. Consider what improvements need to be undertaken to enhance the sustainability of the G 5 Sahel and its armed force?

Readings:

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Case Study Two: The Multinational Joint Task Force

Background:

Collective-security regimes such as The Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF) forged to combat specific transnational threats are gradually becoming key features of the African security landscape. Skeptics of these ad-hoc security coalitions see it as undermining the positions and role that the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) play. Proponents of ad hoc forces, however, point to their utility in filling the gaps in the framework for AU deployments of forces. While waiting for AU member states to muster the collective political will to make possible the deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF), ad hoc coalitions such as the MNTJF can be efficient response tools to security challenges.

The MNJTF has been forged out of a genuine desire to collectively address a clear and present threat. After years of regional rivalries and persistent bickering and mistrust among the different heads of states, the fear from the diffusion of terrorism from its stronghold in northern Nigeria ended up galvanizing countries across the Lake Chad basin to collaborate on a joint military response. In April 2012, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Benin expanded the mandate of the Multinational Joint Security Force that the Lake Chad Basin Commission first established in 1994. In 2014, they renamed it the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF). The AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) has mandated the MNJTF, whose headquarters are located in N'Djamena, Chad. The force is comprised of around 10 000 uniformed personnel and is organized into four national sectors: Mora-Cameroon, Baga Sola-Chad, Baga-Nigeria, and Diffa-Niger.

The military operations conducted by the MNJTF have been aimed at blunting the asymmetrical advantage of terrorist groups, dislodge them from their strongholds, and facilitate the restoration of state authority. Some of the goals of the mission have been achieved, but much more needs to be done to enhance the capacity of the force to not only reclaim territory from terrorist groups but also to stabilize these areas and deliver urgent service delivery to the affected populations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Examine the characteristics of the MNJTF and the challenges the joint task force has faced?
2. Assess progress and challenges in making the MNJTF fully operational
3. Recommend how troop contributing countries and their international partners can boost the sustainability of the MNJTF and its ability to reclaim and stabilize territory captured by Boko Haram and its splinter group, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

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Case Study Three: Al Shabaab and Cabo Delgado

Background:

While terrorist attacks and violent extremist groups are concentrated in a handful of hotspots, these terrorism epicenters have also indirectly affected neighboring nations, including a set of countries on the periphery of international terrorism – a step removed from the crises but not immune to their impacts. At the continental level, Southern Africa and Southeast Africa are, for example, considered less directly caught up in international terrorism and violent extremism challenges than Northern, Western, and Eastern Africa. But as the case of Mozambique illustrates, it is critical that in nations and subregions long thought to be on the periphery of international terrorism to understand the security landscape in their countries, calculate probable threats, and calibrate appropriate responses to terrorism and violent extremism.

Since the October 2017 attacks on police stations in Mocímboa de Praia, an armed Islamist movement in Cabo Delgado has carried out several deadly attacks that killed over a hundred people and displaced thousands more. Little is known about the group that locals refer to invariably as "al Shabaab," "Ansar al-Sunnah", or "Swahili Sunnah." There is no consensus on the exact ties, if any, that link local militants to Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tanzania, nor is there much clarity about how the group operates, raises funds and recruits. What is clear, however, is that the insurgency has tapped into simmering grievances as it tries to gather momentum. The gas-rich province of Cabo-Delgado is the poorest region in Mozambique. An appreciable number of the province's 58% Muslims are unemployed and feel they have been deliberately marginalized for decades by state policies. Worse, local communities feel further aggrieved that the recent oil and gas discoveries in their region have not yielded the economic benefits they had hoped for.

The government response has evolved from first minimizing the threat as the work of a few criminal individuals to sounding alarmist warnings about the dangers of a creeping Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado. President Nyusi warned the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018 that the insurgents in Cabo Delgado were committing "crimes of a global character", and their threat "will tend to spread to neighboring countries." To forestall such eventuality, the government has strengthened cooperation with Uganda, DRC and especially neighboring Tanzania where there are suspicions that Mozambican insurgents have connections. The government has also deployed troops in the gas-rich north of the country, passed an anti-terrorism law, arrested hundreds of suspects and closed and destroyed several mosques. The governments' security measures, however, have elicited concerns from human rights groups that some of these security-focused interventions might further alienate the local Muslim population that is mostly concentrated in the north of the country. There is plenty of evidence that over-reaching security driven responses that are insensitive and indiscriminate tend to be counter-productive and produce backlash effects.
Discussion Questions:

1. Assess whether the insurgency in Mozambique is indicative of a new pattern whereby violent extremism spreads into African states thought to be on the periphery of terrorism.
2. Consider the implications of international terrorism and violent extremism in states on the periphery of terrorism.
3. Consider what states on the periphery of terrorism can do to calibrate appropriate responses to violent extremism.

Readings:

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