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Security Review (18th May 2017-May 29th 2017)

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Introduction

In this bi-weekly security review, various terror incidences occurred in Mogadishu, Somalia and Bosasso the capital of the Northern semi-autonomous region of Puntland, and Tana River County in Kenya in, where an alleged Al-Shaabab suspect was gunned down; and in the larger northern eastern province where eight Kenyan officers have been killed through road side bombs.

Bi- Weekly Security Details

Terror incidences were recorded on Wednesday 24th May 2017. Eight security officers were killed in two separate roadside bombings in Mandera, Eastern Kenya where the governor Ali Roba convoy was blown up by what appeared to be a landmine. Further south of Liboi a truck ferrying policemen hit an improvised explosive device (IED), close to the Kenyan Somali border which Al-Shaabab claimed responsibility for both attacks.¹ Terror attacks in North Eastern Counties are believed to be getting less attention from the relevant authorities. Leaders from the region say that, giving warnings to al Shabaab is not enough to countering them. Leaders cited the destruction of communication masts and the abduction and killing of area chiefs as the cause effect of raising alarm. "If communication equipment can be destroyed by terror groups and no one minds months later, it is my fear that we will lose part of the country to the terror group," Wajir Governor Ahmed Abdullahi said on Friday, 26th May 2017². BBC reported that women are trafficked from Kenya to Somalia against their will to "breed the next generation of al Shabaab fighters". This discovery in 2016 was by Salama Ali, who was investigating the disappearance of her younger brothers.

Three suspected al Shabaab militants were killed in Wayu area, Tana River County on Monday 29th May 2017. The suspects are said to have been part of a group behind recent attacks targeting security agents. Deputy Commissioner Michael Kioni said they recovered several rifles and ammunition from the suspects who were wearing jungle green uniform. "They were ambushed by police and Kenya police reservists on Monday, and killed in a fierce gun fight"³.

¹ "Somali Islamists Kill Eight Kenyan Officers with Roadside Bombs" *US News a World Report*, USA P. 2017. Wed. 24th May 2017. Date accessed 5/6/2017. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-05-24/three-kenyan-police-killed-by-suspected-al-shabaab-landmine>

² "Kenya risks losing parts to al Shabaab, North Eastern leaders say at cops' burials" *The Star, Kenya*. N. p., 2017. May 26th 2017 http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/05/26/kenya-risks-losing-parts-to-al-shabaab-north-eastern-leaders-say-at_c1568782 date accessed 5-6-17.

³ "Al Shabaab suspects gunned down in Tana River" *The Star, Kenya*. N. p., 2017. May 29th 2017 http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/05/29/al-shabaab-suspects-gunned-down-in-tana-river_c1570457

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In Mogadishu, two men had their right hands chopped off by Al Shabaab on Thursday, 18th May 2017. This is after the Sheria court convicted them of breaking into a shop and stealing about \$500. The two men from Tiyeglow district of Southern Bakool region had already confessed and had been asked to return the money⁴. A Somali court sentenced five men to death on Saturday, 27th May 2017. These men confessed to be Al Shaabab members after they were arrested while driving a vehicle carrying three barrels packed with explosives into Bosasso, the capital of the Northern semi-autonomous region of Puntland on 26th April 2017⁵.

Somali based Al-Shabaab have released a video purportedly showing its fighters at a graduation ceremony with fighters from neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia which was supervised by its spokesman Ali Dhere. The video shows the gun-wielding masked soldiers in a bushy setting. Dressed in military apparel matching as Ali Dhere is holding a gun as he looks on as they chant slogans that have AL Qaeda shouts at the end of each chorus. Pictures also showed the spokesperson addressing the soldiers who all sat on the ground with legs crossed. According to local journalists, he singled out Kenya for criticisms⁶. A former U.S. intelligence specialist has donated surveillance drones to police in Somalia, aiming to help combat a jump in deadly bombings by al Qaeda-linked Islamist insurgents. The Somalis received five drones, some of which have infra-red or night vision capabilities, from Brett Velicovich, whose service with the U.S. military features in a "Drone Warrior", a book to be published next month. His life story is also being developed as a movie by Paramount Pictures⁷.

Conclusion

The recent attacks have resulted in 13 deaths from both sides of the terror war experiencing fatalities and unaccounted injuries. The attackers are using explosives in form of IED, barrel bombs, roadside bombings. This means that the Al-Shabaab militia is strategically regrouping itself, planning to take over territories it once occupied and further expand its rule into the larger North Eastern porous border bordering Somalia. The graduation ceremony has further shown that although the militia have lost large swathes of land to AMISOM, they still have the might and capability of holding training camps and graduating militia who are well equipped and dressed in army regalia.

⁴ "Somalia's Al Shabaab Cuts off Hands of Two Men Convicted by Sharia Court" *US News a World Report, USA P.* 2017. Thursday, 18TH May 2017 Date accessed 5/6/17. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-05-18/somalias-al-shabaab-cuts-off-hands-of-two-men-convicted-by-sharia-court>

⁵ "Somalia sentences five al Shabaab to death for attempted bombings" *The Star, Kenya.* N. p., 2017. May 29th 2017.. http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/05/29/somalia-sentences-five-al-shabaab-to-death-for-attempted-bombings_c1569916 Date accessed 5-6-2017.

⁶"Al-Shabaab releases video of 'graduation' for its East Africa fighters" *Africanews. Africa P.* 23RD May 2017, date accessed 5th June 2017 <http://www.africanews.com/2017/05/23/al-shabaab-releases-video-of-graduation-for-its-east-africa-fighters/>

⁷ "Somali police get surveillance drones to combat al Shabaab insecurity" *Africanews. Africa P.* 26th May 2017 <http://www.africanews.com/2017/05/26/somali-police-get-surveillance-drones-to-combat-al-shabaab-insecurity/> dated accessed 6/6/2017.

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Equipping the Somalia policemen with drones will only help little in fighting this “war on terror”. Since the drones are more likely to cause more attacks on the communities harboring the militia causing there to be retaliations from the community. “Softer” methods like engaging the community through dialogues to fight the “war on ideas” other than “war on terror” will go a long way.