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INTRODUCTION

January 2018 was marred with a lot of extremist activities and international engagement including the AU meeting in Addis. During the special meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27th January 2018, Security-General Antonio Guterres indicated that no single nation, organization or institution can defeat the so-called terrorism in Africa or anywhere else. He hence recommended for a sustained, coordinated and cooperative approach in essence of tackling the complex and ever-evolving menace of terrorism. The African Union and United Nations are vital partners in confronting the global challenge posed by terrorist groups, and hence in April 2017, they signed a joint framework for the enhancement of partnership in Peace and Security that will include cooperation in the field of countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.¹

The activities of Al-Shabaab heightened in January with 100 heavily armed militants pitching camp in Ishakani village, Lamu East and preaching radical teachings while hoisting their flag at a deserted local police station. Luckily there were no casualties as they did not harm any individual before they retreated to their hideouts. In Somalia, engagement of children in extremist activities has been brought to the fore by a human rights report; which was denied by a spokesperson from Al-Shabaab. On the other hand, the US support in the region assisted in rescuing 30 children who had been abducted by the militia group. Further North in Somalia, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a bomb attack that killed an African Union Peacekeeper and a soldier in Bulo Burde district, Mogadishu. The United States government on the same day designated Al-Shabaab's Abukar Ali Adan a global terrorist.

The question of resources is driving wedges in different countries in the Horn of Africa. In Tanzania, an unnamed group is driving a wedge between the natural resource-rich areas that are somewhat still poor against other regions that have prospered despite lacking resources. On

¹ At African Union Summit, Guterres outlines UN-AU approach to combatting terrorism; retrieved from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58495#.Wnrgw66WbIV> date accessed February 8, 2018

the other hand, the renaissance dam is creating a lot of tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt and other nations such as Sudan are being roped into the conflict system.

In Sudan, multiple armed groups in Darfur region agreed to a unilateral two-month ceasefire extension which would then provide humanitarian access to war-afflicted regions. The three groups pledged to support the peace framework that was enumerated in the African Union-led Roadmap Agreement.

MONTHLY SECURITY DETAILS

International support has been critical to the challenge of terrorism in the region. On 23rd January 2018, terrorism in the African continent led to the Department of Defense deploying 6,000 U.S. military personnel across 53 countries, not including special operations forces whose Pentagon's involvement has already set to increase this year in the regional counter-terrorism operations amid growing emphasis on the advise-and-assist missions abroad. Africa will, therefore, become the next major front in the Global War on Terror. According to Congressional Research Service Africa analyst Lauren Ploch, Tunisia has the highest recorded number of foreign fighters that have travelled to Iraq and Syria; Libya's weak borders and the non-state armed actors environment makes it a haven appealing to the ISIS escapees; Boko Haram has split into two factions aligned with ISIS and Al Qaeda in Lake Chad; while Somalia remains to be a fertile ground for Al-Shabaab terror recruits. However, the analysis still indicates that the state department may not be ready for the threat posed by these organizations.

The threats posed by non-ISIS aligned groups should not be underestimated, and in reference to Al-Shabaab's deadliest attack that killed over 500 people in a massive truck bomb in 2017, they could seek to expand their attacks on Western targets beyond Somalia. Al-Qaeda-linked groups in the Sahel continue to pose threats to American citizens in the region. Furthermore, some of the challenges that the U.S. military faces, stems from Africa's geopolitical ramifications and its complex regional politics.² In lieu of this, African politics also contribute to radicalization and recruitment challenges as alluded to by a report focusing on issues happening in Kenya.

² The Pentagon Is Woefully Unprepared For The Global War On Terror's African Front; retrieved from <https://taskandpurpose.com/trump-africa-terror-threat/> date accessed February 6, 2018

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Kenya:

Violent Extremism and Terrorist activities have contributed to economic challenges in the region and more so in the northern parts of Kenya. On 6th January 2018, Miraa transporters changed their routes including; Nyambene Hills in Meru County and Southern Somalia due to fear of Al-Shabaab attacks which have become more pronounced. They now prefer using the Isiolo town-Marsabit and Moyale highway before getting to Mandera through Tabaka and Bute. Isiah Mwambiu, Nyambene Miraa Growers Association chairman, confirmed that the militia had on numerous occasions attacked vehicles that went through the Wajir route to Mandera and hence putting lives at risk which led to their consideration of a longer but safer route in the transportation of Miraa.³

In an effort to ensure communication lines are destroyed and reduction of back-up when needed, a communication mast was destroyed in Kutulo area, Wajir county on 7th January 2018 by suspected Al-Shabaab militants. The militants used a rocket-propelled grenade to destroy the mast before they started engaging in a gunfight with four officers who were on the lookout at the said premises. Fortunately, there were no casualties, and all the officers were accounted for.⁴ Al-Shabaab militants ambushed an AP security vehicle in Nyongoro, Lamu county on 13th January 2018 Killing five police officers and one civilian as they escorted buses from Lamu to Mombasa. However, contradictions have emerged on the number of officers who were involved in the attack. Other media reports indicate that there were 15 officers but only 13 were accounted for, and several among them escaped with minor injuries and were receiving treatment in Witu and Manda hospitals. The gang and the police exchanged fire for more than two hours. Reinforcement was later dispatched to help fight the attackers and pursue those who had earlier fled resulting in the death of some of the militants while others escaped with serious injuries.⁵

It had been more than two years, and hundreds of civilians and security officers are still dying at the hands of the Al-Shabaab. The militants have opted to change their tack and openly attack security vehicles and security camps. This is despite the constant assurance that the operation is succeeding from Linda Boni director Joseph Kanyiri. Failure of the war on Al-Shabaab was clearly depicted to the thousands of residents around Boni forest in Lamu county as well as the

³ Miraa transporters change route over threat from Al-Shabaab; retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001265060/miraa-transporters-change-route-over-threat-from-al-shabaab> date accessed February 2, 2018

⁴ Al Shabaab destroy Safaricom communication mast in Wajir attack; retrieved from https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/01/07/al-shabaab-destroy-safaricom-communication-mast-in-wajir-attack_c1694294 date accessed February 2, 2018

⁵ Woman killed, five officers injured in Shabaab ambush; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/Woman-killed-5-police-injured-Shabaab-ambush-Lamu-Tana-River/1107872-4262700-m07jdrz/index.html> date accessed February 2, 2018

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world when an invasion of more than 100 heavily armed insurgents on the 16th of January 2018 pitched a camp at Ishakani village in Lamu East. The groups are said to have been preaching radical teachings for an hour while hoisting their flag at a deserted local police station. They later went back to their hideouts and did not kill anyone which was odd as it is in their nature to do the opposite unless they were trying to win favor from the civilians.⁶

Four Somali men who had been charged over an explosion at a coffee shop in 2014 at Nairobi's International airport were found not guilty due to lack of evidence on the 22nd of January 2018. Hassan Abdi Mohamed, Mohamed Osman Ali, Yusuf Warsame and Garrad Hassan Fer claimed not to be members of the Somali-based Al-Shabaab Islamist group. Police, on the other hand, had blamed the incident to a loose light bulb which fell into a wastepaper basket but later changed their story when a bullet-ridden car containing a body was found with explosives at a housing estate near the airport. Unfortunately, due to lack of evidence the four men were acquitted of more than 12 counts including being unlawfully present in the country and possession of explosives.⁷ This is a clear indication of lack of adequate information sharing and engagement between law enforcement and the judicial systems as they engage on the issues of violent extremism.

On the 23rd of January 2018, Kenya was to receive funding to the tune of \$600,000 (Sh61.74 million) aimed at the fight against Al-Shabaab from the United States. The State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism stated that the Kenyan society is diverse in its ethnic and cultural composition and is also uniformly patriarchal and highly prescriptive of gender expressions and identities. Socially, men are expected to be tough, aggressive, unemotional, achieving and heterosexual hence with these pressures to follow the custom, may lead to them being vulnerable and the Al-Shabaab would take the initiative to exploit them by offering opportunities that would fulfill the roles of a Kenyan male identity.⁸ Women, on the other hand, have been driven to join the terrorist groups in relation to family ties, economic distress and the desire to avenge ill-treated loved ones. Their involvement is majorly in non-combative or indirect roles as it is not clear the full extent of women's involvement in violent extremism. Once recruited some of the

⁶ Shabaab play cat and mouse with Lamu 3 years after KDF invaded Boni hideout; retrieved from https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/01/24/shabaab-play-cat-and-mouse-with-lamu-3-years-after-kdf-invaded-boni_c1702055 date accessed February 6, 2018

⁷ Somali: 4 Somalis suspected in Kenya airport blast acquitted; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/world/africa/somalia-4-somali-suspected-in-kenya-airport-blast-acquitted> date accessed February 5, 2018

⁸ US boosts Kenya's fight against Al shabaab; retrieved from <https://hivisasa.com/posts/us-boosts-kenyas-fight-against-al-shabaab> date accessed February 6, 2018

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roles include; becoming recruiters, spies, cooks, and cleaners which is according to a report by the Institute for Security Studies in Africa.⁹ Even with glaring evidence, the question of identity caused much uproar from a section of individuals within government; leading to cancelation/postponement of the funding stream.

The political temperatures in the nation are also contributing to the state of violent extremism, according to a report from IDS global.¹⁰ In the report, extremism is now taking shape as influenced by different political views and affiliations in the nation. From this background, a gazette notice on 30th January 2018, the National Super Alliance's National Resistance Movement (NRM) were outlawed including 33 other groups as per the Prevention of Organized Crimes Act 2010 by Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. This came after Nasa leader Raila Odinga took an oath of office as the people's President at Uhuru Park in Nairobi. The movement was named together with other renown criminal groups including terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda.¹¹ We are yet to hear a response from the known extremist organizations included in the groups. While addressing peace committee elders from six sub-counties of Mandera county, North Eastern regional commissioner Mohamud Saleh stated that unless leaders from the areas are ready to expose and condemn the group, the war against terrorism and specifically Al-Shabaab will never be won. He further criticized that both elected and non-elected leaders for not condemning Al-Shabaab in public but are quick in condemning the governments when it mounts operations to counter Al-Shabaab attacks.¹²

Somalia:

Somalia has nearly three-decade-old loans which are around \$4 billion most of it being interest and penalties to the former government of Mohamed Siad Barre. The said arrears make it impossible for Mogadishu to get new funds from the International Monetary Fund or the International Development Association which has money set aside for the purpose of fragile states like Somalia. This has therefore pushed Somalia's prime minister to call on multilateral

⁹ Al-Shabaab: Inside the ranks of women fighters; retrieved from <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Al-Shabaab-women-fighters-/2558-4285476-14tle76/index.html> date accessed February 7, 2018

¹⁰ (Harrasy, 2018)

¹¹ Gov't Declares NASA's National Resistance Movement(NRM), 33 Others As Criminal Organized Groups; retrieved from <http://www.mwakilishi.com/article/kenya-news/2018-01-30/matiangi-declares-nrm-a-criminal-group> date accessed February 7, 2018

¹² Agency, K. N. (2018, January 30). We have list of youths helping Al-Ashabaab says commissioner. *News Focus*.

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lenders in accelerating the debt-forgiveness process so as to be able to get funds that would be used in the fight against terrorism and its underlying cause.¹³

While discussions on development and funding for the nation, an airstrike carried out by the US military 50 Km from the capital Mogadishu, killed two Al-Shabaab extremists and destroyed a vehicle that was said to have been carrying explosives hence preventing it from being used against the people in Mogadishu on 3rd January 2018.¹⁴ No Civilian casualties were reported. Five men were executed for spying for the Kenyan, Ethiopian and Somali governments by Somalia-based Al-Shabaab extremist group. Their death was announced on Andalus radio station clarifying that it was carried in Kuntuwarey town in a public square in lower Shabelle region. The men were tied to poles and shot by masked gunmen after a self-proclaimed judge read out their verdict at the execution ground in front of a crowd.¹⁵

On the 4th of January 2018, security officers killed 11 Al-Shabaab militants including a senior Al-Shabaab commander during an operation in Afgoye, Southern Somalia. An Al-Shabaab deputy commander for Lower Shabelle region was also killed while other militants were critically wounded in an operation that was carried out 60km south of Mogadishu near Awdhegale town. The killed militant was involved in a plot that was targeting Somali military bases in the region. There were no casualties reported on the national army forces during the operation.¹⁶

On 5th January 2018, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a bomb attack which killed an African Union peacekeeper and one Somali National Army (SNA) soldier on the spot in Bulo Burde district 200 Km north of the capital, Mogadishu. This specific attack is one of the latest series of IED blasts which have been targeting the African Union forces and the Somali National Army (SNA) in the south and central Somali by extremist groups who are linked to Al Qaeda this year.¹⁷ On the same day in Mogadishu, the United States government designated Abukar Ali Adan who is the deputy leader of the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab extremist group a global terrorist.

¹³ Somalia calls for accelerated debt relief to fight terrorism; retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/142e8e9a-f22c-11e7-ac08-07c3086a2625> date accessed February 2, 2018

¹⁴ US airstrike in Somalia destroys vehicle carrying explosives; retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/us-airstrike-in-somalia-destroys-vehicle-carrying-explosives-20180103> date accessed February 5, 2018

¹⁵ Al-Shabab extremists execute 5 alleged spies in Somalia; retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2018/Jan-03/432268-al-shabab-extremists-execute-5-alleged-spies-in-somalia.ashx> date accessed February 5, 2018

¹⁶ Somalia: Military raid kills Senior Al-Shabaab commander; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-military-raid-kills-senior-al-shabab-commander> date accessed February 5, 2018

¹⁷ Somalia: AU peacekeeper killed, 2 hurt in Hiran landmine; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-au-peacekeeper-killed-2-hurt-in-hiran-landmine> date accessed February 2, 2018

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This, therefore, blocks any form of assets that are subject to US jurisdiction and hence prohibits US citizens from making any form of transactions with him.¹⁸

An explosion wounded several soldiers who were escorting the police commander of Deynile district at Florence junction in Mogadishu's Wardhigley district on 16th January 2018. The number of people killed is still unknown though reports say a huge explosion was heard when the roadside bomb planted on the road struck the police vehicle.¹⁹ On 17th January 2018, Ali Mohamud Rage the media spokesperson for Alshabaab lamented on a video concerning defections to joining the enemy and clarified that anyone who joins the line of non-Muslims is an apostate who can be killed. This was in reference to Mukhtar Robow Abu Mansur who had a fall out with him in 2013 and had defected to the UN-backed government in August 2017.²⁰ On the 18th of January 2018 to intimidate them to hand over their children for indoctrination and military training; according to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report. This report indicated that the armed group had begun ordering teachers and elders in mid-2017 in the rural parts of the southern Bay region children as young as eight or face dire consequences. Al-Shabaab spokesman whose identity was withheld stated that the accusation was all false as they have a rule in the areas they control which states that all children should learn and are given teachers at the boarding madrassa where they study, and this agreement came into terms with clan elders concerning the education of their children. He also insisted on the fact that they do not recruit any member below the age of 15 years and that no one is forced to join.²¹ Available data indicate that armed groups' recruit children for indoctrination and initiating them to become frontline fighters as seen from approximately 30 children recruit soldiers who were rescued during a raid on an Al-Shabaab camp by US troops who helped Somalia's security forces on 20th January 2018 in Mogadishu.²²

A U.S. air raid killed four Al-Shabaab militants on 19th January 2018 in the southern province of Lower Jubba. Africom confirmed no civilians were killed adding that the American forces will

¹⁸ US designates al-Shabaab deputy leader as 'global terrorist'; retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/us-designates-al-shabaab-deputy-leader-as-global-terrorist-20180105> date accessed February 2, 2018

¹⁹ Roadside Bomb Hits Somali Police Vehicle In Mogadishu; retrieved from <http://radioshabelle.com/roadside-bomb-hits-somali-police-vehicle-mogadishu/> date accessed February 5, 2018

²⁰ Former Somali al Shabaab leader denounced as apostate; retrieved from http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50410:former-somali-al-shabaab-leader-denounced-as-apostate&catid=52:Human%20Security&Itemid=114 date accessed February 5, 2018

²¹ Somalia's al Shabaab denies forcibly recruiting children to fight; retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-conflict-children/somalias-al-shabaab-denies-forcibly-recruiting-children-to-fight-idUSKBN1F72TE> date accessed February 5, 2018

²² Somalia: US troops help SNA rescue 30 children from Al-Shabaab; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-us-troops-help-sna-rescue-30-children-from-al-shabab> date accessed February 5, 2018

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continue to use all authorized and appropriate measures to disable terrorist threats in Somalia. Also, on the sidelines of the AU's summit, on 27th January 2018, in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, chief of the 22,000-strong African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), commented on the drone attacks that were wiping out Al-Shabaab in good numbers which would bring an end to terrorism. The surge came after President Donald Trump loosened constraints on the US military in Somalia hence allowing commanders to take action against suspected terrorists when the need arises without seeking specific approval from the White House.²³ Though Counter Terrorism approaches that include hard power approaches seem to be bearing fruit, the "Kill them all" attitude will not work and more push should be on Preventing Violent Extremism by winning the hearts and minds.

On 23rd January 2018, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility of a roadside landmine explosion, outside Somalia's capital Mogadishu at KM13 area that ripped apart a military vehicle carrying military forces killing five soldiers including the commissioner of Elbur District in Galgaduud region with several others wounded. An eyewitness narrated the incident as a blast that sparked large fumes of smoke that was visible throughout the Taredishe area which is home to thousands of internally displaced persons who fled from recent drought and conflict in the south and central Somalia.²⁴

Sudan:

On 4th January 2018, citing a presidential decree, Sudan extended a unilateral ceasefire with rebels up until the end of March as reported by state news agency SUNA. The United States lifted 20-year-old sanctions which tied progress on countering terrorism cooperation as well as on resolving internal conflicts. The ceasefire was set to expire end of December hence the three-month extension.²⁵ Multiple armed groups in Darfur region agreed to a unilateral two-month ceasefire extension from 30th November 2017 to 31st January 2018. This agreement is hoped to provide greater humanitarian access to war-afflicted regions. The three groups which are The Sudan Liberation Movement - Transitional Council (SLM-TC), the Justice and Equality Movement

²³ Somalia: US drones 'wiping out' Al-Shabab, says AU envoy; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-us-drones-wiping-out-al-shabab-says-au-envoy> date accessed February 2, 2018

²⁴ Somalia: Five soldiers killed in blast outside Mogadishu; retrieved from <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-five-soldiers-killed-in-blast-outside-mogadishu> date accessed February 5, 2018

²⁵ Sudan extends ceasefire with rebels through end-March - SUNA agency; retrieved from <https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/38491164/sudan-extends-ceasefire-with-rebels-through-end-march-suna-agency/> date accessed February 2, 2018

(JEM), and the SLM-Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM), also pledged to support the peace framework that was enumerated in the African Union-led Roadmap Agreement. However, despite the extension of the ceasefire, other clashes between militant groups and Sudanese security forces might be evident.²⁶

Ethiopia

Ethiopia and Egypt command most of the diplomatic clout in the region while other players see opportunities to assert themselves within recent tensions and a growing Arab presence. Ethiopia and Somalia have since developed a strategic alliance in the past year, while Egypt and Eritrea have also grown close with unconfirmed reports of Egyptian soldiers at the Sawa Military base in Eritrea which are said to have been manufactured by Sudan as a diversionary crisis. Tension rose in East Africa on 23rd January 2018 when Ethiopia's prime minister rejected Egypt's suggestions on the ongoing disagreement over the construction of a dam on the Nile River through the World Bank arbitrate. Both countries are at opposing points as Ethiopia is for the dam as the \$5 billion hydroelectric dam would provide power to the millions in desperate need of electric power while Egypt claims the dam will disrupt the flow of water from the Nile hence jeopardize agriculture which they highly depend on in the country for export purposes.²⁷

The tension between Egypt and Ethiopia gives an opportunity for Sudan and Eritrea to gain new footing and forge a beneficial partnership. However, Sudan faces challenges in rebuilding its economy in the wake of the lifted U.S. sanctions while Eritrea is still under the same sanctions sees it as an opportunity to emerge from isolation and hence cope with its vulnerabilities and migration issues. The hold of construction that the regional powers long dispute concerning the arbitration is the latest setback as well as the many regional conflicts that have been heightened by the growing power struggles among Gulf states which continue to spill into East Africa.²⁸

Tanzania

Kenya and Tanzania have been collaborating in the war against terror since 1998, and that was when Osama Bin Laden's AL Qaeda had announced its presence to the world concurrently attacking US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In Kenya, militants have been infiltrating

²⁶ Sudan: Militant ceasefire in Darfur extended through January 2018; retrieved from <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/80501/sudan-militant-ceasefire-in-darfur-extended-through-january-2018> date accessed February 6, 2018

²⁷ Tension in East Africa Ticks Up Over Nile, Gulf Power Struggle; retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/tension-in-east-africa-ticks-up-over-nile-gulf-power-struggle/4220431.html> date accessed February 6, 2018

²⁸ Tension in East Africa Ticks Up Over Nile, Gulf Power Struggle; retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/tension-in-east-africa-ticks-up-over-nile-gulf-power-struggle/4220431.html> date accessed February 6, 2018

rural populations mainly on the coast and northeastern as opposed to their previous tactics of staging major attacks in the cities. They have also resorted to the destruction of infrastructure such as communication masts, police stations and planting improvised explosive devices on targeted roads.²⁹

Whereas in Tanzania, an unnamed group has also been driving a wedge between the natural resource-rich areas that are somewhat still poor against other regions that have prospered despite lacking resources. A good example is the case of the Southern coast of the country in Mtwara and Lindi where the said gang with unscrupulous dealings instills feelings of the area been marginalized and hence remain poor despite their vast natural resources. They have also resorted to attacking police officers to collect firearms as in the case of Kibiti district where a gang killed eight police officers and escaped with seven firearms.³⁰

CONCLUSION

January has had at least 32 casualties, seven being civilians and 13 militants who were killed whereby two of them were killed in an airstrike which has been recommended as it has helped in the elimination of the Al-Shabaab. Regarding the injured civilians and militants there was no specific data that shared which would give us a figure to work with but rather the injured were mostly the militants who were engaged in battle and managed to escape. It is clear that the Al-Shabaab has diverse and new methods which keep on changing. Finally, a review of political issues may be a solution to dealing with terrorism in the Horn. This can be through inclusive economic growth that is combined with good governance which will ensure less volatility as a reconsideration approach taken to the threat of terrorism.³¹ Also, this can assist with the structural conflict issues that contribute to the push factors that drive individuals to terrorism.

²⁹ Militants change game plan, hurt war against terrorism; retrieved from <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Militants-change-tack-hurt-anti-terrorism-war/2558-4271582-11y2qca/index.html> date accessed February 6, 2018

³⁰ Militants change game plan, hurt war against terrorism; retrieved from <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Militants-change-tack-hurt-anti-terrorism-war/2558-4271582-11y2qca/index.html> date accessed February 6, 2018

³¹ Africa: What Needs to Be Done to Make Africa Politically Stable; retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201801050422.html> date accessed February 2, 2018

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