



# HORN OF AFRICA SECURITY REVIEW

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**Reviewed by: Maureen Nyarangi and Stephen Gaita**

Scofield Associates Team  
3rd Floor Mayfair Suite, Parklands Road - Westlands,  
P.O. Box 336-00621, Village Market, Nairobi  
Telephone +254 020 7868306 or +254 731055306  
Email: [info@scofieldassociates.co.ke](mailto:info@scofieldassociates.co.ke)  
[www.scofieldassociates.co.ke](http://www.scofieldassociates.co.ke)

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## INTRODUCTION

*"It is harder to build peace than it is to destroy it."*

There has been a decline in the global peace according to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) due to violence and conflict which has increased in the Middle East as well as Africa in the past decade. The Institute warns that the alarming conflicts are costing the global economy trillions of dollars every year. Mr. Steve Killelea, head of IEP, mentions the reason for the gradual decline in peacefulness is due to conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa which has a spillover effect on other areas. He warns of the descent into violence which is much easier compared to establishing peace in any case scenario.<sup>1</sup> The 2018 Global Peace Index released early this month also reveals the world to be at a less peaceful state; compared to other times due to tensions, conflicts, and crises that have emerged in the last decades that are still unresolved up to date with violence costing the world \$ 14.6 trillion. Two of the least peaceful countries are in Africa according to the reports.<sup>2</sup>

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018, The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that will focus on the increased representation of young people in efforts to prevent conflict, spur negotiations to end the fighting and foster peaceful agreements. The resolution on Youth, Peace, and Security sponsored by Sweden and Peru recognizes the role of youth in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue with the aim of discouraging their participation in acts of violence, xenophobia, terrorism and all forms of discrimination. It talks about the importance of building sustainable peace and countering violent extremism by encouraging youth and women participation. The greatest concern expressed is the increased use of the internet by terrorists and their sympathizers to recruit and incite young people into committing terrorist acts.<sup>3</sup>

Violence Early Warning System (ViEWS) which is a political Violence Early warning System at Uppsala University, is developing an early warning system database that will be publicly available to researchers as well as the International Community. They released the first public forecasts for Africa on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The system suggests a continued high risk of conflict in Somalia, Nigeria and other countries in Central Africa. Recent violence in places like Kenya is forecasted to recede.<sup>4</sup>

Reports have emerged stating that several ISIS militants were captured and publicly executed in a small town of Maas by Al-Shabaab operatives due to a perceived subversion by the ISIS militants with rumors of a grand plot to depose Al-Shabaab leader Abu Ubeidha. The grand plan by ISIS as reported is to eventually merge the two organizations through an alliance between ISIS top leadership with Al-Shabaab's Military wing leader as one of Ubeidha's two deputies Maalim Osman, in a bid to become the new emir. This comes to light even as cracks

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<sup>1</sup> World is now LESS PEACEFUL than at any time in last DECADE according to SHOCK report; retrieved from <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/970114/World-war-3-Syria-conflict-South-Sudan-Middle-East-world-less-peaceful-IEP-report> date accessed June 22, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Global Peace Index shows world is becoming less peaceful; retrieved from [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=51987:global-peace-index-shows-world-is-becoming-less-peaceful&catid=56:diplomacy-a-peace&Itemid=111](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51987:global-peace-index-shows-world-is-becoming-less-peaceful&catid=56:diplomacy-a-peace&Itemid=111) date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>3</sup> UN Security Council says include youths in peace efforts; retrieved from <http://www.tampabay.com/un-security-council-says-include-youths-in-peace-efforts-ap-world93e070402111484fb969ec535b2f3201> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>4</sup> First public forecasts from ViEWS, a political Violence Early-Warning System; retrieved from [https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2018-06/uu-fp060818.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-06/uu-fp060818.php) date accessed July 4, 2018

intensify as Al-Shabaab leader fights illness as identified in our previous security reviews.<sup>5</sup> A captured defector confessed to torture and execution of militants from both sides and Al-Shabaab militants with Kenyan origins opting to join ISIS following accusations of espionage by the latter. Massive casualties will be incurred on both sides as the conflict escalates.<sup>6</sup>

This security review covers events that happened during the whole month, in the Greater Horn of Africa countries in summary. Below in detail is a classification going by the different countries.

## **KENYA**

Students of Kenya Medical Training College Nyeri campus on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018, fled their hostels due to terror threats. Police questioned students over the rumors that were being circulated amongst them of an eminent attack on the institution. The neighboring Hospital, Nyeri County Referral also received additional officers as they probed into the matter. Nyeri Central police Boss Muinde Kioko confirmed that they had monitored the situation and assured that there was no cause of alarm since the threat had been neutralized. This incident came less than three weeks following a similar threat that was relayed to the students by a boda-boda rider who claimed the school would be attacked.<sup>7</sup>

On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018, A lorry carrying nine security officers, drawn from the General Service Unit (GSU), performing a routine patrol at Liboi along the Kenyan-Somali border at 8 A.M hit an Improvised Explosive Device suspected to have been set by Al-Shabaab militants. Dadaab Deputy County Commissioner Harun Kamau reported six officers died while the remaining three were injured. Reinforcement was sent to pursue the militants behind the attack.<sup>8</sup>

A three-day meeting in Nairobi from 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, convened by Dr. Ododa, the senior civil officer of stabilization and early recovery at the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was expected to take stock of the Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and see how best they can be implemented as well as delivered to the community. Some of the attendees included Ambassador Purity Muhindi of Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Simon Mulongo the deputy head of AMISOM and Adong Oder, the representative of the African Union Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The envoy credited AMISOM for contributing to peace and stability and degrading the threat posed by Al-Shabaab militia. She mentioned the lack of reliable and sustainable funding as a key challenge to the mission's operations. Simon Mulongo, AMISOM's deputy head said that the QIPs were initial projects that underpinned the mission in Somali and also contributed to Somalia's early recovery. Some of the implemented projects that helped stabilize liberated areas included; water, health, education and security projects.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Security Review (May 2018); retrieved from <http://www.scofieldassociates.co.ke/Security-Review-May-2018.php> date accessed July 9, 2018

<sup>6</sup> The ISIS And Al Shabaab Divide Over Somalia; retrieved from <https://epukaugaidi.com/2018/05/30/the-isis-and-al-shabaab-divide-over-somalia/> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>7</sup> Nyeri College students flee hostels after terror threats; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/nyeri/Nyeri-College-students-flee-hostels-after-terror-threats/1954190-4595728-bphqkyz/index.html> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>8</sup> Six GSU Officers Killed in a Suspected Al Shabaab Attack in Liboi along Kenyan-Somalia Border; retrieved from <https://www.mwakilishi.com/article/kenya-news/2018-06-06/six-gsu-officers-killed-in-suspected-al-shabaab-attack> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>9</sup> AMISOM meets to evaluate projects; retrieved from [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1479563/amisom-meets-evaluate-projects](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1479563/amisom-meets-evaluate-projects) June 14, 2018

On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the United States threatened sanctions and funding cut to the Kenyan government if it failed to investigate president Salva Kiir and former Vice president Riek Machar. The US Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Sigal Mandalker, claimed that the leaders were using Kenya and Uganda as a safe haven for their property acquired through proceeds of conflict in South Sudan. President Kiir and Machar are among those mentioned in a report by an NGO – the Sentry. President Donald Trump’s administration intends to go a long way in ensuring peace and stability in South Sudan. Hence it wants Kenya to strictly impose sanctions on corrupt South Sudanese individuals by barring them from banking their money in Kenya.<sup>10</sup>

Lamu County Police Commander Muchangi Kioi spoke to the Nation on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 informing them that police had increased patrols, especially on the Lamu-Garsen road, as it is usually busy this time of the year as relatives travel to join their kin in Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Uniformed and plain-clothed security officers were also deployed to man five key jetties which are the main entry points to Lamu Old Town, a Muslim hub, and a tourist destination. The five entry points are; Mokowe customs, Manda airport, Lamu Mangrove customs, Kenya Ports Authority jetty and Shella Jetty. Security was also beefed up in all villages in Lamu and areas bordering the Boni Forest.<sup>11</sup> Due to the improved security, Mr.Kioi informed the nation that calmness had been witnessed in the area with limited road attacks. He lauded the community for their cooperation with the police and security forces saying it was a crucial step in the ongoing war on terrorism.<sup>12</sup>

Bojigaras location that is about 150 km from Wajir town is an area that is prone to Al-Shabaab attacks.<sup>13</sup> On June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, five Administrative Police officers and three police reservists were killed after their vehicle was ambushed by Al-Shabaab militants who staged an IED attack. The group claimed responsibility citing to have killed 15 security officers and injured 23 others. They also reported taking eight assault rifles and hundreds of bullets belonging to the slain officers and burnt the vehicle before fleeing towards the Somali border.<sup>14</sup> According to media reports, the officers got out of their vehicle after the explosion and engaged the militants in a fierce fight before they were overpowered. One of the officers managed to escape but died while being rushed to the hospital.<sup>15</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, three women were re-arrested by the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit after leaving a court in Mombasa. The three were accused of being members of Al-Shabaab militants. Ummulkheir Sadri Abdalla, Khadija Abubakar Abdulkadir, and Halima Adan were released on a Sh.500,000 bond. The arrests came after the prosecution claimed allegations impersonation where it was purported that the suspects were being represented in court by other persons.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> US goes after Kiir, Machar's wealth in Kenya, threatens sanctions; retrieved from [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/13/us-goes-after-kiir-machars-wealth-in-kenya-threatens-sanctions\\_c1772749](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/13/us-goes-after-kiir-machars-wealth-in-kenya-threatens-sanctions_c1772749) date accessed June 18, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Security beefed up in Lamu as locals mark end of Ramadhan; retrieved from <https://mobile.nation.co.ke/counties/Security-beefed-up-as-residents-celebrate-Idd-ul-Fitr/1950480-4615164-7d3oxjz/index.html> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Al-Shabaab attacks on Lamu-Garsen road drop, police say; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/lamu/Al-Shabaab-attacks-in-Lamu-on-the-wane--police-say/3444912-4618356-ogfpkz/index.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>13</sup> Al-Shabaab took 8 rifles and over 540 bullets from police in Wajir attack; retrieved from <http://www.kulanpost.com/al-shabaab-took-8-rifles-and-over-540-bullets-from-police-in-wajir-attack/> date accessed July 9, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Somalia's Al-Shabaab claims Wajir attack in which 8 died; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/wajir/Al-Shabaab-claims-deadly-Wajir-attack/3444790-4619742-x3m2gdz/index.html> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>15</sup> Eight security officers killed in Wajir Al-Shabaab attack; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/wajir/Several-police-officers-feared-dead-in-Wajir-IED-attack/3444790-4617348-1hunmdz/index.html> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Terror suspects arrested leaving Mombasa court; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/mombasa/Terror-suspects-arrested-after-leaving-Mombasa-court-/1954178-4624498-ak5xqez/index.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

Residents in Mpeketoni and its environs talked to the Nation on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 complaining of harassment that they receive from security officers who were conducting an ongoing operation to flush out Al-Shabaab in the region. There was no curfew put in place, but the officers harassed them during their daily night patrols hence forced to be indoors as early as 6.00 P.M. Mr. Komu who is a resident at Mpeketoni claimed that they were even forced to drink dirty water on the roads and this had brought about fear in that area. However, KDF spokesperson David Obonyo said his officers had tried to build a good relationship with the locals and that they did not harass anyone in the community. On 27 June, he held a meeting with the residents including boda-boda operators and opinion leaders, but no one raised any complaints about the alleged harassment.<sup>17</sup> It was clear that there was more to the incidences that were claimed to have happened as it has been observed the level of victimization and fear among members of the society towards law enforcement hence victims end up not sharing their grievances.

The Chief of Defence forces General Samson Mwathethe warned on the rising numbers of Kenyans who had joined Al-Shabaab in Somalia. He mentioned on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2018 during an annual St. Johns 9<sup>th</sup> inspection parade, at the Kenya Railways headquarters, his fears on vulnerable youth who are mostly targeted by extremists. He commended St. John's ambulance for providing programs for the Kenyan youth which keeps them busy and also urged parents to enroll their children in courses for life-saving skills to ensure they are immune to radicalization by the militant groups.<sup>18</sup>

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018, an Al-Shabaab suspect was killed while another was injured in a fierce gun battle that ensued after four Al-Shabaab suspects were identified in Tarbaj Sub County. The injured suspect was assisted by his comrades and escaped into the nearby bushes. Wajir County Commissioner Loyford Kibaara addressed journalists stating that a joint team of police officers and police reservists are pursuing the militants with the aim of capturing them or any sympathizers who might be assisting them in any way.<sup>19</sup> Al-Shabaab has numerous sympathizers who aid them during the escape, or when in need and this has proven to be a difficult task as they sympathizers cannot be identified in the community or even if the community is aware of their actions, they will be unable to share such information as they are part of the community.<sup>20</sup>

## **SOMALIA**

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018, a soccer program was adopted in Somalia spearheaded by UPDF who are working under AMISOM with the aim of preventing the youth from joining Al-Shabaab militants and any other wrong elements. The program was already underway in Ceel Jaale at Shalamboot in the lower Shabelle region. Community members together with elders, chiefs', women and children were encouraged to turn up in big numbers to cheer their teams while playing. The overall goal in the competition is to ensure there is an aspect of unity among the

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<sup>17</sup> Mpeketoni residents accuse KDF soldiers of harassment; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/lamu/Mpeketoni-residents-accuse-KDF-soldiers-of-harassment-/3444912-4626112-ek63lq/index.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Chief of Defence Forces warns on rising numbers of Kenyans joining Al Shabaab; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/video/news/4146788-4629306-ec17m6z/index.html> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Police kill suspected Al Shabaab operative in Wajir; retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001285887/police-kill-suspected-al-shabaab-operative-in-wajir> date accessed June 29, 2018

<sup>20</sup> Tangled Ties: Al-Shabaab and Political Volatility in Kenya; retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294482784\\_Tangled\\_Ties\\_Al-Shabaab\\_and\\_Political\\_Volatility\\_in\\_Kenya](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294482784_Tangled_Ties_Al-Shabaab_and_Political_Volatility_in_Kenya) date accessed July 10, 2018

youth and support reconciliation processes between Bimaal and Habar-Gidir clans who are the active participants.<sup>21</sup>

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018, The US military announced the death of 27 Al-Shabaab terrorists who were killed by airstrikes carried out approximately 26 miles southwest of the northern city of Bosasso in Somalia; no civilians casualties were reported following the attack. AFRICOM stated that the U.S. forces would continue to use all authorized and appropriate measures to protect U.S. citizens and disable any terrorist threats, including partnering with AMISOM and Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) in a combined counterterrorism operation by targeting terrorists, their training camps and safe havens throughout Somalia and the region.<sup>22</sup>

Al-Shabaab militants on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018 killed six traders and burnt 11 trucks that were carrying food and other commodities to Hudur town the headquarters of Bakool region, southwest of Somalia. The incident occurred at Qura'a-Jome village which is under the control of Al-Shabaab militants.<sup>23</sup> In March they also shot and killed nine transport donkeys that were ferrying goods to government-controlled areas in Bakool region.<sup>24</sup>

There has been an increase in executions of Kenyan fighters in Somalia on allegations of being informants, with reports of approximately 20 people in the last few years. Two Kenyans were executed for allegedly spying for Somalia and Kenyan Intelligence services on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in Fino Town, Lower Shabelle region in Somalia. Shukri Ali, 22 was from Garrisa County while Farah Godane was from Lamu. The militants forced locals to watch the inhumane act as they stoned and slit their throats to instill fear among the locals.<sup>25</sup>

An attack targeted a convoy that was carrying regional lawmakers and other government officials on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018, killed five people including regional members of parliament and soldiers. An officer claimed that the number of casualties could rise. Residents said they could hear explosions as well as gunfire and later learned that it was an attack from the Al-Shabaab who claimed responsibility of the act. The militants attacked Balad town, about 30 km north of the Somali capital Mogadishu.<sup>26</sup> Other sources gave deferring fatalities claiming the impact killed two lawmakers and ten soldiers; this is according to a resident Ali Ibrahim who witnessed the incident. He said Al-Shabaab hit the two vehicles with rocket-propelled grenades.<sup>27</sup> On the same day, at least 10 Al-Shabaab fighters were killed and one arrested after they tried to launch an ambush to Bardhere military base in Bardhere town, the southern part of the Horn of Africa nation. The Somali National Army Commander Osman

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<sup>21</sup> AMISOM using sports to promote peace in Somalia; retrieved from [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1478888/amisom-sports-promote-peace-somalia](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1478888/amisom-sports-promote-peace-somalia) date accessed June 14, 2018

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Military Announces Airstrikes Killed 27 Terrorists in Somalia; retrieved from <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/u-s-military-announces-airstrikes-killed-27-terrorists-somalia/> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>23</sup> Al-Shabaab kills six traders, burn 11 trucks in Bakool region; retrieved from <http://sunatimes.com/articles/5663/Al-Shabaab-kills-six-traders-burn-11-trucks-in-Bakool-region> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>24</sup> Al-Shabaab kill donkeys, burn food in Bakool region; retrieved from [https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2018/mar/157014/al-shabaab\\_kill\\_donkeys\\_burn\\_food\\_in\\_bakool\\_region.aspx](https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2018/mar/157014/al-shabaab_kill_donkeys_burn_food_in_bakool_region.aspx) date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>25</sup> Al Shabaab Executes Two Kenyan Militia As Residents Watch; retrieved from <https://epukaugaidi.com/2018/06/04/al-shabaab-executes-two-kenyans-as-residents-watch/> date accessed June 27, 2018

<sup>26</sup> Somalia: Somali Regional Lawmakers, Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabaab Ambush; retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201806060532.html> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>27</sup> TWO SOMALI LAWMAKERS KILLED IN AL-SHABAAB AMBUSH -ARMY OFFICER; retrieved from <http://ewn.co.za/2018/06/05/two-somali-lawmakers-killed-in-al-shabaab-ambush-army-officer> date accessed June 21, 2018

Sheikh Abdi informed reporters that they had lost one soldier and three others were seriously injured during the attack.<sup>28</sup>

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018, a US Commando was killed and four other servicemen wounded in an incident when they were attacked by Al-Shabaab in the southern town of Kismayo. The US special operations forces were fighting alongside other 800 troops from the Somali National security forces and Kenya Defence Forces when they were attacked by mortars and small arms fire. Abdiasis Abu Musab, Al-Shabaab's military operations spokesman, said that they attacked the military base and killed one US soldier, two Kenyan soldiers, nine Somali soldiers and injured four US soldiers. Mr. Trump sent his condolences on twitter stating that his thoughts and prayers were with the families of the serviceman killed and his fellow servicemen wounded in Somalia and that they were true heroes.<sup>29</sup> The US casualties are the first confirmed in Somalia since May 2017 when one soldier was killed, and two others wounded in a gun battle west of Mogadishu.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Shabaab militants and the Somali National soldiers engaged in a fierce battle in the Gedo region town of El Wak on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The militants raided the town earlier that week and preached in the mosque after the SNA soldiers retreated towards Kenya, they intensified their attacks since the month of Ramadhan.<sup>31</sup> On the same day, Major Hussein Ali, a Somali military officer told Reuters of an attack that took place at a military base outside Kismayo in Southern Somalia. Seven Somali soldiers were injured by a suicide car bomb that exploded before it entered the base. However, Al-Shabaab claims to have killed 40 soldiers and chased foreign forces away from the camp after their attack.<sup>32</sup>

'Operation Lighting Strike' was launched on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018, by Somali President Mohammed Abdullahi Farmajo ahead of Eid al Fitr celebrations. This was in a bid to open multi-fronts on Somali army who were currently in defensive positions near Tukkraaq village in Sool. Planes were seen being loaded with crates containing round of ammunition, dissembled heavy artillery, mortars and spare parts at the Adan Adde international airport of Mogadishu. The fully equipped military unit was estimated at a total of 600-1000 men trained at the Turkish base and other foreign supported training grounds in and around Mogadishu. The Horn of Africa has been keen to ensure that these celebrations are not disrupted by acts of terrorism, and each country has taken measures in safeguarding the day at all costs.<sup>33</sup>

Four government soldiers were killed after Al-Shabaab carried out an attack in a military base in Teed town 30km North West of Hudur district in Bakool region on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

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<sup>28</sup> Somali army kills 10 al-Shabab militants in southern Somalia; retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/05/c\\_137232423.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/05/c_137232423.htm) date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Trump tweets condolences after Islamist militants al-Shabaab claim responsibility for death of US commando; retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/al-shabaab-condolences-death-us-soldier-commando-donald-trump-somalia-a8390856.html> date accessed June 19, 2018

<sup>30</sup> Somalia conflict: One US soldier killed, four wounded in firefight; retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44421488> date accessed June 12, 2018

<sup>31</sup> AlShabaab & Govt Troops In Deadly Clash Over El-Wak; retrieved from <http://sunatimes.com/articles/5687/AlShabaab-Govt-Troops-In-Deadly-Clash-Over-El-Wak> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>32</sup> Al Shabaab strikes again following Friday attack that killed US commando; retrieved from <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/10/al-shabaab-strikes-again-following-friday-attack-that-killed-us-commando/> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>33</sup> Somalia President launches 'Operation Lightning Strike' days to Eid Fitr; retrieved from <https://epukaugaidi.com/2018/06/11/somalia-president-launches-operation-lightning-strike-days-to-eid-fitr/> date accessed June 19, 2018

Claims of the militants taking control of the area and seizing of the weapons after the attack on government forces were denied by the Somali military.<sup>34</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018, reports of supremacy battles among deputies to the bedridden Al-Shabaab leader Abu Ubeiydah widened inside the camp. He took over after Ahmed Godane was killed in 2014 and now he is struggling with his health worsening in the last six months battling stomach cancer. He has been unpopular among militants with his reign marred by defections, executions of foreign fighters and terror attacks on and outside Somalia which has left many Muslims dead. The Shura Council in charge of decision making and appointment of new leaders has split into two as the majority of its members from Hawiye clan have appointed one of their own Hassan Fiidow as the preferred successor upon Ubeiydah's death. This has not been received kindly as it has caused cracks within the council and Al-Shabaab's external ranks as the majority of the fighters hail from Darod clan feel short-changed with the council's decision. The head of Intelligence, Mahat Karate, who was the preferred successor, is suspected to be gathering troops in an attempted coup against whoever takes over. Countries in the region want the group crushed as their attacks have left many including soldiers dead or severely injured.<sup>35</sup> Reports have surfaced on the death of the supreme leader, but the group has neither confirmed nor denied these reports. A southern Somali military officer Mr. Ismail Sheikh Isaq told SNA radio that the army had received credible information that the leader had died of kidney failure.<sup>36</sup>

Unknown airstrikes hit El-Adde and Goof locations in southern Somalia on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The militants suffered heavy casualties during the strike. However, the exact battle damage assessments have not been established. Locals claimed they were not sure whether the Kenya Defence Forces soldiers were behind the airstrikes.<sup>37</sup>

Nine militants were killed in an attack where the Somali army backed by African Union and U.S forces unleashed a joint offensive against Al-Shabaab hideout near Kismayo, Somalia. The attack took place on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018 where there was heavy gunfight that left several Somali soldiers injured and an unclear exact number of casualties on foreign forces.<sup>38</sup>

A joint military offensive that included the Somali army forces along with United State Forces attacked Arare town that had been under the control of Al-Shabaab. The militants retreated and were able to capture the town. There have been no comments from Al-Shabaab over the claims. A military officer who asked to be anonymous said that the operation would continue until the militants are eliminated.<sup>39</sup>

The war against Violent Extremism has resulted in consequences such as child deaths which have been witnessed in Somalia where Kenyan troops have killed six children whereas Al-

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<sup>34</sup> Somalia: Al-Shabaab Says Killed 4 Soldiers in Attack On Somali Military Base in Bakool; retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201806120772.html> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>35</sup> Al Shabaab cracks widen as leader Abu Ubeiydah battles cancer; retrieved from [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/13/al-shabaab-cracks-widen-as-leader-abu-ubeiydah-battles-cancer\\_c1772444](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/13/al-shabaab-cracks-widen-as-leader-abu-ubeiydah-battles-cancer_c1772444) date accessed June 18, 2018

<sup>36</sup> Somali National Army says Al-Shabaab supreme leader dead; retrieved from <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Army-radio-says-Shabaab-supreme-leader-dead/4552902-4634154-j9qi4k/index.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>37</sup> Unidentified airstrikes target al-Shabab militants in southern Somalia; retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/18/c\\_137262831.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/18/c_137262831.htm) date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>38</sup> Somalia, US forces' raid kills 9 militants near Kismayo ; retrieved from <https://mareeg.com/somalia-us-forces-raid-kills-9-militants-near-kismayo/> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>39</sup> Somalia, US especial forces seize key town from Al Shabaab; retrieved from <https://mareeg.com/somalia-us-especial-forces-seize-key-town-from-al-shabaab/> date accessed July 5, 2018



Shabaab was responsible for 208 deaths below the age of 18 years according to a report that was issued by the United Nations on 27<sup>TH</sup> June 2018. The UN also stated that Kenyan airstrikes had resulted in the deaths of several children. In 2017, unknown armed elements were blamed for the killing and maiming of 477 children in Somalia which half of the total of 931 were cited in the UN report. In addition to forces fighting against the extremist groups that include deaths caused by the KDF, 21 children were killed by the African Union troops, 88 by the Somali National Army and ten by the Somali Police Force. The report also mentioned Al-Shabaab's public execution of children.<sup>40</sup>

12 Al-Shabaab fighters defected to the federal government forces on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The fighters came from Bar Sanguuni, Bula Haji and Abdalla Biroole villages in Lower Jubba region. The forces displayed the defectors at Barsaguuni village before they were ferried to Kismayo for investigation. Somlai's Jubaland intelligence chief Khalid Sheikh said that Jubaland administration was open to receive defectors from the militant group as part of the amnesty offered by Regional President of Jubbaland Ahmed Mohamed.<sup>41</sup>

## **SOUTH SUDAN**

South Sudanese rebel leader Riek Machar accepted an invitation from the Ethiopian Prime Minister to talks with President Salva Kiir that will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The talks will be led by East African bloc IGAD. The meeting would be the first time that Kiir and Machar met since a peace deal between the government and Machar rebel group fell apart in August 2016. Both sides stand accused by the United Nations and other bodies of committing atrocities against civilians.<sup>42</sup>

In May, the Kenyan government appointed opposition leader Raila Odinga as a special envoy, to help bring the two parties to the negotiation table, a move lauded by South Sudan leaders. The US government has been pushing to have assets belonging to leaders fuelling the conflict in Africa's newest nation frozen.<sup>43</sup> According to the US Treasury's under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Sigal Mandelker, some of the leaders have made real estate investment with illicit money in Kenya, Uganda, and other regional countries and mainly stay in the leafy suburbs.<sup>44</sup>

Kenya and its peers in the eastern Africa region are cautious with imposing sanctions on South Sudan because it could damage the legitimacy of mediators involved. Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta has in the past voiced his disappointment with the way South Sudan President Salva Kiir and his nemesis Riek Machar have dragged on with talks as violence persists. South Sudan's neighbours have indicated any approach such as imposing sanctions

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<sup>40</sup> KDF killed 6 children in Somalia, Shabaab 208: UN; retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Child-deaths-violence-Somalia-UN/1056-4636102-xm8gfwz/index.html> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>41</sup> 12 Al Shabaab fighters surrender to Somal Forces; retrieved from <https://mareeg.com/12-al-shabaab-fighters-surrender-to-somal-forces/amp/> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>42</sup> South Sudan Rebel Leader To Attend Talks With President In Addis Ababa; retrieved from <http://ewn.co.za/2018/06/13/south-sudan-rebel-leader-to-attend-talks-with-president-in-addis-ababa> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>43</sup> Garang hails US sanctions on South Sudan leaders; retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001284475/s-sudan-leaders-ask-kenya-to-seize-ill-gotten-wealth-from-leaders> date accessed July 4 2018

<sup>44</sup> US urges crackdown on S. Sudan war money invested in Kenya; retrieved from <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article65647> date accessed July 4 2018

could antagonise South Sudan leadership and spoil any remaining legitimacy of Igad in the talks.

A peace deal was signed between South Sudan's President and rebel leader Riek Machar that included a ceasefire. However rebels rejected parts of the deal. The agreement was made in Khartoum on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 with the aim of ending the war in which tens of thousands of people have been killed. Sudanese Foreign Minister Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed informed Reuters that the parties would continue with talks in Khartoum to discuss arrangements for implementing the ceasefire together with issues of power-sharing. Results of the agreement will bring forth access to humanitarian aid, prisoners freed and a transitional unity government that will be formed after four months.<sup>45</sup>

## **ETHIOPIA**

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Ethiopia announced that they would fully accept and implement the 2000 peace agreement between them and Eritrea over their disputed border. This will be a major step towards resolving one of post-colonial Africa's bloodiest and most protracted conflicts. The countries fought a war from 1998 to 2000 over their border dispute that left about 80,000 people dead. The 2000 peace agreement was signed, but Ethiopians denied the pact due to a boundary commission that was established by the agreement that would award Eritrea the border town of Badme. It is, however, unclear how the Eritrean government will respond to Ethiopia's announcement.<sup>46</sup>

Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed and Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmajo" agreed, on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018, to strengthen their brotherly bilateral relations as well as to collaborate with the African Union in seeking solutions to problems in the continent. They condemned terrorism in all its forms and emphasized on the need to cooperate to counter terrorism and deal with cross-border security challenges effectively.<sup>47</sup>

A grenade exploded during a rally that was on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June in support of Ethiopia's new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his reform policies killing at least two people and injuring 156. Rally organizers claimed he was the main target<sup>48</sup> though it was not confirmed whether the incident was an act of terrorism or due to the bold act of the new Prime Minister and his openness regarding his admission of state terrorism and torture in the country.<sup>49</sup>

## **UGANDA**

On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Al-Shabaab suspects appeared in High court Kampala presided by Justice Michael Elubu. With over 30 exhibits including a jacket suspected to be used in explosives were lined up by the Directorate of Public Prosecutions which would be used at

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<sup>45</sup> Salva Kiir, Riek Machar sign peace agreement in Khartoum; retrieved from [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/27/salva-kiir-riek-machar-sign-peace-agreement-in-khartoum\\_c1778869](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/27/salva-kiir-riek-machar-sign-peace-agreement-in-khartoum_c1778869) date accessed July 6, 2018

<sup>46</sup> Ethiopia to 'Fully Accept' Eritrea Peace Deal From 2000; retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/05/world/africa/ethiopia-eritrea-peace-deal.html> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>47</sup> Ethiopia, Somalia Agree to Strengthen 'Brotherly' Relations; retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopian-prime-minister-visits-somalia/4441732.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>48</sup> The Ethiopia rally bomb will test the prime minister's reform agenda amid internal party conflict; retrieved from <https://qz.com/1314460/the-ethiopia-rally-bomb-will-test-the-prime-ministers-reform-agenda-and-internal-party-conflicts/> date accessed July 5, 2018

<sup>49</sup> Torture, state terrorism and Ethiopia's transformation; retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/abiy-ahmed-transforming-ethiopia-face-adversity-180622112645741.html> date accessed July 5, 2018

the trial of the eight, all of whom are nationals of Somalia, suspected Al-Shabaab facing charges of terrorism. They were arrested in 2014 by security agencies and detained at various police stations including Kireka. Current status of the suspects was pending as they awaited instructions to apply for bail pending their trial considering the years they have spent in incarceration.<sup>50</sup>

Troops from East African regions, the United States and the European Union are scheduled to hold a joint military training exercise in Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Centre, in the eastern town of Jinja, starting 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018. Uganda's military spokesman Brig. Richard Karemire said that the exercise would be aimed at assessing abilities of participants in conducting peacekeeping operations as well as to enhance positive bilateral and regional relationships in austere environments with coalition partners. Participants are from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Somali, Netherlands and United States.<sup>51</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

In June, there have been 80 deaths 47 being militants, 20 law enforcement 13 civilians. From the various attacks that took place, a total of 174 people were injured, 1 being a militant, 17 being law enforcement and 156 civilians. Increase in the number of civilians injured is due to a grenade attack in Ethiopia during a rally. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility to most of the incidences while giving conflicting figures with those reported by law enforcement. 27 militants were killed by an airstrike which has proved to be an effective method of eliminating the extremist group.

On a positive note, the U.S military vowed to enhance the fight against terrorism posed by Al-Qaeda and its affiliate. Al-Shabaab as well as any threat posed by ISIS in Somalia despite the killings of its soldier.<sup>52</sup>

In June 2017, one year ago, the International Crisis Group warned that the ongoing geopolitical fight present between the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf states of Qatar would threaten to destabilize Somalia further. Recommendations to prevent the Gulf crisis from sabotaging local and international efforts include; calls for the Somali government to remain neutral in the Gulf crises, the federal government reconciliation with its rivals, UAE should coordinate with Mogadishu on all aid and investment in Somalia and Saudi or European officials' facilitation to reconcile Abu Dhabi and Mogadishu.<sup>53</sup>

It has been noted that militants have started blocking humanitarian assistance from reaching vulnerable populations by attacking vehicles and animals that are delivering goods and surplus to the affected regions. The militants have managed to isolate Waqjid, Hudur and other towns in Bakool hence causing distress to the affected communities. This is a tactic that the militants are using depending on what they want to achieve. For instance, reports

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<sup>50</sup>Court to view exhibits in al-Shabaab terrorism trial; retrieved from [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1479613/court-view-exhibits-al-shabaab-terrorism-trial](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1479613/court-view-exhibits-al-shabaab-terrorism-trial) date accessed June 18, 2018

<sup>51</sup> East African states to conduct joint military training exercises with U.S., EU troops; retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/13/c\\_137251731.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/13/c_137251731.htm) date accessed June 14, 2018

<sup>52</sup> U.S. vows to enhance fight against al-Shabab despite loss of soldier; retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/10/c\\_137243043.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/10/c_137243043.htm) date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>53</sup> Somalia's stability is threatened by rivalry between Gulf states: Crisis Group; retrieved from <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/05/somalia-s-stability-is-threatened-by-rivalry-between-gulf-states-crisis-group/> date accessed June 26, 2018

emerged of how Al-Shabaab militants in Somalia extorted huge sums from starving communities who had received any food or medical aid from the AMISOM troops or humanitarian organizations due to financial pressures, a decrease in their numbers and a crisis of morale that was being experienced in the terror group.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, by Al-Shabaab adopting the responsibility of humanitarian organizations, this will enable them to get more sympathizers in the regions affected hence have the upper hand in their activities as they will be protected or shielded from the government proving to be difficult in the fight against terrorism.

A report from World Vision published on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018, that launched an important study jointly developed by the UN and the World Bank, was based on extensive research of what has worked in different countries. Recommendations for how development processes can better interact with issues to deal with diplomacy, security, mediation and any other efforts to prevent conflicts from becoming violent. Central to these efforts was the need to include women and youth as they play a major role in countering or preventing violent extremism.<sup>55</sup> Development programs are riddled with problems as they fail to ensure that participants are actually at risk of radicalization while others foster wasteful spending on activities that have no links to the problem. Apart from failures from development-led efforts to mitigate violent extremism, another burning issue is the degree to which humanitarian actors are contributing to conflict.<sup>56</sup>

Children at a very young age are trained by terrorists, and it has been depicted via mainstream and social media. The strategy of exploiting young brains is to feed them with hatred of all kinds and manipulate them however they want, and due to this, children have been wasted in wars as soldiers, spies or suicide bombers. Various push and pull factors such as desperation, inequality, injustice, discrimination or foreign policy has forced them to join extremist groups or through abductions. However, equal and an all-inclusive education if provided appropriately can be used to counter some of these challenges.<sup>57</sup>

There have been reports of the rift that is present between ISIS and Al-Shabaab due to mistrust among its members. Infighting and accusations have also been witnessed with killings of many fighters on suspicions of spying as well as declaring allegiance to ISIS. This confusion has seen vast young fighters surrender and pledged their allegiance to the Government. The squabbles have further enabled the AMISOM troops to counter the militants by several of their combats failing thus losing their territories.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, in an article titled “*Development programs can help reduce political violence*”, Dafna H. Rand And Beza Tesfaye of Mercy Corps commend Jessica Trisko Darden on her article, “*War On The Rocks*”, pushing those seeking to counter VE to be more self-reflective and ensure the programs do not exacerbate the issues they seek to address.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>How al Shabaab prey on starving Somali villages for food, cash and children; retrieved from [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/03/08/how-al-shabaab-prey-on-starving-somali-villages-for-food-cash-and\\_c1726939](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/03/08/how-al-shabaab-prey-on-starving-somali-villages-for-food-cash-and_c1726939) date accessed July 10, 2018

<sup>55</sup> Pathways for Peace: Reflections from Somalia; retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/pathways-peace-reflections-somalia> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>56</sup> Compounding violent extremism? When efforts to prevent violence backfire; retrieved from <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20180615-the-next-plague-is-coming-internet-of-things-is-built-to-leak-drone-surveillance-is-here-and-more?page=0.1> date accessed June 21, 2018

<sup>57</sup> Curbing radicalism and violence through education; retrieved from <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/opinion/curbing-radicalism-and-violence-through-education/> date accessed July 4, 2018

<sup>58</sup> Al shabaab in a major split over mistrust; retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001251138/al-shabaab-in-a-major-split-over-mistrust> date accessed July 10, 2018

<sup>59</sup> Development Programs Can Help Reduce Political Violence; retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2018/06/development-programs-can-help-reduce-political-violence/> date accessed June 18, 2018