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SECURITY REVIEW

Maximizing Gains by Changing Strategy

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A DIFFERENT METHOD
OF MANAGING CONFLICT

Terrorism and conflict prevention policies and programs should aim at reducing the risk in ways other than investigating and locking people. The tools for doing so span the entire life-cycle of terrorism from preventing recruitment, to limiting the influence of terrorist messaging, to intervening with individuals who are at risk of taking violent action, to supporting programs that lower the chance that people who are incarcerated commit terrorist-related crimes again. The same can be applied to conflict management and other development issues. Some of the successes witnessed in community education and Public-private partnerships such as the Peer to Peer (P2P) program which funded university students to create media campaigns to counter extremist narratives.

Executive Summary:

This security review covers the events that took place in the month of February accounting to 156 deaths, 126 being militants, 3 law enforcement and 27 civilians. A new report, documents that the war-ravaged South Sudan and violence-prone Democratic Republic of Congo account for the highest number of children killed in conflicts in Africa. The two countries account for the biggest numbers of the nearly 1.2 million refugee population in Uganda.¹ A report by Save the Children released on 15th February titled 'Stop the War on Children' says five times more children than fighters are killed in conflicts across the world's hotspots, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa that have exported the largest number of refugees between 2013 and 2017².

Drones have emerged as the United States' weapon of choice as they enable the US intervene in conflicts without putting its soldiers in harm's way while offering an alternative to costly interventions. Since April 2017, the United states has been able to conduct a methodical campaign of attrition, picking off groups of Al-Shabaab fighters with drone strikes. Though drones may have performed well in US counter-terrorism strategy in Pakistan and Yemen, the case of Somalia illustrates limitations since the intensified drone strikes have not resulted to a strategic victory against the terror group Al-Shabaab.³

Somalia forms the largest market for Kenyan grown miraa. Several cargo planes full of miraa leave Kenya for Somalia, valued at millions of shillings. Kenya has also established direct flights to Somalia to improve its access of the Horn of Africa market. An escalation of the diplomatic row, sparked by alleged auctioning of oil and gas reserves in the Indian Ocean could significantly affect trade, people-to-people relations, and the fight against terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The loss from such engagements will therefore affect both countries.⁴

President Bashir declared state of emergency in Sudan. The Presidential order by the government raises the risks of violent crackdown against protesters in March due to continued protests that began mid-December. Despite an overall easing of South Sudan's war, a government offensive against rebels in the south gained momentum and fighting could escalate in March. though there are plans for withdraw of troops, those opposed to the withdrawal called on leaders to revisit security transition plan.

Reintegration of returnees can involve deradicalizing violent extremists where programs attempt to re-pluralizing an extremist's worldview, and the Aarhus model in Denmark as a similar approach but works directly with extremists. While these options provide some direction, more contextualization is required. Terrorism and conflict prevention policies and programs normally aim to reduce the risk of terrorism in ways other than investigating and locking people. The tools for doing so span the entire lifecycle of terrorism and conflict systems. Rebuilding after attacks can also contribute in instilling trust in communities as seen in the case of a school in Somalia.

KENYA

Original hotspot areas are shifting, and radicalization and recruitment is moving inward in Kenyan counties. On the 1st February 2019, Ramadhan Adam Athman was sentenced to 15 years in jail after he was found guilty of being an Al-Shabaab member. Chief magistrate ruled that he was found in possession of a mobile phone with videos, images, and articles on terrorism in Kipkaren area, Uasin Gishu county.⁶

Additionally, the intelligence gathering also point to the fact that the process is shifting. Reports emerged on 16th February 2019, of a possible attack in several churches as well as Kiganjo Police Training College in Nyeri.⁷ Border towns are still prone due to the ease of migration and movement. On the 20th February 2019, Kenya Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) arrested a man believed to be an Al-Shabaab spy near the border town along Somalia. Kenya's intelligence says Abdu Hassan Yamah alias Somo Dubat Oukor was found with a Ugandan identity card. He was suspected to have been collecting information for Al-Shabaab in Mandera in northeast of Kenya where Al-Shabaab carried out similar attacks.

Kenya was officially welcomed into the 79-member Global Coalition Against ISIS on 6th February. This platform gave Kenya the opportunity -through the Foreign Affairs Chief Administrative Secretary - to pitch, for the Al-Shabaab terror group to be officially classified as a terrorist group by the UN Security Council and the US, who currently categorise the group only as a militia. On the flip side, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) filed a complaint accusing police officers of engaging in illegal businesses with terrorists. They claimed that a senior police officer was using government resources to transport contraband goods. The goods are mostly sugar seized from illegal traders who have links to Al-Shabaab fighters, the sugar is then dispatched to other parts of the country during the night for sale.

This accusation has previously been leveled against the Kenyan Defense Forces in Somalia⁹. After sale, the money is sent to the suspects who reward them with heavy kickbacks. KDF want CS Matiang'i, IG Boinnet and DPP Noordin Haji to address the issue and those found culpable punished.¹⁰

Seventeen youths arrested on suspicions of being members of Al-Shabaab terror group have been unconditionally released by Kwale court on 4th February 2019. The youths aged between 18 and 28 were arrested on January 28th in a two-bedroom house in Kwale County. Kwale chief magistrate Dominica Nyambu said extensive enquiries satisfied investigation that there were no grounds to charge them with terrorism offences.¹¹ Devolution, Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Chief Administrative Secretary, Hussein Dado alluded that the terror group was using scholarships to entice young people in Tana River. This revelation necessitated a call to parents to be wary of such baits being used by terror groups. The reintegration of returnees from Al-Shabaab and reformed local gang members in Kwale and Mombasa received a boost when the European Union gave them fishing nets, boats, and cash as a form of creating employment.

The group will also spearhead advocacy programs against violent extremism across their respective counties.¹² On the other hand the National Counter Terrorism Centre has not provided a policy framework for engagement. Isiolo County leaders have also come out to strongly condemn profiling of the county as an Al Shabaab ridden space. The leadership point to a decline in economic investments and tourism. The media received criticism for unfair reporting and sensationalizing terrorism.¹³

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Rebuilding after attacks form a critical component of resilience in communities. The renovations of a six-classroom block at Dr. Qamar Primary school was completed on the 1st February 2019. The school was severely damaged in a suicide bomb attack that led to closure in 2016 which forced children to abandon schooling. This was done under the facilitation of AMISOM.

On 2nd February 2019, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira met senior government officials from HirShabelle State to discuss the planned cut back in troops from Burundi. The first reduction of troops was undertaken in December 2017.

An official in Burundi said the withdrawal of 1000 Burundian soldiers from the African Union regional force in Somalia begun on 21st February 2019.

The African Union said it plans to withdraw the 21,500 troops that it has in Somalia by the end of 2020.¹⁴ The Hir-Shabelle leader expressed his concerns on the vulnerability of the State to attacks if the transition is done in haste hence the need to work closely with AMISOM to ensure gains made in stabilizing the country are not eroded!¹⁵

On 4th February 2019, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for twin attacks in Somalia. The first incident took the life of Paul Anthony Formosa, a Maltese national who was the manager of the port of Bosaso in Puntland state for P&O Ports, a subsidiary of the Dubai-based DP World.

Three other employees were injured from the incident. Al-Shabaab military spokesperson claimed that they had warned him of his illegality in the country.

Many of Somalia's federal states have aligned with the United Arab Emirates, while the central government is perceived as pro-Qatar, in the Gulf crisis putting Arab powers against each other.

Al-Shabaab also claimed responsibility of a second attack in which a car bomb went off killing 11 people, injuring several. The blast occurred close to Mogadishu mall; some victims died in a building that collapsed as a result of the blast in the Hamarweyne market.¹⁶

On 5th February 2019, a senior Somali military commander was killed in a powerful roadside explosion by Al-Shabaab near the capital, Mogadishu. Colonel Abdisalam Sheikh Aden died after his vehicle was struck by an IED shortly after leaving a military base in Dhanane. A second officer, Colonel Abdirahman Jimale Muse who was in charge of the finances for the first battalion of Somali army, was also killed.¹⁷

On the same day, a suspected US airstrike targeting Al-Shabaab in Somalia left a dozen dead according to Somali Intelligence. A released statement confirmed the death of 40 militants in Farsoley area near Qoryoley town that lies 120km southwest of the capital of Mogadishu.¹⁸ Two people were killed, and two others injured from a blast by Al-Shabaab in a government-controlled town of Bardhere in Somalia's southern region of Gedo. A military officer said that a car filled with explosives detonated near Ethiopian military killing 16 soldiers.¹⁹

At least 12 people were killed when a bomb exploded at a crowded shopping mall in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on the 7th February 2019. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the deadly attack.²⁰ The United States Military said it had killed eight Al-Shabaab extremists with an airstrike near Kobon, close to Kisimayo on the 8th February 2019.

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SOMALIA

The US said that Kobon had been used to stage attacks against Somali forces. No civilians were killed in the airstrike.²¹ Heavy battle flared up following a surprise assault between Somali forces and the militants on the 12th February 2019. The army convoy came under attack at Jazeera area, along the coastal road connecting Mogadishu to Lower Shabelle region, south of Somalia.²²

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility of twin bomb explosions that ripped through African Union armoured personnel carrier on the 13th February 2019.

The vehicle ran over bomb explosives concealed on the roadside partially destroying it. It is unclear how many soldiers were killed.²³ On the 17th February 2019, a senior Al-Shabaab commander in an operation in Bakol region southwestern Somalia was killed by Somali National Army (SNA).


The commander of SNA section 60's unit nine, told journalists that they had killed Aliyow Iman Ibrahim who was a prominent operational commander of Al-Shabaab and injured one of his staff in the operation.²⁴

On the 23rd February 2019, Al-Shabaab claimed to have killed lawmaker Osman Elmi Boqore in Mogadishu. The long-time member of the Federal Parliament was ambushed by gunmen at Karan District on the eastern flank of the Somali Capital .

Initial reports indicated that some of the men involved in the assault were apprehended and their saloon car detained by security forces, though the claims could not be independently verified.

The US military announced that an airstrike had killed 35 Al-Shabaab fighters on 24th February 2019. That brings the total figure to at least 180 militants killed in 22 airstrikes in 2019, according to figures released by US AFRICA Command, which oversees US military operations on the continent.

The latest strike took place 23 miles east of Beledweyne, Hiran region. It targeted the fighters as they were transitioning between locations in a rural area.²⁵



The British and French envoys on 6th February 2019 were appealed by the opposition Sudan Call alliance to support the formation of an International commission of inquiry into the killing of peaceful demonstrators in Sudan. Mr. Yasir Arman, foreign relations official of the opposition umbrella, held meetings in London and Paris.

He informed the Sudan Tribune that the meeting agenda was to seek support of Britain and France as permanent members of the Security Council to step up the formation of an international commission of inquiry on the killing of protesters and the need to hold the perpetrators accountable. **SUDAN**

On 13th February 2019, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir pledged to achieve peace in the whole country and silence guns during the year 2019. Al-Bashir who is facing two-month protests calling for his resignation addressed the opening session of a conference to assess the performance of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) a paramilitary force under the command of the army.

This month has had an interesting conversation moment from both the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA- IO) and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), on conflict issues and engagement of civilians. On 4th February 2019, South Sudan's main opposition group said that it was satisfied with the positive step towards the unification of forces after peace partners agreed unanimously to establish 25 cantonment sites for all warring parties.

Lam Paul Gabriel, Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA- IO) deputy military spokesman, said they remain committed to the implementation of the Transitional Security Arrangements as per the signed revitalized agreement on the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. ²⁶ On 19th February 2019, South Sudan vowed to end staffing of and use of children in equipped fights as the country tries to end over five years of conflict. **SOUTH SUDAN**

Kuol Manyang Juuk, minister of defence and veterans' affairs, stated that the department of child protection in the army has been actively engaging its field division commanders on how to discharge children out of its ranks and file. He also added that the Government released strong orders to all the military generals to collaborate with the worried UN agencies in guaranteeing that children were banned from joining the army emphasizing that South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) has trained over 100 child protection officers in an effort to professionalize the army.²⁷

Since Ethiopia announced political reform led by Prime Minister Aby Ahmed ten months ago, different parts of the Ethiopia including Benishangul Gumz, Oromia, Amhara, Somali, and many parts in Southern part, have been experiencing conflicts. 200 individuals were captured on 4th February 2019 while taking illegal military training in Benishangul Gumz region of western part of the country; to destabilize the area.²⁸ **ETHIOPIA**

UGANDA

On 6th February 2019, Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) formerly known as the National Resistance Army (NRA) celebrated Tarehe Sita. This day in 1981 marked the genesis of a five-year long struggle that brought National Resistance Movement (NRM) to power in 1986. The NRA/UPDF has since been engaged in various conflicts both internally and externally in the efforts to maintain peace and security within Uganda and across Africa. UPDF has also been instrumental in the development of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) and other AU-affiliated conflict management initiatives. UPDF provided the director for Eastern Africa Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM), and also participated in several joint multi-national military exercises in the region and has developed a Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) for future missions.²⁹

Conclusion

In the month of February, Somalia is the only country that has experienced numerous attacks compared to the other Horn of Africa countries which had minimal or no incidents recorded. The month had 156 deaths, 126 being militants, 3 law enforcement and 27 civilians. From the attacks, a total number of 8 were injured. A number of incidents were contradicting in nature as the militants would counter Government reports, and always cite higher figures. Kenya on the other hand did not have any incidents apart from a terror threat that was announced by the US Embassy. It was also evident in the review of numerous cases that were dropped due to insufficient evidence. There has been an increase in the number of airstrikes and according to the outgoing U.S. Africa commander Marine Gen Thomas Waldhauser. The Marine Gen has argued that the goal of the strikes was to help the fledging government of Somalia gain control of its country. He further clarified that the strikes would not defeat Al-Shabaab however, they would enable the federal government and the Somali National Army to grow and assume security of the country.³⁰

Reintegration of returnees can involve deradicalizing violent extremists where programs attempt to re-pluralizing an extremist's worldview. Daniel Koehler, an extremist expert, describes radicalization as a process of de-pluralization. He has developed a family counselling approach that works on this premise. A counsellor builds trust with the individual extremist's family, coaching them to quietly introduce their relative to different perspectives. By building trust with violent extremists, it provides for a false safe. Those planning terrorists' attacks often drop hints to friends or family members, who are well paced to tip off the authorities. The Aarhus model in Denmark takes a similar approach but works directly with extremist.³¹ While these options provide some direction, more contextualization is required.

Terrorism and conflict prevention policies and programs should aim at reducing the risk in ways other than investigating and locking people. The tools for doing so span the entire lifecycle of terrorism from preventing recruitment, to limiting the influence of terrorist messaging, to intervening with individuals who are at risk of taking violent action, to supporting programs that lower the chance that people who are incarcerated commit terrorist-related crimes again. The same can be applied to conflict management and other development issues. Some of the successes witnessed in community education and public-private partnerships such as the Peer to Peer (P2P) program which funded university students to create media campaigns to counter extremist narratives.³²

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