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SECURITY REVIEW

BETWEEN UNCERTAINTY AND STABILITY

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Peace in the Horn of Africa

Country Specific Details:

BETWEEN UNCERTAINTY AND STABILITY: PEACE IN THE HORN
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Numerous conflicts in the Horn of Africa, ranging from political related to terrorism have contributed to a lot of instability within states and the worsening humanitarian situation. South Sudan and Somalia are the leading contributors of refugees in the Horn of Africa. Despite these uncertainties, there are efforts by states and the international community to stabilize the region.

Executive Summary:

President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order on 6th March 2019 in the latest steps towards rolling back Obama-era rules for targeted killings, as he would no longer require U.S. intelligence officials to publicly disclose the numbers of people killed in drone strikes and other attacks on terrorist targets. The move had been expected since last year when the administration failed to release an annual accounting of civilian and enemy casualties required under an order that was signed in 2016 by then President Barack Obama.¹

During a testimonial before the House Armed Services Committee on 7th March 2019, U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Thomas Waldhauser said that about 300 counterterrorism troops had been pulled from Africa in connection with a strategy shift that called for more focus on great power competition. Additionally, the U.S. State Department has showed that Hamza bin Laden the son of the slain Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, is said to be emerging as a leader in the terror network. The success of Hamza in reigniting the Al Qaeda poses a threat to the Horn of Africa since Al-Shabaab is an affiliate of Al Qaeda.

African Union president Abdul Fattah Al Sissi, during the 32nd African Union summit held in Addis Ababa insisted on the necessity to identify

the sponsors of terrorism and address its root causes while putting counter-terrorism measures in place. This was due to the pledge by African leaders to silence guns in the continent by 2020. ² Kenyan born terrorist Ahmad Iman Ali also known as Abu Zinira was killed in Somalia. He was also known to have targeted Kenyan troops serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom), such as the January 2016 attack in El Adde.³ The United Nations has also pointed out the need to protect women rights in the conflict environments due to the surge in abuses and gender-based violence.⁴

Women and girls' rights are violated by militants and responders to conflict. The actors therefore need to curb that vice. Security Review is a desk-reviewed document by the Scofield Associates team. Reports from media entities, government agencies and Non-Governmental organizations are triangulated and checked with local researchers for consistency, credibility, and reliability. The data is analysed using Tableau software where upon recommendations are drawn.

Numerous conflicts in the Horn of Africa, ranging from political related to terrorism have contributed to a lot of instability within states and the worsening humanitarian situation. South Sudan and Somalia are the leading contributors of refugees in the Horn of Africa. Despite these uncertainties, there are efforts by states and the international community to stabilize the region.

KENYA

Ethiopian Prime Minister has tried reconciling Kenya and Somalia over the border conflict to no success. Kenya-Somalia dispute. Somalia maintained that it will wait for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling while Kenya opted for an out of court settlement.⁵

The United States on 12th March 2019, vowed to revitalize war against terrorism in Kenya which has faced increased threats from Al-Shabaab terror group. Kyle McCarter the new envoy said US will do everything within his power to help prevent Kenya from being used as a terrorist gateway by enhancing the two countries' strategic alliance to defeat terrorist threats.⁶

On 29th March 2019, a family from Nandi county were under surveillance of police and other security agencies after Kiptenai Kosgei's son Shadrack Kipkoech, 34 years resurfaced on Facebook with a new Islamic name. In his post, Kipkoech questioned why Kenyan

"Once again, Kenya threatens to close the 25-year-old Dadaab camp that hosts up to a quarter million refugees."

Security forces on 1st March 2019, ended a siege by Al-Shabaab insurgents that had lasted nearly 24 hours after the group launched an attack in the Somali capital of Mogadishu leaving 19 dead. Other sources cite the numbers to be as high as 30 fatalities and 80 injuries.⁹

SOMALIA

The attack began on 28th February evening when a militant blew himself up. Other fighters then stormed inside a yielding housing a restaurant. At least 112 people were admitted to the city's three main hospitals. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility stating the attack was towards a luxury


military neutralized Al-Shabaab while promising more attacks to befall on Kenya. The post was however pulled down by Facebook after it was widely shared.⁷

Once again, Kenya threatens to close the 25-year-old Dadaab camp that hosts up to a quarter million refugees. Rights groups have warned that refugees would face violence and drought if forced to return to their home countries.

According to leaked United Nations documents and Kenyan media, authorities revived threats to shut down the camp by August citing security concerns. Officials argued the camp, home mainly to Somali refugees, breeds insurgents who carry out terror attacks inside Kenya. Forcing the refugees to return to violence and drought in their home countries would be inhumane and would violate Kenya's international obligations.⁸

hotel inhabited by government officials and security service officers.¹⁰

Al-Shabaab recaptured Fahfahdhun, Gedo region of Jubaland on 4th March 2019 after it was abandoned by units of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). According to an Al-Shabaab spokesperson, they found dry and canned foodstuffs, ammunition and an assortment of equipment that was hastily abandoned at the post. He further claimed that the KDF forces had remained with only one post in Bussar area.¹¹



This is the first town captured by the militants this year however, the African Union mission said that Kenyan forces withdrawal was part of their plan to vacate a number of frontline bases responding to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) call to reduce AMISOM forces in Somalia. On the same day, Somalia police force released photos of three young men said to be members of Al-Shabaab assassin units. The three were caught after a pistol failed to fire in an attempt to kill a female khat seller. The woman was among the delegates who elected the members of Somalia's federal parliament, a group of people that Al-Shabaab targets to discourage further elections as well as to warn any person in partaking any government activity.

30 Somali security officers were trained on how to tackle conflict related sexual violence in South West State by the African Union Mission

A 12-year-old football fan was killed by Al-Shabaab in Somalia on 10th March 2019 after he was spotted celebrating Arsenal win over Manchester United. Watching football matches and western movies are some of the prohibited and punishable acts in al-Shabaab-controlled areas and anyone who wants to enjoy such activities must pay some small fee. It was reported that the boy's family could not raise the required amount in time to escape the painful execution.⁴ On 13th March 2019, three Al-Shabaab terrorists were killed following a gunfight with Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) soldiers at Bura Hache Somalia. The soldiers arrested one militant and recovered some weapons.¹⁵ Somali Special Forces on 16th March 2019 carried out air and ground offensive against Al-Shabaab near Marka town, 91km south west of Mogadishu.

The operation was conducted in Jilib market killing at least 22 militants. Two senior militants' commanders known as Abu Sheikh Yasin and Abu Mohamed Hamza were among those killed in the operation.¹⁶

At least 30 people were killed at clan's militia clash between two groups in Burdere location on 18th March 2019. The two sides who are said to be close have a high number of casualties and are known to have conflicts due to grazing land. Residents of Burdere location reported that there was sanity after heavy military engagement.¹⁷ On 19th March 2019, the United

(AMISOM) in Somalia. The trainees were drawn from the Somali National Army, Somali Police Force and ministries of health, internal security and women and human rights. The acquired skills would enable them to investigate the crimes and act against perpetrators to end impunity. The training was part of AMISOM's capacity-building program aimed at preparing security institutions to take charge of the country's security.¹²

On 7th March 2019, a car loaded with explosives exploded near a restaurant in central Mogadishu killing four and injuring nine. The restaurant was near a security checkpoint in the Somali capital not far from the presidential palace. Several vehicles and buildings were damaged. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack with claims of targeting one of the checkpoints of the palace apostates.¹³

"Amisom accused of using Somalia National Army as human shield"

States military confirmed an airstrike against Al-Shabaab terrorists killing three militants. The strike was due to a cooperation between US AFRICOM and Somalia military in the vicinity of Awdheegle, Lower Shabelle region. The U.S. army also said it was aware of reports alleging civilian casualties resulting from airstrikes and promised to investigate any relevant information provided by third parties on civilian casualties.¹⁸ On the same day, Somalia accused AMISOM troops of using Somalia National Army (SNA) troops as human shields instead of fighting side by side with them.¹⁹

SOMALIA

Somali soldiers on 20th March 2019, vacated at least three of their bases, in Somalia's Middle Shabelle region, in protest over months of missed pay despite being on the frontline. This move created panic among the residents due to possible Al Shabaab takeover of such an ungoverned space.

The Somali government downplayed the strike and accused some of the soldiers for not being registered.²⁰ Al-Shabaab attacked AMISOM and Somali soldiers at Bula Marer location in Lower Shabelle on 21st March 2019. Joint Somali troops and AMISOM soldiers countered the attack imposed by the militants. It is believed that both sides incurred casualties though not reported.²¹

Security forces reported that Al-Shabaab's director of Kenyan operations, Ahmad Iman Ali also known as Abu Zinira, was killed in an airstrike in the town of Bu'aale in middle Juba on 22nd March 2019. The Kenyan-born terrorism suspect was killed together with 40 Al-Shabaab members. Ali was declared a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the U.S. in March 2018.²² He is alleged to have spearheaded the establishment of cells in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and DR Congo.²³

On 26th March 2019, former deputy leader of Al-Shabaab, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow was set to be released from prison after he attempted to run for South West regional presidency in October 2018. He had announced his interests for the presidential seat, but the federal government


declined his candidacy.

A statement from the internal security ministry said that he was not eligible to run for the post as he was still under international sanctions. Highly placed sources told Radio Dalsan that an intense lobbying involving MPs, government officials and emissaries from IGAD to secure his release.²⁴

Three Kenyans among five people executed by Al-Shabaab on 27th March 2019 in Barawe, Somalia. An intelligence report by Kenyan security force revealed that a middle-aged woman from Coast and two men from Wajir were among those killed by a firing squad after being found guilty of spying. Al Shabaab militants believed that the attack on their command was an insider's work as the drone hit the building where their leaders were meeting and planning future targets.²⁵

The Somali government was being accused on 28th March, for the existence of clan-clashes in Galgaduud region where two clan militias are currently head-on threatening the security of the area. Experts and elders met in Abudwak town situated north of the region so as to discuss solutions to the growth of clan conflicts that are growing within the region.²⁶

“Three Kenyans among five people executed by Al-Shabaab in March 2019”



On 4th March 2019, the President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omar Al-Bashir held a meeting with leaders of the native administration in South Kordofan State where he said the war is the enemy of development and stability thus affirmed that peace remained a priority in plans and programs of the state.²⁹

In a bid to increase political pressure on the regime of President Omar al-Bashir, the Sudan Call decided to withdraw from the Roadmap Agreement signed in August 2016 to end the war and to restore a democratic rule in Sudan.

According to the United Nations, more than 1.5 million people in South Sudan are on the brink of starvation and more than 6 million people, half the population, face extreme hunger. On 1st March 2019. On the peace agreements signed, clergy leaders are pessimistic of the deal because it does not address the root causes of the conflict. Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan has three months left and that most of what should have been achieved has not been done. This would likely have a negative impact on the next activities in upcoming phases.²⁷ On 4th March 2019, Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders reached out to Salva Kiir amid concerns over South Sudan's struggling peace process. The meeting majorly discussed on ways to improve/reinforce the ongoing peace process. Last year's peace agreement brought an end to conflict between government troops and members of South Sudan's leading rebel groups however, reports of fighting and human rights violations are beginning to emerge.²⁸

On 19th March 2019, five workers including two foreigners from a mining company were shot and killed by gunmen in the restive west. The unidentified attackers struck near Nedjo town, 500km from the capital Addis Ababa in the Oromia region where several conflicts take place. The huge region is home to Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and has at least four separate conflicts in addition to a border dispute constantly threatening violence.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, himself an Oromo, has overseen a series of major political and economic changes since

The opposition National Consensus Forces (NCF) led by Farok Abu Issa on 20th March 2019, welcomed the withdrawal of the Sudan Call forces from the African Union-brokered Roadmap for peace and democratic reforms and therefore called on the holdout armed groups to join the forces of freedom and change.

This led to the armed groups in Darfur to also withdraw from a peace process accepted in December to engage with Khartoum under the framework of the Doha Document for peace in Darfur.

coming to office, however, the reforms have not stopped ethnically charged violence including in his own native region.³⁰ On March 29^h, 2019, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced the government would increase restrictions to eliminate arms smuggling throughout the territory and border lines.

This will be possible through a wide partnership within Ethiopia.

SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

UGANDA

President Yoweri Museveni on 10th March 2019 threatened to withdraw his country's forces from the peacekeeping mission in Somalia if the United Nations insists on reducing the number of troops on the mission.

He recently became critical of the UN and personally informed the Security Council that Uganda would withdraw its 6,400 contin-

gents from Somalia if forced to scale down.

Due to the declining and irregular funding, the UN Security Council, in Resolution 2372 of 2017, proposed a phased drawdown of peacekeepers in Somalia with a full pullout by 2020.³¹

ERITREA

A U.S. congressional delegation Karen Bass, Ilhan Omar and Joe Neguse visited Asmara, Eritrea for the first time in 14 years as Washington sought for a closer contact with the State after it made surprising peace with Ethiopia. They were able to meet the foreign minister, presidential adviser and head of economic development. Bass, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa said that she hoped several U.S. nationals detained in the country including U.S. Embassy staff would be released as well as other people who were incarcer-

Conclusion

In the month of March, there have been 159 deaths, 47 being militant, two law enforcement and 110 civilians. From the various attacks, a total of 90 were injured, one being law enforcement and 89 civilians. Numerous conflicts in the Horn of Africa has contributed to the increase in deaths as they fight over land and other clan militias war leading to displacement of people in their respective countries. According to police sources, at least two or more people are killed daily by Al-Shabaab and Daesh assassination squads of three to five members making targeted killings a common phenomenon in Mogadishu.³³ It is quite unfortunate that the journey to extremism in Africa found 48% of those who voluntarily joined Violent Extremism Organizations (VEOs) were aware of CVE programming before they joined therefore indicating a significant shortcoming in current iterations.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke on March 1st, 2019, during a meeting of the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism, a group co-chaired by Jordan and Norway said that extremist groups have subjugated hundreds of thousands of women to slavery, sexual exploitation, kidnapping, trafficking and other horrific ordeals. Therefore, the need to defend the rights of women, place their voices and expertise at the centre of the various strategies and work side by side with them would limit and prevent violent extremism.³⁴ Conflict and political disruption in other parts of the African region has sent thousands of refugees fleeing their homelands for safety. This has generated new conflicts between states and local communities like in Kenya that hosts a lot of refugees from Somalia.

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