EFFECTIVENESS OF AU STRATEGY TO COMBAT AL SHABAAB IN SOMALIA

Dudziro Nhengu[1] and Martin Chingambu Kayembe[2]

Abstract

Somalia is named the world's most dangerous country (Global Peace Index, 2011), following decades of conflict between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and a number of armed groups led by al-Shabaab. Despite the African Union's concerted efforts to quell the Al Shabaab insurgency in Somalia, conflict dynamics have become more complicated and more difficult to deal with overtime. This article analysed the effectiveness of the AU's strategies in mitigating al Shabaab phenomena in Somalia using a desk review of available literature. The article argued that given the globalised typology of terrorism, the AU has a central role to play in harnessing the efforts of member states, development agencies including the UN to couch befitting multi-faceted strategies to combat the pandemic. The article proffered insights and recommendations on how the AU can alternatively and effectively address issue of al Shabaab in Somalia.

Key words: Terrorism, al Shabaab, al Qaeda, African Union, Amisom, Islam, extremism

Introduction

This article attempted an assessment of the effectiveness of the AU strategies in combating the al Shabaab insurgency using a desk review of available literature. Within the states agenda, the article also analysed the threat posed by al Shabaab, further making recommendations for a suitable approach required to mitigate al Shabaab and stabilize Somalia. Structured into five

[1]**Dudziro Nhengu** is a gender, peace and security practitioner based in Zimbabwe. Dudziro has recently submitted her final thesis for the Doctoral degree in Leadership, peace and governance in the College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University in Zimbabwe.
[2]**Martin Chingambu Kayembe** is a gender, peace and security practitioner based in Zimbabwe. Dudziro has recently submitted her final thesis for the Doctoral degree in Leadership, peace and governance in the College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University in Zimbabwe.

parts, the article examined the terroristic nature of al Shabaab; its emergence, ideology, demands and partnerships against the AU's strategies for mitigating it. The first section of the article provided introductory remarks. The second part attempted a short literature review of religious terrorism and of the AU's role in countering terrorism in Africa, to provide an understanding of the architecture of al Shabaab and of the AU with regard to securing peace and security from global threats for the continent of Africa. The third part provided a background to the conflict in Somalia, and the effect of the presence of al Shabaab therein. The fourth part examined the role and tactic of the AU in dealing with al Shabaab, critically analysing effectiveness of highlighted strategies, and arguing for home grown and more practical solutions to the problem. The article further argued that given the globalised typology of terrorism, the AU has a central role to play in harnessing the efforts of member states, development agencies including the UN to couch befitting multi-faceted strategies to combat the pandemic. The conclusion proffered insights and recommendations on how the AU can alternatively and effectively address issue of al Shabaab in Somalia.

Background

The Somalia Republic gained independence on 1st July 1960. Nine years later, in 1969, General Mohamed Said Barre took power through a coup. Barre, who managed to suppress the political moves and intentions of Islamic groups for two decades, was overthrown in 1991. This change weakened the state of Somalia both ideologically and institutionally, and a period of anarchy ensued, further affecting the effectiveness of the country's institutions for governance, hence its capacity to function as a state. The situation enabled al Shabaab, whose objective is to establish a Somali caliphate in the entire nation, to position itself and unleash terror on innocent civilians, with spill over security effects regionally. According to Ewi and Aning (2006), the timely metamorphosis of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the AU was a desirable coincidence at a time when multilateralism and international cooperation faced the common security threat to humanity, terrorism. At a moment when all actors got mobilised by the effects of the tragedy of September 11 (9/11) in the United States of America[3] to focus on actions to combat terrorism, the main concern of the AU has likewise been to reinforce, re-strategise and implement existing counter terrorism instruments adopted at the continental level in coordination with states and regional organisations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018; Ewi & Aning, 2006). The AU's responses to the situation in Somalia were firstly the adoption of

---

3

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1725 (UNSCR1725), subsequent deployment of peacekeeping contingent, the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as well as presence of Kenya Defense Forces into Somalia to destabilise al Shabaab.

As such, the role of the AU is critical in filling the gaps where its member states or regional mechanisms are lacking in preventing and combating terrorism. The role of the AU is likewise be complementary, serving as an interface between the continent and the international community, including the United Nations (UN) (Khumalo, 2022; Ewi & Aning, 2006). For the AU to perform this task efficiently it must first overcome some of its internal shortcomings, including building its own financial and human resource capacities (African Union, 2017). The Constitutive Act of the AU provides a basis for preventing and combating terrorism, Article 4(0) calls for, "*respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities*" (Organisation of African Unity, 2000). Likewise the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact and the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), have identified terrorism as one of the common threats to Africa (African Union, 2017).

Various conflict dynamics continentally and internationally necessitated the development of the AU's counter-terrorism activities in the post 9/11 period. On 28 September 2001, the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1373 was adopted, based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter and the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) (African Union, 2017). As part of the follow-up to that resolution the CTC convened a special meeting with international, continental and regional organisations on 6 March 2003 to define their roles and to strengthen international cooperation in the global campaign against terrorism (African Union, 2017). Major concern of the AU was to protect and maintain Africa's focus on development, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effect wars may bring to bear on African development as explicitly expressed at the first summit of African leaders in response to 9/11, held in Dakar (Senegal), which adopted a Declaration against Terrorism on 17 October 2001 (African Union, 2017).

In line with the stipulations of paragraphs 19 to 21 of the AU Plan of Action, the AU Commission officially launched the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) (Bah, Choge-Nyangoro, Dersso, Mofya & Murithi, 2014). The ACSRT is the technical arm of the Union on matters relating to terrorism and the implementation of the AU counter-

terrorism programme. This institution has a mandate to centralise information, as well as to initiate research and develop training programmes by organising training schedules, meetings and symposia with the assistance of international partners, with the view to raise maximum awareness, prevent and eliminate the threat of terrorism to the continent (Bah *et al*, 2014). The Centre provides the AU with the necessary technical expertise for realising its counter-terrorism objectives, as well as translating the continental and international commitments of member states into concrete actions (Bah *et al*, 2014). The centre is in the process of placing ACSRT focal points in the 53 AU member states and regional economic committees (Bah *et al*, 2014).

The rise of al Shabaab in Somalia

Al Shabaab is a terrorist insurgency group which opposes Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). The major goal of al Shabaab is to topple the TFG and establish an Islamic caliphate so as to seize power throughout Somalia and reincorporate Somali-inhabited areas of Kenya and Ethiopia. Although it controls very little territory of the country, the TFG has backing of the United Nations, African Union and Arab League, as well as support from thousands of troops from Ethiopia from late 2006 (Hansen, 2010). An AU established peacekeeping force also occupied Somalia in 2007 to assist the TFG, with a troop numbering 8,000, from Uganda and Burundi, purposed to protect TFG officials and guard the functions of the port and airport (Williams, 2013). The group has three leadership layers; the top leadership (qiyadah), the foreign fighters (muhajirin) and local Somali fighters (ansar) (Williams, 2013). Top leaders oversee a leadership structure with strong foreign ties. Its 85 member executive council includes 42 Somalis and 43 foreigners (Rgahavan, 2010).

There are three kinds of foreign fighters comprising Somalis who were born in neighboring countries, especially in Kenya, and have the nationality of those countries, Somalis who were born in Somalia or whose parents were born in Somalia but have grown up in the diaspora and foreigners who have no Somali ethnic connection (Rgahavan, 2010). The largest parts of foreigners who have joined al Shabaab are Somalis from neighboring Kenya or from the diaspora (Rgahavan, 2010). As of June 2010, anonymous sources in the U.S. military and intelligence community estimated the number of foreigners in Somalia affiliated with al Qaeda at up to 200 (Shinn, 2011). In September 2010, Terrance Ford, AFRICOM's Director of Intelligence and Knowledge Development, cited 200 foreign fighters and another 1,000 ethnic Somalis from outside Somalia (Shinn, 2011). There are probably between 200 and 300 non-Somali foreign

jihadists fighting alongside al Shabaab, coming primarily from Kenya's Swahili coast, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Saudi Arabia (Shinn, 2011). The Afghan-trained Somalis and the foreign veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq brought specialized skills with them to Somalia. These groups lead the training and indoctrination of al Shabaab recruits, teaching techniques of suicide attacks, remote-controlled roadside bombings, kidnappings and assassinations of TFG officials, journalists, and humanitarian, civil society workers and whoever fits into what al Shabaab views as constituting a threat to their goal of establishing a strict Islamic state completely under its control (Hassan, 2010).

Definition of terms and literature review

This article concerns itself more with unpacking the concept of terrorism than with its definitional aspect per se, given the definitional crisis that exits. The definitional crisis is a result of the proliferation of definitions of the term, a complexity which may be a significant pointer to the complexity of the phenomena of terrorism. Existing content analysis studies on this aspect (Schmid, Jongman and Stohl, 1988), have established that out of the exiting 212 definitions of terrorism, the common concepts that cuts across them all are "violence" (emerged in 83.5% of the definitions), "political goals" (emerged in 65% of the definitions), "causing fear and terror" (appeared 51% of the definitions), "arbitrariness and indiscriminate target" (appeared in 21% of definitions) and "victimisation of civilians, non-combatants, neutrals and outsiders" (appeared in 17.5% of the definitions).

Merari (1993), found three common elements which cut across the many definitions of terrorism, especially in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Germany. These elements include the use of violence, political objective and the aim of propagating fear in the target population. Rapoport (2011) locates terrorism right at the beginning of the human social order, arguing that insurgency has always formed part of social existence. Sandler & Enders (2004) argue that terrorism only became significant for the first time in the 1960s when it 'increased in frequency', assuming 'novel dimensions' as a transnational phenomenon. Jenkins (1975) also describes terrorism as a 'new mode of conflict', while Krieger & Meierrieks (2011) opine that there are a horde of possible factors that cause terrorism, including global order, contagion, modernisation, institutional order and identity conflict. The two authors argue that terrorism is closely linked to political instability, sharp divides within the populace, country size and further demographic, institutional and international factors (Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011). These two a

scholars strongly oppose the arguments of the human needs theorists who view social deprivation as the major cause of violent conflict (Kukah, 2012; HRW, 2012; Kwaja, 2011). Likewise Agbiboa (2013a), views the link between socio-economic deprivation and the outbreak of conflict as simplistic because it fails to explain why some poor people or sections of society do not participate in violence.

Rapoport (1984/2011) was first to advance a theory on the linkages between religion and terrorism, arguing that the organisation of human beings into religious groups like Hinduism, Islam and Judaism has caused much more destruction and institutional violence than has any modern secular group. Agbiboa (2013a) likewise argues that the seismic rise of radical Islamist terrorism between the 1980s and 1990s has in turn significantly contributed to the incidence and lethality of attacks perpetrated by religious terrorist groups. Obtainable experiential data also shows that between 1968 to 2005, Islamist groups (especially groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) were responsible for 93.6 percent of attacks and 86.9 percent of fatalities perpetrated by religiously oriented terror groups (Piazza, 2009). Piazza (2009) likewise explains the higher frequency and intensity of terrorist activity among Islamists in the light of the (mis)interpretation of certain doctrines and practices within Islam, including the concept of 'lesser jihad,' the practice of militant struggle to defend Islam from its perceived enemies, or the Muslim reverence for 'Itishhad' (the practice of martyrdom). Juergensmeyer (2003) also identifies a link between terrorism and religion, arguing that the jihadist worldview characterizing terrorism is both savage and relentless because it places images of divine struggle or cosmic war in the service of political battles, and that acts of religious terror evoke much larger spiritual confrontations. Hoffman (2006) likewise opines that religious terrorism produces radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimation and justification, concept of morality and worldview.

Okeke (2019) describes the origins of terrorism as complicated to explain owing to the unreasonable scope of the grievances of terrorist groups and their septic worldview that venerates jihad as a solution.

Magnus and Ranstorp (1996) argue that this religious terrorist mentality robs terrorists of any moral constraints in the use of violence, leaving them unconstrained in the lethality and the catholic nature of violence used. Gunning and Jackson (2011) also argue that the terrorist

worldview makes religious terrorists aim for maximum causalities, hence why they justify use of weapons of mass destruction (see also Stern, 2003). Of worse effect is the religious terrorists' potential to evoke total commitment and fanaticism from their followers, leading to the momentous growth of such jihadist movements. The fact that the majority of those attracted to join terrorist movements are the youths gives religious terrorism nexus to the social deprivation theory.

Piazza (2009) divides the typology of terrorism into two, describing one as the universal/abstract and the other one as strategic. He further explains that,

> ... the primary difference between universal/abstract groups and strategic groups is that the former are distinguished by highly ambitious, abstract, complex, and nebulous goals that are driven primarily by ideology … in contrast, strategic groups have much limited and discrete goals: the liberation of specific territory, the creation of an independent homeland for a specific ethnic group, or the overthrow of a specific government.

In line with Piazza's (2009) postulation, extremist Islamist groups like al Shabaab fall into the universal/abstract camp because of their global jihadist appeal, their absolutist and inflexible objectives to establish an Islamic Caliphate in the country.

The rise of al Shabaab in Somalia

Though dictatorial in nature, one of the successes of President Siad Barre's rule was that his government managed to suppress influences of Islam on the country's political landscape although the religion had existed therein for decades (Bryden, 2014). A number of Somalis who studied the Salafi views of Islam in Egypt and Wahhabi teachings in Saudi Arabia before Somali independence in 1960 completely failed to propagate their views among Somalis who overwhelmingly followed Sufi Islamic beliefs (Bryden, 2014). In the 1970s, some of the Wahhabi believers created the Unity of Islamic Youth (Wahdat al Shabaab al Islamiyya) and the Islamic Group (al Jama'a al Islamiyya). These two organizations merged in 1982 to the Islamic Union (al Ittihad al Islamiyya or AIAI) (Bryden, 2014). AIAI failed to launch security attacks in Somali but conducted terrorist attacks in the Somali inhabited parts of Ethiopia. The group

effectively disappeared early in the 21st century when the Ethiopian security forces launched a strong counter attack against them (Bryden, 2014).

The political overthrow of Barre in 1991 weakened the state and allowed penetration of various Somali and foreign forces and influences into the country's governance structure. Different Islamic groups, both local and foreign, started to assert their power and influence into the country. During this period, the Somali National movement (SNM) took control of the north, while the United Somalia Congress (USC) took control of the capital of Mogadishu and southern Somalia (Ingiriis, 2019). The SNM further refused to recognize an interim government formed by Ali Mahdi Muhammed on 26 January 1991, declaring the northern Somali regions as independent, in turn establishing the Republic of Somaliland in May 1991 (Global Security, 2012). The continuous fighting among rival faction leaders resulted in massive deaths of Somali civilians, leading to United Nations intervention (Global Security, 2012). In August 1992, the UN further launched a UN relief effort, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) to take care of the humanitarian needs this political disorder evoked (Global Security, 2012).

In December 1992 the United States joined UNOSOM I, changing the mission to Operation Restore Hope (Global Security, 2012). In March 1993, the UN changed the mission to UNOSOM II with more nations contributing forces and the US handing control over to the UN on 9th May 1993. On 3rd and 4th October 1993 the first battle of Mogadishu commonly referred to as Blackhawk down or the Day of Rangers by Somalis ensued. The battle was supported by UNOSOM II and Somali militia men who were loyal to the self-proclaimed prospective president Farah Aideed and some armed civilian fighters. The situation continued to deteriorate and in 1994 and 1995 the United States and the UN withdrew their forces from Somalia respectively (Ibid). In June 1995 Aideed, who declared himself president of Somalia, was not recognized both locally and internationally. He was assassinated by Osman Ali and Ali Mahdi Mohammad on 1st August 1996. Ali Mahdi Muhammad became president under the United Somali Congress (USC) party. A Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed on 27Aug 2000 to 14 October 2004 under Abdiqasim Salad Hassan. In October 2004, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of the Somalia Salvation Democratic front (SSDF) took over power when warlords had reached a power sharing agreement after having talks in Kenya. The agreement called for a 275 member parliament and Abdullahi Yusuf called for African peacekeepers to restore order within Somalia (Ingiriis, 2019).

In the year 2000 members of al Itihaad al Islamiya (AIAI) formed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The ICU were the Union of Sharia Law Courts, and were created to administer justice in the districts where they had been established as a result of the absence of governance systems due to the prevailing chaos of the 1990s (Ibid). Each court maintained a militia and eleven of these courts chose to pool their militia's resources in order to take control over Mogadishu (Shinn, 2011). In May 2006, fighting broke out in Mogadishu between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the UIC.

The rise of al Shabaab in Somalia is linked to al Qaeda. It is also linked to the movement of Osama bin Laden to Sudan in 1992, accompanied by one al Qaeda lieutenants, Abu Hafs al Masri (Shinn, 2011). Abu Hafs, an Egyptian by birth, made multiple trips to Somalia beginning in 1992, where he established training camps and supplied arms for fighters (Shinn, 2011). These activities were controlled from the al Qaeda's headquarters in Khartoum (Shinn, 2011). In January 1993, Abu Hafs created a team of al Qaeda veterans to conduct operations in Somalia. The first al Qaeda group that arrived in Somalia in February 1993 worked closely with AIAI, establishing three training camps in Somalia (Shinn, 2011).

Abu Hafs expected to replicate another Afghanistan in Somalia, taking advantage of the weak state, to turn it into recruiting ground for Islamic terrorists (International Crisis Group, 2017). Hafs further aimed to eventually expel the United States led international peacekeeping force that arrived in Mogadishu in 1992 (International Crisis Group, 2017). Hafs however underestimated the transactional cost of operating in Somalia. The highly unfavorable transactional costs emanated from high financial expenses of monitoring operations from another country, the levels of corruption in the country and its neighbors, and the uprisings from Somali clans who still believed in traditional Sufi Islam, and attacked the al Qaeda convoys regularly while sabotaging operations (Williams, 2009). The primacy of clan ultimately frustrated al Qaeda's efforts to recruit and develop a strong, unified coalition, after noticing that the costs outweighed the benefits (Shinn, 2011). Despite the highlighted failures, al Qaeda still managed to recruit a number of young Somalis to the jihad agenda. The cause was accepted by a few Somali locations such as Ras Kamboni, a small Indian Ocean port town near Somalia's southern border with Kenya. The failure by the central government to establish authority throughout Somalia increased the warlords' fights among themselves, in turn increasing opportunity for the

Islamic groups to increase their following and to impose stability towards their caliphate. The Islamic groups worked especially with AIAI which provided links with foreign al Qaeda operatives (Williams, 2009).

In 2006 the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) gained ground in Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia (Williams, 2009). The TFG, Ethiopia and the United States, in retaliation, financed a group of warlords in Mogadishu known as the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism (ARPC). APRC opposed ICU, and defeated the U.S. sponsored warlords by mid-2006 (UPI, 2007). Following threats for possible jihad attacks in Ethiopia, Ethiopian troops forced the UIC from Mogadishu early in 2007 (Shinn, 2011). This further drove Islamist leaders and their militia into refugee hiding either to southern Somalia or in Eritrea, one of the major funders of extremist Islamic organizations in Somalia (Shinn, 2011). Some nationals from Yemen, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sweden, Comoro Islands and Morocco linked to the UIC fled across the border into Kenya where they were captured by Kenyan forces and sent back to the TFG-controlled Mogadishu (Shinn, 2011). In 2007, at an AIAI alumni conference in Las Anod, Somaliland, a group of Afghan-trained Somali young men protested the proposed agenda to create a Salafi political organization with links to the status quo. Days later, this radicalized group organized a parallel conference in Las Anod, where they launched al Shabaab as a Salafi-jihadist movement (Ali, 2010). Owing to its association with the Taliban and al Qaeda through the recruitment of foreign fighters the financial aid it received from the two groups, al Shabaab aligned its mode of operation to that of the two (Ali, 2010). In this manner they continued to learn foreign strategy, tactics and ideology.

The ideology of al Shabaab continues to be the use of any violent tactic, especially the most repressive and most vicious, to achieve its goals (Romano, Rowe, Phelps and Simons, 2019). From its launch through to 2010, al Shabaab continued its overtures that linked jihad in the Horn of Africa to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden (Gartenstein-Ross, 2014). While most of the Islamic groups contained their influences and agenda locally, al Shabaab, in seeking to increase its control and to establish itself more, developed a religious cum political program based on Islamic power, and increasingly became subject to foreign influence, with special links to Al Qaida. Osama bin Laden also referred to the conflict in Somalia as a war between Islam and the international Crusade (Gartenstein-Ross, 2014). Official voices like the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia established that extremists within al Shabaab are seeking, with

limited success, to align the organization more closely with al Qaeda. The issue of suicide bombs which is alien to Somalian culture further links al Shabaab to foreign jihad organisations and to al Qaeda. Al Shabaab also prefers foreign ideologies and policies to local ones, to the extent there are policy differences within al Shabaab's leadership, they seem to center on those who seek a closer alignment with foreign jihadi organizations such as al Qaeda and those who want to pursue a narrower Somali agenda. Recent al Shabaab actions suggest the extremists are prevailing. In 2009, al Shabaab formally renamed itself Harakat al Shabaab al Mujahidin (Mujahideen Youth Movement) to underscore its jihadist identity and the global nature of its agenda" (Harnisch, 2010).

Despite this however, there is a general international denial to link al Shabaab to al Qaeda perse. For example the 2009 State Department's annual report on terrorism explicitly acknowledged links between the two organisations, al Qaeda and al Shabaab but denied that they are formally merged (U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2009).

Firstly, as a response mechanism to the conflict in Somalia, the UNSC adopted UNSCR1725 on 7th December 2006. UNSCR1725 authorised the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to establish a protection and training mission in Somalia (United Nations, 2012). In January 2007 the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) authorized deployment of Amisom in Somalia, with a mandate to support transitional government structures, to implement a national security plan, train the Somali security forces, and assist in creating a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid (UN, 2007).

Amisom also supports the Transitional Federal Government's Forces against al Shabaab militants with a renewable six month mandate. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed became TFG's president from 31 Jan 2009 to 20 August 2012, further affiliating himself with the alliance for the Re-Liberalization of Somali (ARS) (Hanson, 2011). In December 2009 the UN voted for an embargo on Eritrea for training and arming al Shabaab and in Jan 2012 passed UNSCR 2036 to mandate AMISOM to take all necessary measures to reduce the threat posed by al Shabaab (Hanson, 2011). Other efforts include election of Speaker of Parliament Mohammed Osman Tawaari, and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on 16 Sep 2012 as well as the European Union's (EU) Naval efforts to patrol Somali waters to counter piracy and allow for the free flow

of commerce and trade, as well as to further clear the sea lanes of communications and guarantee safe passage of ships and goods (Buluma, 2014).

Major critique of the AU's efforts to combat al Shabaab in Ethiopia is that the Regional body has many times only ended at containing the situation, without providing a lasting solution that can ensure the total elimination of al Shabaab from both Somalia and the region Whilst the AU's tendency to adopt landmark decisions and relevant polices and protocols is noted, its failure to ensure effective and appropriate follow-ups remains a challenge. There is need for the full operationalisation of the counter-terrorism instruments and relevant decisions of the AU policy organs.

Secondly, the current achievements of the Amisom forces are highly commendable,. However, these achievements are not an end by themselves. More meaningful gains can be achieved through governmental, bilateral, and multilateral approaches that are inclusive of regional governments, the international community and non-governmental organizations (Ewi & Aning, 2006). The complex situation of al Shabaab and its spillover effects that include terror attacks and proliferation of small arms and light weapons to the region continue to threaten the relative peace and stability enjoyed in the region. Reports on the ground also highlight the continuous weakness of the Somalia national army, worsened by Amisom's lack of financial resources, which can even lead to the mission's defeat. Yet al Shabaab remains an unyielding force determined to destabilize Somalia and destroy the peace table in the region (Kelley, 2015). Regional states contest over the AU's approach and this further complicates the process. There is general lack of trust among some of the regional states, especially those perceived to have been supporting al Shabaab like Eritrea and many of the Arab Gulf states (Crisis Group International, 2022). Finally the Regional armies' divergent interests must be mitigated to avoid negatively affecting the coalition's cohesion and the ability to conduct operations (Crisis Group International, 2022). The AU should thus call upon all regional countries who are stake holders, including the Arab Gulf states, to support the newly elected Somali government so that the problem of divided interests is solved.

As an insurgent group al Shabaab thrives on propaganda which is channeled through massive use of media and modern technologies. As such, the coming together of Regional governments with a combined media strategy is an effective weapon with which to counter al Shabaab's

propaganda. This can be buttressed with increased and better coordinated information sharing and coordination of intelligence among the member states and coalition forces in support of regional counter terrorism efforts.

Terrorism in this article has been established as a global phenomenon. AU interventions on the other hand are regional efforts to combat a global problem. This situation leaves the AU stressed both financially and strategically. This being said, the Arab States, the UN and the US should work hand in hand with the AU to provide logistical support to and resourcing of Amisom Forces to broaden the mission and give it a true international legitimacy. This will increase the opportunities to build capacity for the development of effective security institutions and the establishment of the rule of law. Again, this analysis argues that having a military force on the ground that is detached from civilians provokes more and more images of war. As such Amisom Forces and armed Somali groups should be encouraged to demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate themselves into Somali society by offering skills training, military to civilian dialogue and partnerships in training and partner capacity building to coalesce efforts around and against al Shabaab and all emerging threats.

Furthermore, as long as Somalia remains a weak state economically and politically, the pandemic of terrorism will continue to thrive on the citizens' grievances and divided interests. The AU should thus broaden its military efforts to include the economic and political strengthening of the country. Currently Amisom and the Somalian army are operating with limited resources needed for the combat mission to succeed. With only three utility helicopters to cover its entire area of operation, logistics in Amisom have been rendered unreliable and erratic, making it impossible for the overstretched troop to secure the expansive territory and protect their supply lines (Kelly, 2015). An adequate military aviation unit could provide cover for force and also destroy al Shabaab bases, which are often in rural areas (Roble, 2015). The fact that Amisom's operations are funded from a source contained within the bureaucratic structures of the UN also makes it difficult for the mission to operationalise and implement processes on time, and this gives al Shabaab mileage in carrying out its terrorist acts. Some member states who offer to supply additional aerial assets to the mission end up pulling back as they get discouraged by the UN's slow and low reimbursement rates (Roble, 2015). Restrictions levied on the UN contingent tasked with assisting Amisom to transport weapons and reinforcements to fighting forces in the battle are also noted as a further impediment (Roble, 2015). This renders the UN's

support apparatus inside Somalia (UNSOA) less helpful. Given that UNSOA's capabilities are more civilian and not military; its deliveries of arms and troops can be made only to a designated battalion hub (Roble, 2015). This is because UNSOA as a civilian arm of Amisom is structured to provide logistics in a traditional peacekeeping mission and not for combat environment. This leaves the burden to transport material to the frontline to Amisom to the inadequately equipped troop contributing countries (Roble, 2015).

Development agencies working in Somalia such as the Department For International Development (DFiD), the European Union (EU), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the NGO Community, the UN and the United States Agency for International Development Aid (USAID) (Roble, 2015). Regional nations should also enroll Somalia into the regional economic and trading blocks to encourage regional trade to enable its economy to grow (Roble, 2015).

While it remains our argument that Africa's dependence on foreign aid is detrimental to an African Agenda, the exception in the case of Somalia and al Shabaab is that terrorism is a global pandemic with many dimensions in it. Trying to combat such a problem using local resources only is tantamount to parceling out local resources to address global political and economic problems. This will in turn heighten global problems against dwindling local resources.
The manner in which the African Union responded to the terror attack on Amisom base where 70 peacekeepers were killed by al Shabaab on 1 September 2015 may serve to demonstrate the operational limitations of the AU's strategy measured against the capabilities of this insurgency group. Amison responded to this attack by hastily withdrawing soldiers from 10 towns in the area, ceding them to al Shabaab control, and justifying the act as 'adjusting and re-organising' (Ibid). This decision was taken even after Kenyan and Ethiopian troop were integrated into the multi-national force, joining Uganda, Burundi and Djibouti counterparts in 2012 and 2014, and raising the number of forces to over 22,000 (Human Rights Watch, 2010). This happening again points to poor and uncoordinated intelligence gathering abilities (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

There are recent and continuing reports of bombings of AU bases and civilian homes in Somalia despite the presence of AMISOM and other supporting troops. To combat this, the need to train troops before deployment is balanced with the need to educate them on law enforcement in order to broaden the understanding of how to prevent, detect, protect and respond to modern bomb

technologies and advanced weapon and explosives. Other proposed initiatives include securing borders and training border patrol personnel in more effective security measures. This also includes the screening of refugees in order to separate out the criminal element from the legitimate refugees before they can be registered to settle into Kenya through the refugee camps. It is also necessary to increase job opportunities and create economic incentives for Somali youths and men, as the only way to reduce their exploitability by al Shabaab.

Conclusions and recommendations

The article concludes that that the bottle necks confronting the AU in Somalia are indeed multi-faceted; some are strategic, political, operational, resource based and geo-political. These complications in turn call for a multi-faceted approach and partnerships for combating these problems, as opposed to a focus on what Amisom alone can do militarily. Admittedly, resolving the current crisis in Somalia is not an easy task, but resorting to 'sticks' - the military crack downs, and doing so without the desired military capacities can on the other hand further complicate matters by in turn militarising the polity, especially the youth, laying conducive ground for a culture of continuous war and violence, and escalating same. A multi-pronged approach that can facilitate a better understanding of historical antecedents that make Somalia vulnerable to terrorist threat as well as an understanding of what makes the strategy of al Shabaab sustainable is indeed called for. In other words, the failure of military force to reduce spiraling violence in northern Nigeria calls for a strategic rethink by the AU and the government of Somalia on how to deal with the pandemic of al Shabaab.

There is a need for an intelligence-led strategy to better confront al Shabaab's global informed localized terrorist activities in Somalia and the region. The AU needs to realize the globalised nature of al Shabaab terrorist activities, hence the need to combine both local and global intelligence efforts to meet this formidable challenge. Furthermore, there is a necessity for greater international cooperation in terms of financing and operationalising all efforts to identify and intercept al Shabaab's growing external partnerships for strategy, funding, weapon sources, and training which is crucial to the group's operational capabilities. In this context, the Somalian Police Force can benefit greatly from the work of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) and from military strategies globally. Al Shabaab in Somalia also thrives on

infusing jihadist tactics into a long existing ethnic and Islamic religion divide. This being said, a better understanding of history in Somalia prior to the emergence of al Shabaab preceded a long-term strategy that will undercut the jihadist appeal in here, and one that will also address the exiting religious orientations, the sources of socio-economic inequalities and human insecurity in the region.

The Somalian government must develop an effective counter terrorism policy that goes beyond a militaristic approach in order to embed counter terrorism in an overarching national security strategy that appreciates the broader context in which Islamic radicalization occurs. The country to date has lacked a viable strategy to counter terrorism that will guide her actions, help undermine the recruitment of terrorists, and change the environment they inhabit into a non-violent one. While a systemic viewpoint conceptualises the fight against terrorism at four levels, the national, regional, international and global, the role of the state remain supremely central in devising effective strategies to counter terrorism. As such, the AU must emphasise suitable political, economic and institutional reforms in Somalia to make the country capable of combating terrorism at all four levels. Ewi & Aning (Ibid) further argue that whatever role intergovernmental organisations play in the fight against terrorism, it is what has been relegated to them by states based on the calculus of comparative advantage.

The use of military force to counter terrorism is not strategic enough because militarism is inevitably indiscriminate and often results in the alienation of exactly those individuals in we do not want radicalised (Agbiboa, 2013a). Moreover, military action against terrorist targets often causes the deaths of innocent civilians, no matter how much care is taken (Agbiboa, 2013a), and militarism is generally not gender sensitive. A military strategy does not only provide terrorists with critical experience in tactics, but forces them to create new networks of support as a form of survival strategy. Reality is that in an economically challenged country like Somalia such network of support can be the youths who end up being radicalized against their fellow citizens. The complication with al Shabaab is that they are more into continued violence than into negotiated settlement, and is such circumstances strengthening the geo-political context against incessant attacks as well as ensuring the safety of all citizens will be the only way out for the AU and the Somali Government.

References

African Union. (2017). Main successes of the AU in Peace and Security, challenges and mitigation measures in place. https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20170127/main-successes-au-peace-and-security-challenges-and-mitigation-measures-place.

Agbiboa, D. E. (2013). *The Nigerian burden: Boko Haram and Religious Terrorism in Nigeria.* UK: CSDG.

Ali, A. (2010). Economic cost of Terrorism. *Strategic Studies*, 30(1/2), 157-170.

Bah, A. S. Choge-Nyangoro, E., Dersso, S., Mofya, B. and Murithi, T. (2014). *The African Peace and Security Architecture, Handbook*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Addis Ababa Office and the African Union.

Bryden M. (2014). The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Buluma, G. (2014). *Al-Shabaab: The Threat to Kenya and the Horn of Africa*. USA: United States War College.

Okeke, J. (2019). Policy brief: Repositioning the AU's role in counter-terrorism operations. Institute for Security Studies.

Crisis Group International. (2022). Eight priorities for the African Union in 2022. Briefing no. 177.

Ewi, M.A and Aning, K (2006) Assessing the Role of the African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrrorism in Africa. *African Security Review* 15 (3), 32-46.

Gartenstein-Ross, D. (2014). Bin Laden's Legacy: Why We're Still Losing the War on Terror. In George Michael. *The New Insurgents: A Select Review of Recent Literature on Terrorism and Insurgency*. Alabama: USAF Counter-proliferation Center.

Ingiriis, M. H. (2019). From Grievance to Greed in Somalia. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* , 59(235), 783-814.

Gunning, J. and Jackson, R. (2011) What's so 'religious' about 'religious terrorism'? *Critical studies on terrorism,* 4(3), 369-388.

Hansen, S. J. (2010). Revenge or Reward? The Case of Somalia's Suicide Bombers. *Journal of Terrorism Research*. 1(1), 21–24.

Hanson, M. (2011). State Sponsorship: An Impediment to the Global Fight against Terrorism. Journal of International Law 7(2), 132-144.

Harnisch, C. (2010). *The terror threat from Somalia: The internationalisation of al Shabaab. A report by the critical threats project of the American Enterprise Institute*. AEI.

Hassan, Oz. (2010) 'Constructing crises, (In)securitising terror: the punctuated evolution of EU counterterror strategy', European Security, 19: 3, 445 — 466Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Human Rights Watch. (2010). Harsh War, Harsh Peace. Abuses by al Shabaab, the Transnational Federal Government and AMISOM in Somalia. April 19, 2010 News Release.

Human Rights Watch. (2012). *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Forces Abuses in Nigeria*. Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/news.

International Crisis Group, 2017. Report No. 178. Middle East and North Africa. How the Islamic State Rose, Fell and Could Rise Again in the Maghreb.

Romano, D., Rowe, S., Phelps, R. and Simons, G. (2019). Correlates of terror: Trends in types of terrorist groups and fatalities inflicted, 5(1), https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1584957.

Jenkins, B. (1975). *International terrorism: A new mode of conflict*. Los Angeles: Crescent.

Juergensmeyer, M. (2003). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kelly, K. (2015). AU: Amisom Lacks Resource to Defeat al Shabaab. *The East African*. Retrieved from www.theeastafrican.co.ke.

Khumalo, K. (2022). The Journey from OAU to AU: Security Remains a Key Concern in Africa 49 Years of the Organisation of African Unity: Analysis. Friedrick Naumann Foundation for Freedom. https://www.freiheit.org/sub-saharan-africa/journey-oau-au-security-remains-key-concern-africa.

Krieger, T. and Meierrieks, D. (2011). What causes terrorism? *Public Choice*. 1(47), 2–27.

Kukah, M. (2012). Nigeria: Country as an Emerging Democracy: The Dilemma and the Promise. *Daily Trust*. Retrieved from http://allafrica.com.

Kwaja, C. (2011). Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflicts. *Africa Security Brief*. Retrieved from http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads.

Maiangwa, B. (2013). *State Fragility and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria: A case study of Boko*

Haram Terrorism. Published Master's thesis. Retrieved from http://researchspace.ukzn. ac.za.

Maiangwa, B. (2014). Soldiers of God or Allah: Religious politicization and the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. *Journal of Terrorism Research*. 5(1), 58–66.

Merari, A. (2007). Terrorism as a strategy of insurgency. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 5(4), https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559308427227.

Organization of African Unity (OAU), *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, 1 July 2000, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/4937e0142.html [accessed 3 September 2022].

Piazza, J. A. (2009). Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous? An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization and Goal Structure. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 5(1), 62-88, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550802544698.

Rgahavan, S. (2010, August 22). In Kenya's Capital, Somali Immigrant Neighbourhood is Incubator for Jihad. *Washington Post*, 25–27.

Rapoport, D. C. (1984). Fear and trembling: Terrorism in three religious traditions. *American Political Science Review,* 78 (3), 658–677.

Rapoport, D. C. (2011). Reflections on "Terrorism and the American Experience". *The Journal of American History,* 98(1), 115-120.

Roble, M.A. (2015) AL-Shabaab has changed its Tactic. AMISOM Must Do So Too. Retrieved from African arguments.org.

Sandler, T. and Enders, W. (2004). An economic perspective on transnational terrorism. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 20, 301 – 316.

Schmid, A. P., Jongman, A. J., Stohl, M., Sociaal-Wetenschappelijk Informatie- en Documentatiecentrum (Koninklijke Nederlands Akademie van Wetenschappen), Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden & Harvard University. (1988). *Political terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories, and literature*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co.

Shinn, D. (2011). "Al Shabaab Foreign Threat to Somalia." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. https:www.doi: 10.1016/j.orbis.2011.01.003.

Stern, J. (1999). *The ultimate terrorists*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

United Nations. (2006). Security Council Approves African Protection Training Somalia. Retrieved from www.un.org.

U.S. Government Publishing Office. (2009). Gateway to the documents of our democracy. U.S. Government Printing Office 2009 Annual Report. GPO.

UN (2007). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1772. Retrieved from www.un.org.

Williams, P.D. (2009). Into the Mogadishu Maelstrom: The African Union Mission in Somalia. *International Peacekeeping*, 514–530.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2018). The African Region. African Union Counter-terrorism instruments https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-5/key-issues/african- region.html

Williams, P. D. (2013). Fighting for Peace in Somalia: AMISOM's Seven Strategic Challenges. *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, *17*(3/4), 222-247, doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1704004