

Violent Non-State Actors in Africa

Terrorists, Rebels
and Warlords

Edited by
Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar



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To Alexia
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AB	Arrow Boys
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AMISOM	African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Somalia
APC	All People's Congress
APRD	Armée pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CCP	Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
CDF	Civil Defense Force
CDR	Coalition pour la Défense de la République
CMA	Coordination of Movements for Azawad
CMRRD	Commission for the Management of Strategic Recourses, National Reconstruction, and Development
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CPJP	Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo

ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EU	European Union
EUTM	EU Training Mission
FACA	Forces Armées Centrafricaines
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaises
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda
FDPC	Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricaine
FROCCA	Front pour le Retour de l'ordre Constitutionnel en Centrafrique
GNC	General National Congress
GNU	Government of National Unity
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
HoR	House of Representatives
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSM	Acholi Holy Spirit Movement
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ICU	Islamic Court Union
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIL	The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
JTJ	Jama'at al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad
LA	Liberation Army
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Movement for Change
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LRM	Lord's Resistance Movement
LSF	Libya Shield Force
MDSF	Malian Defense and Security Forces
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MICEMA	ECOWAS Mission in Mali
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MISAHEL	AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel
MLC	Mouvement de Liberation du Congo
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MPA	Azawad People's Movement
MRND	The National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development
MSSI	The Islamic Youth Shura Council
MUJWA	Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Association
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRA	Ugandan National Resistance Army
NRM	anti-National Resistance Movement
NTC	National Transitional Council
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PMSC	Private Military and Security Companies
PPF	Popular Patriotic Front
RANU	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity
RCD-K/ML	RCDKisangani/Mouvement de Libération
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force
RTF	Regional Task Force
RTLM	Radio Télévision Libres des Milles Collines
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RURA	Rwandan Utilities Regulatory Authority
SLPP	Sierra Leonean People's Party
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SSC	Supreme Security Committee
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

U.S.	United States
UFDR	Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement
UHSA	United Holy Salvation Army
UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNAR	Union National Rwandaise
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNLA	Ugandan National Liberation Army
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDA	Ugandan People's Democratic Army
UPDCA	Uganda People's Democratic Christian Army
USC	United Somali Congress
VNSA	Violent Non-State Actors
WASB	Western African Standby Brigade

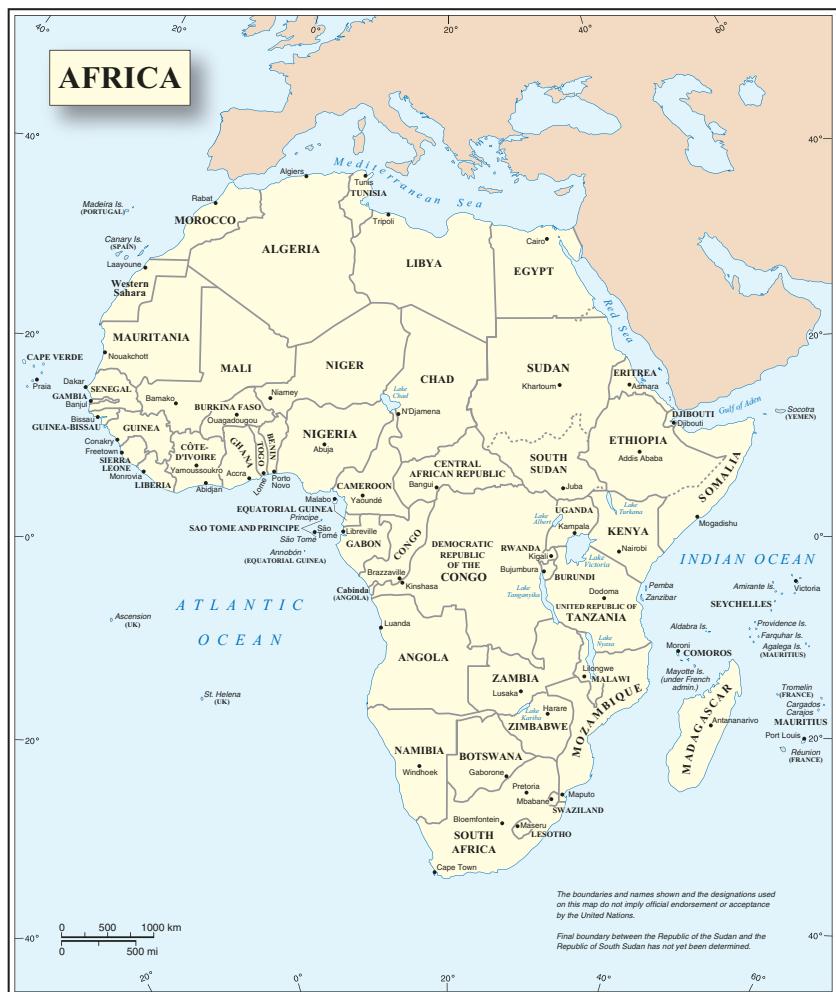
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MAP OF AFRICA



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Caroline Varin

Despite years of economic development, successful democratic elections and cultural and athletic achievements, Africa has largely maintained its reputation as the ‘dark continent’. Explored but misunderstood, Africa continues to be associated with violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by a host of non-state actors, not to mention a number of unsavory governments. The pervasiveness of civil wars, rebellions, coups d'état, child soldiers, war crimes and terrorism has attracted numerous studies by academics drawn to understanding the politics of violence.

This book not only adds to the literature on Africa but also can boast two unique assets: more than half the volume was authored by African political scientists, who add their local knowledge and insight to the conversation; this is also the first book that brings together a thorough analysis of a range of violent non-state actors (VNSAs) particular to Africa. It is in recognition of this analytical deficit that the collaboration for this book was born in 2015 between Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar. The book covers the terrorists, rebels, warlords and pirates who crisscross the continent, leaving a trail of fear and destruction behind them. By bringing all these ‘foes’ under one book, Varin and Abubakar intend to study the

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conditions that lead to their rise and success within a given territory and the different models for countering them.

While each country is unique, we find certain shared characteristics that foster an ‘enabling’ environment in which VNSAs can prosper. The failure or inexistence of a social contract between the state and society is one of the primary motivators for the emergence of VNSAs.¹ Conversely, the strength, credibility and determination of the central government are often the determining factors in defeating a violent group—a study by Cragin and Chalk shows that it is also responsible for preventing such groups from gaining momentum in the first place.² Such governments are few and far between however, and a capacity deficit³ ensures that they rarely reach the border regions in the massive territories of Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR) where VNSAs tend to prosper.

Furthermore, as conflicts move out of the hands of governments and increasingly include one or more non-state actors, it is important to understand the local dynamics and revise rules of war that have become archaic. Civilians, organized along ethnic, religious, economic and political lines, have taken up arms, challenging the state’s claim to legitimately monopolize the use of violence. Whereas conventional warfare takes states and their armies as the main actor, it is worth acknowledging that in Africa, most warfare has been ‘unconventional’ by Western standards. Indeed, from revolutionary movements to terrorist groups, the state has mostly been challenged by its own citizens, many of whom have felt disempowered—and often threatened—by existing political systems.

The mode of warfare is also different; there are few direct confrontations between the state and local VNSAs. While rebels, warlords and terrorists systematically attack state symbols, raiding military compounds and mounting surprise attacks on police stations, they rarely meet the army on even ground—typical of guerrilla movements inspired by the likes of Mao and Sun Tzu. The main targets and victims however are other civilians who are the lifeline of VNSAs, voluntarily or reluctantly. This has led to a whole body of literature on so-called new wars,⁴ although as mentioned above, there is nothing new in this type of conflict for Africa. On the other hand, the scope and extent of the violence and this unprecedented level of brutality are new to contemporary international relations (IR) and more reminiscent of the Middle Ages when the main perpetrator was in fact the state.⁵

Scholars of IR have principally focused their research of political violence on the role of the state, the chief actor since at least the nineteenth

century. The state remains central to our study of violence in Africa, but of particular interest—and frequently underestimated—is the importance of understanding the dynamics between the state and non-state actors today. Indeed, VNSAs are the biggest challenge to the African state's authority and credibility in the twenty-first century. The way the state deals with this threat—whether with violence, with policy shifts or simply by ignoring its existence and impact on its citizens—is instrumental in exacerbating or inhibiting the *raison d'être* of these violent groups.

Each chapter in this volume follows a similar pattern, with authors investigating the inner workings of their chosen VNSA, the leadership, ideology and organizational structure. The group's formation and development are evaluated against the backdrop of the state's political credibility and military strength. The government's strategy in countering the threat of non-state actors is dissected with the goal of understanding how, and whether, these VNSAs can be defeated in the future. The result is a collection of case studies that take a comprehensive look at violence in Africa, integrating the dynamics of the state and non-state actors to shed some light on the continent's plight.

LITERATURE

Our volume is situated among other studies that investigate the context in which VNSAs emerge.⁶ Through 11 empirical case studies, the book reveals the political, historical, economic and social factors that enabled a variety of VNSAs to prosper in Africa. It also explores the internal dynamics of each group, outlining the psychological complexities of leadership and group formation, for example, in the case of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda and the philosophical and ideological leanings of people who are lured to take up arms against the state. By taking this dualistic approach, we acknowledge that VNSAs require both an internal and external study in order to understand their continued existence. Known as an *open systems* approach, VNSAs are therefore studied as an ‘organized cohesive complex of elements standing in interaction’⁷ with their greater environment, not in isolation of it.

On the other hand, this book does not make any theoretical claims beyond the African continent. We argue that the elements that lead to the successful rise of VNSAs are particular to each country but that some parallels can be drawn between states in Africa that share an experience of colonialism and foreign interference and a history of weak governments.

While these can, and do, apply to countries beyond our scope, such conclusions will require further studies not intended to be covered in this current volume.

There have been roughly two approaches to the analysis of VNSAs in IR. A number of edited volumes and monographs have emerged on VNSAs globally, aggregating under one cover case studies from Colombia, Sri Lanka, Spain and Uganda. These studies highlight the emergence of VNSAs in global politics and their central role in undermining the security of the nation-state. The weakness in this model however is the assumption that similar conditions arise in very different environments that create the conditions for a wide range of VNSAs to emerge. Such literature has been particularly popular since 9/11 and the United States' declaration of a 'Global War on Terror' that for the first time specifically targets terrorists beyond domestic borders.⁸ Again, Islamist terrorist groups in Pakistan and India may have little in common with Al-Qaeda in Yemen or Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines and the local context varies greatly.

Other authors have chosen to focus on one specific group of non-state actors facilitating comparisons across regions. Reno (1998) examined warlords in an African context. Vinci (2007) considered the internal dynamics of such warlords. He later investigated the position of VNSAs in IR, focusing on three case studies of warlords and terrorists (2009). Hoffman's study of terrorists and insurgents (2006) has been pioneering for those seeking to understand the history and evolution of these violent groups in different countries. Systemic explanations for the emergence of VNSAs have motivated Chabal (1999), Berdal and Malone (2000) to explore the environmental and economic context in which such groups thrive. What these authors have in common is their consideration of the VNSA vis-à-vis the state; the latter remains an important point of reference that cannot be dismissed.

This volume joins the above-mentioned cohort of texts to provide a mixed perspective of VNSAs in Africa. Including African academic and Western-educated authors, the 12 chapters show a trend of seemingly mindless and hopeless violence on the continent. However, by aggregating our case studies specifically within the context of one, admittedly large territory, we reveal trends that explain why Africa in particular is suffering from the systemic and endless presence of many different types of VNSAs.

DEFINING VNSAs

As is the case with most terms, finding common ground for a specific definition of ‘violent non-state actors’ is politically dubious, at best. Such definitions are usually created by academics and policy makers, who do not agree on the wording in the first place—one look at the many definitions for ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ would give us a snapshot of the complications that can be encountered. As a result, we use the term loosely, enabling each author to explain the dynamics of their particular VNSA without being bogged down in definitions. While we have attempted to organize our VNSAs into three categories—terrorists, rebels and warlords—these groups often overlap and interact, blurring the lines that differentiate them. In its broadest sense and for our purposes, a violent non-state actor is defined as *a group of civilians who are organized together in the illegitimate exercise of violence*. They do not necessarily share the same ideology or motives, as some may be working specifically to undermine the state, whereas others have no economic alternatives than plundering the land. However, they are all influenced by the local dynamics, particularly the response—or its lack thereof—of the state.

The question of legitimacy is a contentious one in the case of Africa, where authority has frequently been imposed from the top down and force has been exploited and abused by the government. For the purpose of this study however, and in the context of IR theory, the state is accepted as being the sole claimant of the legitimate use of force, and hence VNSAs are *by definition* considered to be illegitimately exercising violence. The African state, regardless of its local credibility, is internationally accepted as being the sole legal representative of its population and can therefore label its opponents as unlawful.

Our VNSAs differ in size, characteristics, organization, motive, ideology and methods, but they have all resorted to the illegitimate use of violence, which by definition challenges the *raison d'être* of the state. For the purpose of this study, the three categories of VNSAs to which we refer will be defined as follows:

Terrorists—the original perpetrator of terror was the state, and hence the label at first referred to the government. It has since been appropriated by the authorities to designate a range of actors that threaten the state’s credibility as a provider of security. Today, the definition of terrorists has narrowed substantially, thanks to mass media, and often refers specifically to Islamist groups that use violence to undermine existing political systems

with the ultimate objective of creating an Islamist caliphate under sharia law. More broadly, terrorist groups strategically spread fear and panic among societies to achieve these political goals. They employ a variety of tactics including but not limited to kidnappings, suicide attacks, bombings and murder usually targeting civilians and urban centers such as shopping malls, restaurants and hubs for public transport. Although the attacks are aimed at the government, symbols of state power are usually discredited rather than directly targeted.

Rebels—traditionally, rebels were armed civilians who sought to overthrow the government. They are often perceived or portrayed as liberators who fight against an unjust system, a colonial power or a corrupt or illegitimate government with the objective of delivering a territory from said oppression. Rebels generally have an ideological leaning and are inclined to seek popular and sometimes international legitimacy as they ultimately aim to replace the government. This last element ensures a certain operational ethic within rebel groups that often enforce uniforms, ranks and behavioral codes to obtain a status as combatants that gives them protections and credibility under international law. Rebels claim to rely on popular support, but in reality, they frequently benefit from foreign military and financial support, enabling them to operate freely without concern for the well-being of the local population in the rural areas from which they govern.

Warlords—these VNSAs usually emerge in an environment in which there is already a high level of violence, such as civil wars. They are mainly charismatic local leaders who, by establishing their own private army and exploiting indigenous resources, have carved up a territory within the state—often linked to their ethnic affiliation—which they claim to rule.⁹ Warlords benefit from a situation of chaos and a breakdown of public authority and impose their own rule through coercion and patronage. They have a vested interest in the security and stability of their own territory,¹⁰ and can provide temporary enclaves of peace and governance within a conflict zone. They often seek to perpetuate their reign following the cessation of combat by running for public office.

Although these VNSAs are categorized separately, they can change in the course of their existence, creating new ties, exploiting new opportunities and therefore changing their objectives, membership and operations. This is facilitated in an era of globalization where networks are transnational, therefore sustaining each other for a much longer period. As a result, groups that exploit local resources can trade across borders and further abroad, taking advantage of new developments in communications

and transportation. Terrorists, rebels and warlords are known to have engaged in and rely on extensive criminal activities locally and internationally with other illegitimate actors.¹¹

Indeed, it is the differences, rather than the similarities between VNSAs that allow us to categorize them as we have done. Whereas rebels and terrorists seek to *overhaul* the system and replace it with their own philosophical vision, warlords benefit from a *status quo* of chaos and violence in which they can derive their economic prosperity and maintain their local legitimacy.¹² Unlike the other two, warlords have weak ideological ties¹³ and exist primarily for financial reasons. Occupying and controlling *territory*, usually in rural areas and borderlands, is necessary for rebels to achieve their political purpose and for warlords to prosper¹⁴ but until Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) took over large swathes of Mali in 2012, territory appeared to be marginal in the agenda of terrorists. This has since changed as the Islamic State (ISIS) has taken advantage of the political breakdown in Iraq, Syria and Libya, showing that terrorists could also aim to have their own land, further blurring the distinction with rebel groups. Furthermore, whereas rebels and warlords have mostly been active *locally*, terrorists are increasingly operating through transnational ties with other like-minded organizations. It is harder to distinguish a *motive* for individuals (not their leaders) that join groups of VNSAs. Although some may be ideologically or politically motivated, many young men join up simply because there are no other economic alternatives. They are given a gun; they can take what they need from the local population. This is particularly the case in Africa, where *raison d'être* is a less significant motivator for recruits.

While this is not by any means an exhaustive list of VNSAs in Africa, we have chosen to focus on these three categories in this volume. There will be much debate over the labels and definitions, the exclusion of criminal organizations, militias or mercenaries. The cases included in this book have addressed some of the most threatening groups on the continent, those that exercise indiscriminate violence and claim a desire to overhaul the existing political system.

Each chapter in this volume defines and dissects a VNSA in an African context. Authors have focused on the environmental factors that lead to these groups emerging, their strategy, leadership and organizational structure. Through adopting a similar model for each chapter, but allowing for freedom in definitions and theoretical framework, this volume has been able to aggregate a significant body of knowledge on VNSAs in Africa that can be compared to one another and employed for future analysis and policy-making.

SYNOPSIS

This volume is organized into three categories. The first part looks exclusively at terrorists and more specifically at terrorists who justify their existence and use of violence by pointing to an Islamist ‘mission’. All three terrorist groups, Boko Haram, ISIS and AQIM, defy the classical definitions of terrorism by virtue of their pursuit and acquisition of territory. As such, we could have labeled this chapter ‘Insurgents’ rather than ‘Terrorists’. However, these VNSAs’ ideological leanings and attack pattern connect them to other Islamist groups that have been categorized by the United Nations, the United States and other countries as terrorists. Groups collectively classified as Islamist terrorists by both policy makers and the media have maintained territorial aspirations for the better part of the twenty-first century, challenging definitions born from studies of twentieth-century terrorists.

In Chap. 2, Abubakar shows that, while Islamist reform movements have long prevailed in Nigeria, the transformation of Boko Haram from a sectarian organization to a terrorist group is symptomatic of local religious and political competition as well as the product of international linkages. Systematic failures from the security forces and the state exacerbated the situation, allowing for Boko Haram to thrive in northeast Nigeria. For Abubakar, it is the specific local and historical context however that created the possibility for Boko Haram to become a challenge to the Nigerian state, but knowledge of this environment could have enabled the government to anticipate and better respond to the threat.

Chapter 3 continues to bridge definitional gaps as the terrorist group AQIM successfully took advantage of local dynamics to claim and control territory in Mali. Cocodia shows that by hijacking the secessionist movement of Tuareg rebels, AQIM and its allies were able to exploit the government’s failed security policies and the general breakdown of the military apparatus to create the first terrorist state of the twenty-first century. Once again, the prevalence of existing Islamist movements and a weak and corrupt government within a large and porous state created the opportunity for an organized and well-armed group to emerge.

In Chap. 4, Jaeger evaluates the historical factors and political processes that led to the formation and expansion of ISIS in Libya. While she categorizes the VNSA as insurgents rather than terrorists due to their territorial aspirations and appeal for legitimacy, she does maintain the tie between the ISIS in Libya and its counterpart and predecessors

in Iraq and Syria, including Al-Qaeda. The rise of violent Libyan Islamist groups precedes the fall of Qaddafi, but for Jaeger, it is very much the product of the former President's policies. In addition and similarly to Nigeria, Libya also has a history of Islamist movements and ties to foreign Islamist groups that took advantage of the existing failures in Libya's security apparatus and the breakdown of civil-military relations in 2011. A coordinated counterinsurgency strategy to halt ISIS's progress is unlikely in the short term in view of the ongoing civil war and competition for power that has consumed the political investment of the international community.

The three case studies highlight similarities that led to the rise of violent Islamist groups within the country. Boko Haram, ISIS and AQIM emerged from rural areas, beyond the reach and interest of the central government. They exploited existing religious and nationalist sentiments and acute poverty to recruit followers and impose their worldview on the areas they controlled. Furthermore, all three groups benefited from a general international apathy—despite the West's claims to fight Islamist terrorists worldwide. AQIM was able to rule huge parts of Mali for the better part of a year without foreign involvement, creating opportunities for like-minded individuals to meet and trade ideas and resources. As a result, members of Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda and ISIS have improved their network and know-how with tangible effects on the operational and organizational success of these groups in subsequent years.

Part II of this volume has the widest coverage with four different groups of rebels from the DRC, Rwanda, Ethiopia and the CAR.

In Chap. 5 on Islamist rebels in the DRC, Cullen makes an unusual contribution as he investigates the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group of rebels that operates on the margins of an extremely violent country. The originality of this chapter lies in the assessment of the group's claim to having an Islamist affiliation, suggesting a closer connection to Islamist terrorists than to a typical rebel group. Not so, argues Cullen, who shows that the operations and objectives of the ADF remain economic rather than political or ideological—although this has evolved since the group originally aspired to overthrow the government in Uganda and replace it with Islamist rule. Ultimately, Cullen concludes, that the ADF has undergone several transformations in response to the political situation in Uganda and especially since the Congolese and Ugandan military's incursions into their territory.

In her Chap. 6 on Séléka and anti-Balaka rebel movements, Isaacs-Martin argues that despite the media's portrayal of the conflict, religion and ethnicity play a minor role in the ongoing violence in the CAR. Rather,

she places the burden squarely on the government's shoulders: a succession of autocratic presidents who have clung to power by manipulating existing ethnic and religious identities and by creating military alliances with a variety of militias that target civilians hostile to the government. The exclusion of certain groups from political power and the high levels of poverty present in the country created the perfect storm for rebel groups to prosper, whereas the use of religious discourse has lent a veil of legitimacy to their actions. According to Isaacs-Martin, in the CAR, rebel groups most often coalesce through convenience than purposeful affiliation.

Ethiopia, similarly to the CAR, has experienced violent transitions of power for the past few decades. In Chap. 7, Mesfin shows that a history of secessionist movements and repeated military failures against rebel groups in Ethiopia and the province of Eritrea weakened the central government, enabling a takeover by the rebel group the Tigray People's Liberation Front. According to the author, the Tigray People's Liberation Front 'obsessively fears in-depth change in the distribution of political power' and has taken measures to repress any potential opposition effectively operating as an 'ethnocratic dictatorship'. In a country that is so deeply divided, this has led to the proliferation of secessionist rebel groups. A lack of leadership and clear objectives, however, has kept rebel groups from mounting a real challenge to the government. Mesfin's exclusive insight into the government's counterinsurgency strategy is a priceless contribution to this volume.

In another example of a rebel group taking power and governing a country, Melvin reviews in Chap. 8 the evolution of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) from its formation until today and zeros in on their role in the 1994 genocide. The rebel groups' past has left marks, according to Melvin who argues that under the rhetoric and international praise, the RPF continues to violate human rights in Rwanda and interfere in the affairs of its neighbors. These actions are legitimized by conceptions of security and insecurity informed by Rwanda's violent history. The RPF successfully transitioned from its status as a rebel group to that of a legitimate power holder however, albeit it remains unaccountable and unchallenged domestically and internationally.

A common trend of weak and repressive governments can be observed in all countries that have experienced persistent rebellions from various groups. A lack of legitimacy and draconian military measures combine to alienate populations and eventually prompt them to challenge the state by use of arms. As Mesfin and Melvin show, a rebel group turned into the government may bring temporary peace but by mimicking the

policies of their predecessors, they inevitably bring about more resistance. Furthermore, these rebels-turned-presidents cling to power, complicating the transition process when they eventually die.

There is a fine line separating rebels from warlords; in the case of the LRA, covered by Van Wyk in Chap. 9. Kony led the violent group in Uganda without any clear political or ideological objectives. He not only legitimized his authority through extreme violence, religion, spirit mediums and rituals based on self-ascribed spiritual duty but also provided some socio-economic security to his followers. The forced recruitment of thousands of Acholi children and the leader's aspiration to have total control over the population rather than over a specific territory distinguish Kony as a warlord. Once more, lack of political will and military competence has undermined the government's ability to confront the LRA.

In Chap. 10, Tar and Wapmuk tackle the complicated dynamics between Charles Taylor, the ambitious Liberian warlord, and the Revolutionary United Front, the rebel group in Sierra Leone. According to the authors, a combination of political fragmentation due to multiple military coups, political alienation and especially the abundant supply of diamonds led to the nine-year civil war. This violent period was characterized by a lack of local political movement or ambition and high levels of foreign interference, especially from surrounding countries; support for the Sierra Leone government was principally evidenced in the supply of weapons and training whereas insurgents sold diamonds freely, thereby perpetuating the conflict.

Tar and Mustapha highlight the difficulties in defining warlordism and terrorism in the case of Somalia (Chap. 11). The ambitions of clans' warlords helped accelerate the disintegration of the state, but only through alliances and cooperation with said clans have Al-Shabaab been able to leverage any political legitimacy. Furthermore, the blatant racketeering and plundering Al-Shabaab have exercised in Somalia push them toward the category of 'warlord', albeit with an extremist religious ideology. The authors argue that this is the result of decades of marginalization and poverty orchestrated by its pre- and post-independence leaders. External attacks against Kenya and Uganda have also brought accusations that Al-Shabaab is part of the global network of terrorists, and it surely entertains strong connections to Al-Qaeda. However, the group's local political objectives and reliance on existing clans blur any attempts to strictly categorize this VNSA.

The final chapter on pirates written by Allen shows how political weaknesses, economic failures and an opportunity for quick, if not easy, income have led to the rise of piracy off the Somali coast and the Gulf of Guinea.

While a concerted international response eventually dealt with the Somali pirates, the Gulf of Guinea, especially the Nigerian coastline, remains highly vulnerable to piracy. These VNSAs are motivated strictly by financial interests but have been prompted by political and economic circumstances beyond their control. Pirates therefore fit perfectly in this volume on VNSAs in Africa who share together a sense of opportunism and hopelessness that together have turned Africa into a continent particularly prone to violence.

NOTES

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PART I

Terrorists

CHAPTER 2

From Sectarianism to Terrorism in Northern Nigeria: A Closer Look at Boko Haram

Dauda Abubakar

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Boko Haram as a violent non-state actor in early 2000s in northeastern Nigeria, specifically in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, can be located within the broader history of militant Islamic reform movements and competing theological positions taken by different *clerics* (learned Islamic teachers) on the interpretation of core Islamic doctrines, creed and practices. Also relevant is the attendant fragmentation of sacred authority¹ through sectarian factionalism in Northern Nigeria's Islamic landscape.² In the context of this chapter, the notion of fragmentation of sacred authority refers to the rise of mass anti-Sufi and pro-Salafi radical Islamist movements that challenged the legitimacy of hereditary Muslim leaders (*Emirs*, the Sultan of Sokoto and *clerics*) on theological and doctrinal practices of Islam, as a dominant religious faith in Northern Nigeria.³

The process of fragmentation in the religious realm also involved the emergence of diverse sectarian and politically disruptive groups such as the *Izala* Movement, *Maitatsine*, the Shi'ite sect of Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, and more

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recently Boko Haram. With differing anecdotal emphasis, these groups criticize the religious establishment and political elites for their complicity with Western modernity, and also oppose the Nigerian state and its security agencies as citadels of corruption, predatory rule, exploitation of the poor and social vices. Islamic reform, for these sects, is the necessary starting point for reforming the Nigerian postcolonial state. Within the last eight years of its insurgency, Boko Haram's rampage across poverty-stricken northeastern Nigeria has led to the displacement of several million civilians and thousands of casualties. Boko Haram's indiscriminate violence against the Nigerian state and civilians made headlines in the local, international and social media, following the abduction of girls from Chibok town in Borno state in April 2014.

Although the group started as a conglomerate of just a few zealous Islamists (calling themselves "Nigerian Taliban") that migrated to the remote town of Kannama in Yobe state from the Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri,⁴ their strict puritanical interpretation of Islam quickly drew them into conflict with the local community. When the police intervened, the group, which at this incipient phase was led by Mohammed Ali, not only attacked the security agents in Kannama but later extended its rampage into surrounding communities. As Kyari Mohammed succinctly observed, the group "...launched attacks on police stations and government buildings and generally wreaked havoc on the Yunusari, Tarmuwa, Borsari, Geidam and Damaturu local government areas [of Yobe state] between December 21, 2003 and January 1, 2004."⁵ In Damaturu, the Yobe state capital, they ransacked the main police station and looted the armory. It is pertinent to note that although Mohammed Yusuf—the leader of the radical *Yusufiyya* youth wing at the Indimi Mosque that would lead to Boko Haram, and a student of Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam⁶—did not participate directly in the Kannama uprising, he nonetheless shared the ideology of Islamist reform through the use of violence against the Nigerian state. Following the failed encounter at Kannama, Mohammed Yusuf slipped away into self-exile in Saudi Arabia. The group, however, would maintain its radical jihadi ideology under the tentative hawkish leadership of Mohammed Ali. Several scholars have delved into diverse explanations for the rise of Boko Haram ranging from religious motivations, Salafist-jihadi ideological orientations, socio-economic grievances against the Nigerian state, to the history of radical Islamic militancy in Northern Nigeria and the fragmentation of sacred authority as well as political elite manipulations for the control of local and central power.⁷

This chapter examines the emergence of Boko Haram, as a violent non-state actor by situating its genesis within the broader historical context of Islamic reform movements and sectarian identity formation in Northern Nigeria. I argue that factors such as socio-economic grievances and extreme poverty in northeastern Nigeria, the rise of radical Salafi-jihadist ideology within the context of fragmenting sacred authority in Northern Nigeria,⁸ and elite contestations for political power in the context of a weak, corrupt and predatory Nigerian state, as well as repression and gross human rights violation perpetrated by the Nigerian military and security forces against innocent civilians may be drivers of Boko Haram's insurgency. However, a closer look at the movement suggests that issues of sectarian factionalism and theological fragmentation within Northern Nigeria's religious marketplace provide an important lens for unpacking the roots of the violent insurgency and its implications for local, regional and global security.

Furthermore, this chapter contends that the inept response of the Nigerian state—especially its failure to collect actionable intelligence—institutional corruption within the military,⁹ coupled with the excessive repression against an innocent civilian population (especially in Maiduguri, the epicenter of the insurgency) alienated the citizenry from the project of a collective national fight against Boko Haram. The chapter is divided into three related sections. Following the introduction, I briefly outline the historical context of Islamic reform movements beginning with the nineteenth-century revolution of Uthman dan Fodio which overthrew the *Habe* (Hausa) rulers and established the Sokoto Caliphate that lasted from 1804 until the advent of British colonial rule in early 1900s. Several postcolonial Islamic movements in Northern Nigeria tend to refer to dan Fodio's radical overthrow of the decadent Hausa rulers as a source of doctrinal inspiration for the purification of a decadent Nigerian state and society and the reinstatement of Shari'a law. The second section traces the genesis of Boko Haram within the broader context of what Ousmanne Kane aptly describes as the “fragmentation of sacred authority” in Northern Nigeria¹⁰ whereby the traditional Sufi Orders of *Qadiriyā* and *Tijjaniyya* are challenged by militant Islamic groups such as the *Izala* Movement, the *Maitatsine* sect of the 1980s, Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky's Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN)¹¹ (inspired by the Shi'ite 1979 Iranian Revolution) and the *Ahlus-Sunna* to which late Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam and Mohammed Yusuf belong.¹² I also discuss the early phase of the confrontations between the “Nigerian Taliban” and security forces in

Yobe state and their subsequent relocation to Maiduguri from where they crystallized into a violent terror group, following the extra-judicial murder of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in police custody in 2009. The radical Salafi-jihadi-inspired belief, objectives and ideology of Boko Haram will also be discussed in this section. In the third and final section of the chapter, I draw conclusions on the impact of Boko Haram terrorist insurgency on socio-economic, politics and livelihoods of the citizenry in northeastern Nigeria. I also identify the various policy options and trajectories for the resolution of religious conflicts and terrorism in Northern Nigeria. First, I return to the historical context of Islamic reform movements in Northern Nigeria, the incipient fragmentation of sacred authority and its integral theological/doctrinal relationship to the rise of radical Salafist-jihadi groups in the region.

RADICAL ISLAMIC REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE TRADITION OF JIHAD IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Islam was introduced into Northern Nigeria through the Trans-Saharan trade, but its practice has mainly been limited to the courts of the traditional rulers and urban centers. More specifically, in the ancient Kanem-Bornu Empire (present northeastern Nigeria) Islam was introduced as early as the ninth century through Sudan. By 1804, an Islamic scholar called Sheikh Uthman dan Fodio (d. 1817) embarked on a revolutionary reform of Islam through Jihad against the *Habe* (Hausa) rulers, because he considered them to be mixing Islam with mysticism and traditional beliefs. For dan Fodio, the *Habe* rulers were not “Islamic enough.”¹³ He accused them of *bid'a* (heretical innovation) and declared *takfir* (accusing Muslims of unbelief) that should be punished by death. After successfully mobilizing his followers as well as disgruntled slaves in Hausaland, dan Fodio defeated the *Habe* rulers and established an expansive Islamic state called the Sokoto Caliphate based on Shari'a law. This theocratic state would exist for approximately 100 years before it was sacked by the British in 1904, and later amalgamated into present day Nigeria in 1914.

Thus, it is not surprising that over 200 years later, radical Salafi-jihadi groups such as Boko Haram would call on Muslims in Northern Nigeria to “...fight for the restoration of the Caliphate of Usman dan fodio which the white man fought and fragmented,” and through this narrative, they present themselves as “...the true heirs of Nigeria’s pre-colonial Islam,

while the Sultan and his emirs appear as traitors.”¹⁴ It could be noticed that a similar pattern of theological critique that was used against the Habe rulers by dan Fodio to unleash his jihad is being appropriated by Boko Haram against the Islamic establishment and the Nigerian state in the twenty-first century. As an Islamic reformer in the tradition of dan Fodio, Abubakar Gumi also spoke on the imperatives of restoring “the golden period of the Sokoto Caliphate.”¹⁵ As Murray Last rightly observed: “The Boko Haram incident follows a pattern that goes back at least 200 years in Northern Nigeria, and has a logic to it.”¹⁶ Gumi, who traces his genealogy to the dan Fodio dynasty and the Sokoto Caliphate, has been a central actor in the deepening of Salafi-jihadist doctrines and ideology in Northern Nigerian Islam. After his studies in Sudan and later Saudi Arabia, he settled in Kaduna and embarked on the translation of the Qur'an into Hausa language. Using the mass media such as television, Radio Kaduna, recorded sermons on audiocassettes and local newspapers, Gumi propagated Wahhabi-Salafist strain of Islamist theology and openly criticized the Sufi orders of Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya. He accused them of heretical innovations, and declared *takfir* against the Tijjaniyya order. Furthermore, Gumi “labeled Sufi orders *mushrikun* (polytheists) and declared in a sermon in April 1977 that anyone who recited the *salat al-fatih*, one of the central prayers of the Tijjanis, should be regarded as an unbeliever and could therefore be legally killed.”¹⁷ With the support of the then Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Gumi established a Nigerian pan-Islamic organization called *Jama'atul Nasril al-Islam* (the Association for the victory of Islam—JNI). Gumi became the primary focal point of theological, doctrinal and ideological interface between emerging radical Islamists in Northern Nigeria and their Wahhabi-Salafist counterparts in Saudi Arabia. In 1987, Gumi won the King Faisal International Award “for services to Islam”, but within Nigeria, his constant anti-Sufi sermons “...led to violent clashes between his followers and Sufi sympathizers, including stabbings during prayers in mosques and killing of prominent opponents.”¹⁸ The rise of *Izala* Movement and its violent hatred toward followers of Sufi Orders based on theological and doctrinal differences deepened the fragmentation of sacred authority as well as the cohesion within the Muslim *Umma* (community) in Northern Nigeria, especially over issues of ownership and leading prayers in mosques. As one Nigerian Muslim intellectual lamented:

The mosque has historically been a forum for the communal manifestation of Islam through which identity, solidarity and social cohesion were constantly enhanced. However, Izala insists that it has become imperative to establish separate mosques in Nigeria today because of fundamental doctrinal differences.... The logical consequences of this position is that Izala members cannot accept that followers of the Sufi orders should lead them in prayer....separating mosques has been one of the sources of friction which has continued to keep tension high, attracting criticism against Izala even from non-Sufis.¹⁹

In addition to the above historical context of radical Islamic reform movements in Northern Nigeria, represented by Uthman dan Fodio's jihad, the rise of both Gumi's violent Salafi-jihadi doctrines and the establishment of the anti-Sufi *Izala* Movement contributed to increased sectarianism and the fragmentation of sacred authority. Northern Nigeria's socio-political and religious landscape also experienced heightened tensions and violent conflicts, not only between different Islamic sects but also between Christians and Muslims.

In the 1980s, a *cleric* (Islamic teacher) known as Mohammadu Marwa from neighboring Cameroon, began advocating an Islamic theology that not only criticized Sufi orders in Kano but also condemned modern technology, especially items such as radios, wrist watches, cars, bicycles and motorcycles as corrupting influences and stated that those who use such items were not true Muslims. Marwa's criticism of Muslims as well as the general social, political and religious practices in Nigeria was always provocative and involved cursing those in power—hence his movement was called *Maitatsine* (the one who curses). Frictions between Marwa's followers and Sufi orders in Kano soon degenerated into violent conflict. On December 18, 1980, Marwa's sect launched an attack on police formations, government offices, churches, moderate Muslims and Christians. By the time the armed forces dislodged *Maitatsine* and his followers, about 6,000 people had been killed, including Mahammadu Marwa and thousands of his adherents.²⁰ Remnants of Marwa's sect would later gather in northern cities such as Maiduguri, Yola, Potiskum and Gombe from where they unleashed more violence on security agencies, especially police, moderate Muslims and Christians.

By 1983, security agencies were able to restore some semblance of peace and security in the various cities where *Maitatsine* riots erupted. However, the *Maitatsine* violence was only a prelude of what was to happen later in 2009 as a result of the eruption of Boko Haram, which

will be discussed later in the chapter. Suffice it to say that if dan Fodio's jihad against Habe rulers in the nineteenth century set the stage for the use of militant violence against those regarded as perverted Muslims and unbelievers, then Gumi's assertion of *takfir* against Sufi orders found its crystallization in the form of *Maitatsine* violent attacks against moderate Muslims, police, the army, Christians, Churches and businesses that, in the theology of Marwa, represented the corrupting influence of Western modernity in a predominantly Islamic Northern Nigeria.²¹

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Northern Nigeria's social and political landscape increasingly became a terrain not only for religious entrepreneurs seeking followers and legitimization of their own theology/doctrinal positions, but political elites also patronized religious leaders (Muslim clerics and Christian Pastors) during intermittent elections to secure votes. Thus, political mobilization in the Nigerian space precariously began to take on not only ethnic and regional identity divides, but even more dangerously exploited the nascent religious fault lines between Christians and Muslims. These, as I will show later, has serious implications for Nigeria's existential survival as a cohesive and sovereign political entity.

In Nigeria, elections in local, state or Federal legislatures and executive offices increasingly became moments of mobilization along party lines as well as religious affiliations. Furthermore, debates around the implementation of Islamic Shari'a law also became very contentious, and more often than not, degenerated into violence. For example, following the return to democratic rule in 1999 and the ascendance of Olusegun Obasanjo (a Christian of Yoruba extraction from the South West) to the Presidency under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Governor of Zamfara state, Ahmed Sani Yerima of the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), introduced Shari'a penal code to reflect the precolonial practice of Islamic law in Northern Nigeria. Eleven other Governors in Northern Nigeria would follow Zamfara's example by introducing Shari'a in their states. This generated a violent response from the minority Christian communities, especially in Kaduna and Plateau states. It is estimated that the May 2000 Shari'a riots in Kaduna might have left approximately 5,000 dead and many more displaced.²² In Northern Nigerian cities such as Jos, Zaria, Maiduguri and Kaduna, people are increasingly engaging in residential self-segregation by living in areas where their co-religionists reside to ensure their safety and security in case of a sudden eruption of ethno-religious violence.

During the controversial Shari'a debates of 1999–2002, Northern governors and political elites also stoked the embers of violence through their speeches that called on the masses and convince them that their leaders support Islamic reform. For example, Muhammadu Buhari (who would later be elected as President in 2015) assured his supporters that: “I can die for the cause of Islam...” and that the activists who are insisting on the full implementation of Shari'a are “fighting” for their rights. Furthermore, Bukar Abba Ibrahim, the then Governor of Yobe state, declared that: “If necessary, we are prepared to fight another civil war. We cannot be blackmailed into killing Shari'a.”²³ As Harnischfeger succinctly puts it, Boko Haram's militancy is, “in part, a reaction to the cynical game of politicians who mobilized religious sentiments in the interest of their political ambitions. By posing as campaigners of an Islamic renewal, they discredited themselves...”²⁴ and inadvertently empowered religious extremism in the form of terrorism that would engulf northeastern Nigeria.

It is within the context of the foregoing historical narrative that we can understand the emergence of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria's religious landscape. As indicated earlier, Islamic reform movements in Northern Nigeria ranging from dan Fodio's nineteenth-century revolution against Habe rulers, Gumi's Wahhabi-Salafist theological criticism of Sufi orders, Sheikh Ismaila Idris's *Izala* Movement and its violent attacks against Sufis to Maitatsine's sectarian violence against what he termed perverted Muslims and corrupting Western modernity in Nigeria, are all important antecedents for the emergence of Boko Haram. Thus, Mohammed Yusuf's theology tapped into this embedded tradition of Islamic militancy in Northern Nigeria and gained traction not only because of its zealous claim to represent true Islam, but it also mobilized supporters by exploiting the issues of Shari'a implementation, grievances against the corruption of the Nigerian state, its security apparatuses and the Islamic religious establishment. The fragmentation of sacred authority signified by the emergence of diverse radical Islamic reform movements and the subsequent use of violence to impose a specific theological interpretation of Islamic doctrine on the Muslim community (*Ummah*) provided Mohammed Yusuf with the enabling socio-religious space to carve up an audience and following, especially in northeastern Nigeria. The next section of the chapter examines the rise of Boko Haram by describing its beliefs, objectives and the response of the Nigerian state to the threat of terrorism.

BOKO HARAM AND THE RISE OF TERRORISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Several scholars have provided different explanations about the genesis of Boko Haram and its strategy of terrorism not only against the Nigerian state and security agencies but also against traditional rulers, Christians/Churches, schools, United Nations Offices in Abuja, as well as targeting prominent *Izala* leaders and Muslims.^{25, 26} While some scholars argue that the rise of Boko Haram could be traced to endemic poverty in Northern Nigeria, where over 60% of the population lives below the poverty line, others contend that Boko Haram is an outcome of perceived socio-economic and political marginalization of the north (especially northeast). Advocates of this perspective assert that following the 2011 victory of Goodluck Jonathan—a Christian of Ijaw extraction from the South-South geopolitical zone—in the Presidential election, northern elites felt that political power is gradually slipping out of their grip. Thus, according to this narrative, Boko Haram is a subtle violent religious insurrection aimed at making Nigeria ungovernable under a Christian President. A third line of explanation, usually proffered by international security scholars, attempts to locate Boko Haram's ideological inspiration within the broader global Salafist-jihadi movements such as Al-Qaeda, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magrib (AQIM) and Al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa. A fourth perspective holds that Boko Haram could be seen as a repeat of the *Maitatsine* riots of the 1980s in which followers of Mohammed Yusuf see themselves as heirs to the radical cleric, Mohammadu Marwa, who challenged the authorities of the Nigerian state in the early 1980s.²⁷

While each of the foregoing perspectives provides some insight into understanding the roots, ideological and theological inspirations that may have contributed to the blossoming of Boko Haram into a dreaded terrorist group, I contend that the genesis of Boko Haram could be located not only within the enduring tradition of Islamic militancy in Northern Nigeria as outlined above; but also in the local complex intersections of aspiring religious authority and legitimization on the one hand (Mohammed Yusuf) and the then incumbent Borno state Governor, Ali Modu Sheriff, on the other hand, over the largesse of electoral patronage; second, the internal theological and doctrinal schism between Mohammed Yusuf and the *Ahlus-Sunna* Islamist establishment, especially his mentor at the Mohammed Indimi Mosque, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam; third, attempts by

the *Yusuffiya* Movement to carve out a sectarian identity for itself within Northern Nigeria's Islamic community; and fourth, what Muhammad Sani Umar calls the will to power by competing *clerics* and political elites within the Nigerian political and religious marketplace. As Umar put it, religious factors are inseparably linked to the will to power as the most dominant themes in the emergence of Boko Haram, and that a holistic conception which draws on “divergent religious and intellectual orientations as well as the political, economic, and historical factors... combine to make possible the emergence and the violent turn of Boko Haram.”²⁸ It is pertinent to mention here that Boko Haram is designated as a terrorist organization not only because of its modus operandi which involves unleashing violence to inflict terror and fear against all those that oppose their Islamist puritanical ideology, but their leader, Abu Shekau himself declared the organization's allegiance and affiliation to ISIS, thereby indicating their collective identification with global jihadi terror network that has emerged since the September 11 attacks in US. For its part, ISIS's leadership hierarchy under Abu Baghadtai has also legitimized the alliance by designating Boko Haram as the “Islamic State – West Africa Province” (ISWAP).

The Political-Religious Nexus in Borno

Between 1999 and 2003, Ali Modu Sheriff was a Senator representing Borno central Senatorial district, while Mallah Kachalla was the Governor. It was also the time during which several northern Governors were under pressure not only from Islamic activists, civic associations and *clerics* to fully implement Shari'a as Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima had done in Zamfara, but there were also mass protests by ordinary Muslims insisting on the implementation of Shari'a law. Senator Ali Modu Sheriff (SAS) had his eye on the Governorship office and began to criticize Mallah Kachallah for vacillating on the implementation of Shari'a in Borno state. During the 2003 campaign, SAS promised to fully implement Shari'a law, if elected. Mohammed Yusuf with his large followership from Indimi Mosque supported SAS, thereby enhancing his votes and ultimate victory at the polls.²⁹ Some members of SAS's political thugs known as “ECOMOG” were also supporters of Mohammed Yusuf. In addition to this electoral pact, SAS also assured Mohammed Yusuf that upon winning the governorship election, he would not only implement Shari'a fully in Borno state but also appoint members of the *Yusuffiya* Movement into

his Cabinet, particularly the lucrative Ministry of Finance. However, after securing victory and becoming the Governor of Borno state, SAS did not appoint Alhaji Buji Foi, a member of the *Yusiffiya* Movement, as Commissioner of Finance. Instead, he put him in charge of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. To further placate Mohammed Yusuf and his supporters, SAS gave them several motorcycles to start a microfinance business in local transportation.³⁰ While SAS as governor thought that he had rewarded Yusuf and his supporters for their votes, the latter felt betrayed not only because they lost out in securing the coveted Ministry of Finance, but SAS also stopped giving “ECOMOG” thugs and members of the *Yusifiyya* Movement further largesse from state coffers. The dice was cast. Mohammed Yusuf began criticizing the Governor for being corrupt and insensitive to the needs of the poor and unemployed youth in Borno state. The setting up of a Joint Task Force (JTF—Operation Flush, composed of police and the military to curb criminality in Maiduguri and its environs) further exacerbated tensions between Mohammed Yusuf, his *Yusifiyya* followers on the one hand and the Borno state government and security agencies on the other.³¹

It is also important to mention here that another dimension of the complex political and religious nexus between Boko Haram and Nigeria’s predatory elites can be discerned from the various efforts by security agencies to nip the bud at its earlier phase of inception, but they were always frustrated by higher authorities. Although security agencies had arrested Yusuf on several occasions and taken him to the Federal capital, Abuja, for further interrogation on his radical Islamist views, he always ended up returning home free, to a tumultuous welcome and celebration in Maiduguri by his teaming supporters and disciples. These encounters may have been a source of frustration for security agencies, since Yusuf seems to be highly connected to powerful members of the then ruling party—the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the federal government. This is further attested by the fact that after the 2009 extra-judicial murder of Mohammed Yusuf, Buji Foi and Baba Fugu in the headquarters of Police, President Obasanjo made a special visit to Maiduguri, to condole the families of the deceased and also explore the possibilities of a peaceful resolution of the unfolding violence, but to no avail. Obasanjo’s visit did not placate Shekau and members of the *Yusifiyya* Movement, nor convince them to come to the negotiating table. Rather, they took the path of radical jihadist violence against the Nigerian state and citizenry.

SALAFIST-JIHADI IDEOLOGY AND BOKO HARAM

Prior to the 2009 violence in Maiduguri, Mohammed Yusuf had established his base in a neighborhood called *Unguwan doki*. He named his mosque Marqaz Ibn Taymiyya after the revered Damascene Salafist theologian, Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), whose work has inspired Yusuf's doctrines. What are the key doctrines that Mohammed Yusuf expounded to his followers? Why did it resonate among the unemployed youth in Maiduguri, in particular, and northeastern Nigeria in general? What are the objectives and ideology of Boko Haram and its implications for the Nigerian state and regional security in the Lake Chad Basin area? According to Alex Thurston, Boko Haram has its roots “in the religious landscape of northern Nigeria and in the intellectual currents connecting northern Nigeria and the Middle East,...”³² in particular and the broader Muslim world in general. In crafting his Salafist-jihadi theology, Mohammed Yusuf drew inspiration from the works of the Palestinian-Jordanian theorist Abu Mohammad al-Maqdishi (b. 1959), specifically borrowing the hardline doctrine of *al-wala'wa-l-barā*, which means “exclusive loyalty to those they consider true Muslims, and complete disavowal of all others.”³³ In the words of Mohammed Yusuf himself:

*What will make you a soldier for Allah first and foremost, you make a complete disavowal of every form of unbelief: the Constitution, the legislature....worshiping tombs, idols, whatever. You come to reject it in your speech and your body and your heart. Moreover, Allah and His Messenger and the believers, you love them in your speech and your body and your heart.*³⁴

Flowing from this theology of exclusive loyalty, which Yusuf appropriated from al-Maqdishi, he further develops a rejectionist doctrine, particularly toward Western modernity including democracy, education, science and Darwinism. With Nigeria's transition to democratic rule in 1999 and debates around the implementation of Shari'a, a disavowal of democracy through which SAS and Obasanjo came to power provided the cannon fodder for Mohammed Yusuf's provocative criticisms. Yusuf insists that “...democracy positions the people as an authority in rivalry with [Allah]...whereas Islam demands obedience to the Qur'an and the Sunna. From democracy ...multiple evils flawed, all of them cloaked as freedom: for example freedom of belief allowed apostasy from Islam.”³⁵ He further goes on to urge his followers not just to condemn democracy

but to oppose it because “it is the school of the infidels: following it, having dealings with it, or using its system is disbelief.”³⁶

Another belief of Yusuf and his followers is a complete rejection of the notion that Islam, as a religion, is personal and “exists within the walls of the Mosque.”³⁷ For Boko Haram, personal piety alone is not enough. They insist that true Muslims must confront Nigeria’s decadent and corrupt society that surrounds them, and strive for the establishment of Shari’ā. Another important ideology of Boko Haram is the claim that they embody the “authentic legacy of the early Muslim community” (*al-salaf al-salih* or the pious predecessors of the prophet).³⁸ Drawing on the claim of being part of global Salafism, Boko Haram adherents see themselves as custodians of puritanical Islam with the right to declare other Muslim leaders apostates, or that they have the right to rebel against legitimately constituted state authority, so long as it is not enthroned in accordance with Shari’ā, or to declare those in government positions infidels (*Kufr*). Finally, they claimed the right to use force to impose the Salafi Creed along with their strict and literalist interpretation of the Islamic law on civilians. It is their belief and adherence to this set of extremist Salafi-jihadi ideology that led Boko Haram into violent confrontation with security agencies in Maiduguri, in 2009.

Boko Haram also attracted youths from Maiduguri and its environs, especially among the Kanuri ethnic group, Gwoza people as well as Hausa Fulani and other minority groups from Damboa area. Yusuf’s Salafist theology resonated among the unemployed youths not only because of the perception of being part of a true Muslim community, but even most importantly the microfinance business project reinforced a sense of dignity and respect. Furthermore, since they began to earn income, some of them were able to get married and set up a family within the larger community of the faithful led by Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf’s followership continued to expand, benefiting from the high unemployment and the failures of the Nigerian state to adequately provide its citizenry with social services such as elementary education, healthcare, electricity, roads and clean water, especially in northeastern Nigeria. The primary goal of Boko Haram is to “create a strict Islamic state [Caliphate] in the north that it believes would address the ills of society, including corruption and bad governance.” According to its spokesman, Abu Qaqa: “Our objective is to place Nigeria in a difficult position and even destabilize it and replace it with Shari’ā;...to take Nigeria back to the pre-colonial period when the Sharia law was practiced.”³⁹ Here, Qaqa is certainly alluding to dan

Fodio's nineteenth-century Caliphate as a model of Islamic state that Boko Haram would want to reestablish in postcolonial Nigeria. In pursuing its Salafist-jihadi agenda, Boko Haram secured initial funding not only from Borno state government under SAS but also generated revenue through the microfinance businesses it set up, bank robberies, Middle East Islamic charity groups, ransom from abductions, as well as Al-Qaeda.⁴⁰

After the Kannama uprising (2003–2004) that wreaked havoc in Yobe state, the second phase in the evolution of Boko Haram is what Kyari Mohammed calls the *da'awah* (radical proselytization) phase (2005–2009) during which Mohammed Yusuf returned from his self-imposed exile in Saudi Arabia and embarked on fiery sermons against the Borno state government, the federal authorities, and what he calls “infidels” (Christians) and “hypocritical” Muslims. He began to prepare the minds of his disciples for violent jihad, insinuating whether they could withstand what was to come:

In the process they will abuse you, call you names and some of you may even die. They will shoot some of you, and we will just pray ‘may Allah give you aljanna [Paradise].... Can we endure? We ought to endure. May Allah give us the will to endure. This is how our da'awah is. Patience: this is what we need, brothers. And perseverance upon the truth. Allah is watching us. Victory is certain. What we lack are the helpers. We are not yet primed for victory, but we are working towards getting ready for victory. This is what we are looking for, brothers. This is an incipient da'awah, but it cannot be crushed. It cannot be killed. If we really stand by what the Prophet says we should stand by, even if we die in the process, this da'wah will continue – even after a hundred years. Once the truth comes out,⁴¹ you are in trouble.⁴²

BOKO HARAM'S MILITARIZATION

The armed insurrection that Boko Haram began in July 2009 within the Maiduguri metropolis targeted police stations and the main headquarters along Jos road, the home of police officers, JTF checkpoints and other security agencies. The then President Musa Yar'adua directed the Nigerian army to “crush” the uprising. It is estimated that over 1000 casualties were recorded, most of them disciples of Yusuf.⁴³ During this military crackdown, Mohammed Yusuf, Buji Foi as well as Alhaji Baba Fugu were all killed in an extra-judicial manner within the precincts of police headquarters in Maiduguri. As the violence escalated subsequently, Churches, Pastors, Christian businesses, traditional rulers and particularly

District heads in rural areas were also targeted.⁴⁴ Abubakar Shekau, who became the new leader of Boko Haram, vowed to expand the violence not only within the northeastern states but also to other parts of Lake Chad Basin area and Nigeria in general. It is estimated that following the 2009 repression by the state, Boko Haram's membership rapidly expanded from about 4,000 in 2009 to between 6,000 and 8,000 in 2014,⁴⁵ and it set up underground cells in major Northern Nigerian cities such as Kano, Kaduna,⁴⁶ Jos, Gombe, Yola, Bauchi and Abuja. For example, on Christmas Day 2011, Boko Haram cell launched an attack on St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, Abuja, killing about 43 Christians. In 2012, the underground cell in Kano targeted police stations, State Security Services and prisons killing about 186 people.⁴⁷ In 2014, Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche—a suspected Boko Haram sleeper cell in Abuja area of the Federal Capital Territory—detonated a suicide bomb in Nyanya neighborhood killing over 250 civilians.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in 2015, Boko Haram attacked the relatively prosperous fishing town of Baga in northern Borno killing over 200 residents and razing the town to ashes.⁴⁹ Respondents to interviews conducted in Borno describe the vast devastations between Maiduguri and Damboa, stating that virtually all villages along the main road have been destroyed by rampaging Boko Haram fighters.

In April 2014, Boko Haram operatives attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok (Borno state) and abducted 276 girls who were preparing to take their final exams.⁵⁰ Between 2013 and 2015, Boko Haram attacked the Schools of Agriculture in Gujba and Mamudo, Government Secondary Schools in Potiskum, and Buni-Yadi in Yobe state, where they killed over 100 male students at night.⁵¹ It is reported that all primary and secondary schools in Borno and Yobe states have been closed due to fear of attack on students and teachers by the terrorists. It is estimated that between 2003 and 2016, Boko Haram's terrorist violence in northeastern Nigeria may have led to the death of over 20,000 innocent citizens, and the displacement of another 2.5 million people, especially from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states.⁵² After sacking Bama and Gwoza towns in 2013, Boko Haram declared their "Caliphate" with its capital in Gwoza town. In May 2014, Boko Haram also attacked Gamboru-Ngala in northern Borno state, killing 300 people. Soldiers who were deployed to guard the border town left about an hour before the attack and did not return until it was over.⁵³ It is reported that many towns and rural communities in northern Borno such as Kukawa, Mallam-Fatori, Abadam, Dikwa and Mafa remain under the firm control of Boko Haram fighters.

THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

The response of the Nigerian state to the terrorist violence in northeastern Nigeria has generally been slow, sometimes characterized by total ineptitude in equipping the troops that are deployed to the frontline. Between 2011 and 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency rule in parts of Borno and Yobe states, and additional troops were deployed to fight Boko Haram. In the early phase of the war against Boko Haram, particularly within Maiduguri metropolis, troops were accused of repression and high handedness toward civilians. However, between 2012 and 2013, most of the civilian population was willing to support the soldiers in the fight against the terrorists. This led to the establishment of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)⁵⁴ composed of civilians and security agencies. In 2011, the President signed the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, and in 2012, the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) was designated the national coordinator for counterterrorism to curtail bureaucratic infighting among the various security agencies.⁵⁵ The Defense budget was also increased. For example, in 2011 it was increased from \$625 million to \$6 billion, and between 2012 and 2014, it was increased to \$6.25 billion.⁵⁶ In August 2013, the Federal government established the 7th Infantry Division with about 8,000 troops and charged it with the responsibility of fighting Boko Haram, instead of relying on the JTF.

A regional initiative has also been an important part of the counterterrorist strategy adapted by Nigeria. Following his election in May 2015, President Mohammadu Buhari secured the support of neighboring countries including Niger, Chad and Cameroon to establish a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF—with headquarters in Chad) which, when fully operational, will consist of 8,700 troops that is tasked with securing the Lake Chad Basin area. The African Union also supports this strategy. Nigeria has since contributed over \$100 million to ensure the successful operation of the MNJTF. Chad has since been involved in the fight against Boko Haram and its troops were instrumental in liberating parts of northern Borno from the terror group. Although Boko Haram has lost most of its territory,⁵⁷ recent reports indicate that some of its fighters are secretly sneaking back into Maiduguri and other cities in Northern Nigeria to engage in suicide attacks against soft targets.⁵⁸ Overtures for a negotiated settlement with Boko Haram have faltered on several occasions.⁵⁹ For now, the Federal government has focused its energy on defeating the terrorist group. However, whether this strategy will be successful in ridding the country of terrorism and the long tradition of militant Islam remains to be seen.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of Boko Haram as a violent non-state actor that unleashed immense killings, pillage and destruction on communities in northeastern Nigeria cannot be reduced to a single explanation. As I have shown in this chapter, the genesis of Boko Haram can be traced to the history and tradition of militant Islamic reform movements in Northern Nigeria. Like the ISIS, which is obsessed with the restoration of the “glorious Caliphate,” Boko Haram also takes its doctrinal inspiration from the claim that dan Fodio’s Caliphate and Shari’ā law should be reestablished because the Westphalian-inspired model of the nation-state, anchored on the values of democracy, constitutionalism, sovereignty and the rule of law have all failed in addressing Nigeria’s corruption, predatory rule and moral decadence.

The rise of Boko Haram as a terrorist group in Nigeria’s socio-political landscape in 2003 has seriously undermined national cohesion and led to the destruction of the livelihoods of over six million residents in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.⁶⁰ For over a decade, the regular killings, abductions, bombings, lootings, pillaging and destruction of schools, bridges, markets, businesses and hospitals have blocked socio-economic development in northeastern Nigeria. However, as this chapter demonstrates, Boko Haram’s terrorism has a genealogy that could be located within the incipient tradition of militant Islam, dating back to the nineteenth-century reform movement of dan Fodio and its reincarnation through Abubakar Gumi’s *Wahhabi*-Salafist theology that inspired the discourses of *Izala* Movement and *Ahlus-Sunna*. Dan Fodio’s insurrection against the *Habe* rulers and the subsequent establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, as this chapter reveals, provided a theological model and doctrinal legitimacy for most Salafi-jihadi groups in Northern Nigeria, especially the *Ahlus-Sunna* and Boko Haram. From the twisted theology and doctrines of Mohammed Yusuf described in this chapter, it is clear that the fragmentation of sacred authority in Northern Nigeria’s Islam increasingly provides the socio-religious space for individual *clerics* to propagate violence-driven doctrines that serve their goals of mobilizing followership, and in some instance, using it as a channel for patronage with political elites that seek elected positions.⁶¹ This process has exacerbated the emergence of sectarian groups and factions in Northern Nigeria’s religious landscape.⁶²

In order to curtail the flourishing of violent terrorist ideologies propagated under the cloak of religion, the Federal government should look into the possibilities of a people-driven constitutional amendment that will

regulate the religious marketplace.⁶³ Governments at Federal, state and local levels should also rethink the whole idea of direct financial involvement in Christian or Muslim pilgrimage that have increasingly become channels of patronage and corruption. Aspiring political elites that are seen to be patronizing religious entities to secure votes and power should be sanctioned through legal channels by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) immediately. Furthermore, to curtail the flow of external funding and armaments to terror groups such as Boko Haram,⁶⁴ Nigerian intelligence and other security agencies should engage in proactive information sharing with their counterparts in other countries to ensure tracking of illicit funding to violent non-state actors in the country.

The future trajectories of the fight against Boko Haram's terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin region can be divided into four scenarios: first, Nigerian troops and the MNJTF secure enough fire power and dislodge Boko Haram from its camps and hideouts in the Sambisa forest and Mandara mountains. Second, Boko Haram fighters may retreat into cities and towns such as Maiduguri, Damaturu, Diffa (Niger), Kano, Bauchi, Jos and Kaduna to stage deadly suicide attacks on soft targets. Third, Boko Haram could transform into a roaming band of armed criminal bandits, spread across the Lake Chad Basin and Northern Nigeria, threatening rural communities as well as travelers through armed robberies on highways. A fourth scenario could be a negotiated settlement in which Boko Haram fighters lay down their arms and reintegrate into society, for now, but live to fight another day in the form of another militant Salafi-jihadi group.⁶⁵ To ensure peace and security in the northeast and the Chad Basin region in general, Nigeria and its neighbors should effectively coordinate the operations of the MNJTF so that Boko Haram will be defeated. Allowing the group to hold on to its strongholds in Sambisa forest and the Gwoza mountains will only provide its fighters with the opportunity to attract external attention, draw more Salafi-jihadi fighters from across the Sahel and internationalize the crisis.

NOTES

1. The notion of “fragmentation of sacred authority” in Northern Nigeria’s Islamic landscape has been well articulated by Ousmanne Kane in his book *Muslim Modernity in Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, Leiden, Brill. 2003. Also see Alex Thurston, “Muslim Politics and Shari'a in Kano State, Northern Nigeria,” *African Affairs*, 114/454. p. 31.

2. John Azumah. 2015. Boko Haram in Retrospect. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26 (1). p. 34.
3. For details, see Ousmane Kane. *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 2003; and Alex Thurston “Muslim Politics and Shari'a in Kano State, Northern Nigeria,” *African Affairs*. 114/454: 28–51. 2014.
4. The movement by Muslims from a specific community they regard as corrupt and perverted goes back to the *hijra* of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in the seventh when Islam was founded in the western Arabian Peninsula. The tradition of *hijra* has since then become common, especially among the millinnerian Mahdist. For details on Mahdism and *hijra* in the Sokoto Caliphate, see Paul E. Lovejoy and J. S. Hogendorn. “Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905–06.” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 31 (2). 1990.
5. Kyari Mohammed in Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine (ed). 2004. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. Leiden: African Studies Center. p. 7.
6. The Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri, located along Damboa road, was built by a wealthy business man called Alhaji Mohammed Indimi. The Mosque provided a forum not only for conducting regular prayers by the faithful but also a platform for *Tafsir* (Qu'arabic recitation, especially during *Ramadan* fasting period) by clerics who subscribe to the *Ahlus-Sunna* theology that draws deeply from Salafist doctrines of Islamist reform. Sheik Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam (d. 2007), the cleric of the Dorayi Mosque in Kano, was a regular preacher/teacher at the *Tafsir* in Indimi Mosque. Sometimes, the *Ramadan Tafsir* is conducted at the Government House—the official residence of the Governor; hence, the cleric in charge gets closer to the corridors of power, and the possibilities of patronage. Mohammed Yusuf who would later become the leader of Boko Haram was a student of Sheik Ja'afar Adam. They would later have a doctrinal dispute over the issue of Western education and working for secular government, which culminated in the assassination of Sheik Ja'afar on the eve of the 2007 elections, allegedly by Mohammed Yusuf's followers. *Ahlus-Sunna* refers to the second-generation members of the Izala Movement who are mainly graduates of the University of Medina, Saudi Arabia, and upon their return to Northern Nigeria became dissatisfied with the trajectory of the Islamic reform movement, as well as the overall status of Islam and Muslims in Nigeria. Several members of the *Ahlus-Sunna* were involved in pushing for the implementation of *Shari'a*—Islamic law—in Northern Nigeria, following the return to civil rule in 1999, and the ascendance of President Obasanjo (a Southern Christian) to power at the federal level. Twelve of the 19 states in Northern

- Nigeria would later implement Shari'a as part of their penal code. This would eventually lead to violent clashes between Christians and Muslims in several parts of Northern Nigeria, especially in Plateau and Kaduna states where there are significant Christian communities who perceived the implementation of Shari'a as a threat to religious freedom in a democratic Nigeria.
7. Select works that effectively provide nuanced analyses on the emergence of Bokom Haram and its Salafi-jihadi doctrines include Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine (ed). 2004. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. Leiden: African Studies Center; Abdul Raufu Mustapha (ed). 2014. *Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. London: James Curry; Muhammad S. Umar. "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (42). 2012; Roman Loimeier. 2012. *Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria*. *Africa Spectrum*, 47 (2–3); Abimbola Adesoji. 2010. "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revival in Nigeria." *Africa Spectrum*, 45 (2); Danjibo. 2009. Mimeo. Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The "Maitatsine" and "Boko Haram" Crises in Northern Nigeria. Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan; Ousmane Kane. *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, Andrea Brigaglia. "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Da'wa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Sheik Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam." *Islam in Africa*, Vol. 3 (1). On the tenets of Salafi doctrines, see Quintan Wiktorowicz. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29, 2006.
 8. Ousmanne Kane 2003; Thurston 2014, 2016; Gwarzo 2007; Mustapha 2014. In a recent incisive study on "Understanding Boko Haram," Raufu Mustapha persuasively contends that: "The evidence from the political economy of north-east geopolitical zone suggests that poverty is an important factor in the rise and sustenance of Boko Haram. It is not the only factor.... But it is an important one." He goes on to argue that vertical and horizontal inequalities are important factors in understanding the trajectories of radical extremism in northeastern Nigeria. Available data indicate that northeastern Nigeria is the poorest part of the country "...with 75% of the population being relatively poor, 71.5% being absolutely poor and 51.5% hardly able to feed itself." The breakdown of poverty level in the three states is as follows: Yobe (58%), Borno (56%) and Bauchi (49%). These states, along with Katsina (50%) "...have the highest poverty indices in Nigeria." Furthermore, they have the highest level of unemployment in the country: Yobe (39%), Bauchi (30%), Gomber (29%) and Borno (27%). For further details, see Abdul Raufu Mustapha (ed). 2014. *Sects and Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. James Currey. p. 171–173.

9. At the time of my field work in Nigeria (February–August, 2016), the Federal government under President Buhari has embarked on a crackdown on pervasive corruption in Nigeria's public service. The anticorruption agency—Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has initiated legal proceedings against the former National Security Advisor to President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, retired Major Sambo Dasuki for embezzling over \$2.1 billion—funds that was allocated for the procurement of arms and munitions for fighting the Boko Haram terrorists. Legal action has also been initiated against the former Chief of Defense Staff, Air Commodore Badeh, for embezzling about 48 billion naira from the coffers of the Nigerian Air Force. As at the time of writing, the EFCC has successfully retrieved approximately \$10 billion and several assets, from various state officials who have since been charged to court for embezzlement of public funds. It is obvious that part of the explanation for the failure of the Nigerian military to effectively contain the expansion of Boko Haram terrorists hinges on the problematic issue of institutionalized corruption within the Nigerian Armed Forces, public service sector and society, in general.
10. Ousmanne Kane provides a detailed intellectual history of the rise of Islamic reform movements in Northern Nigeria, particularly the *Izala* Movement and their theological critique of Sufi Orders. Traditional rulers (*Emirs*) and the *Ulamma* (Islamic scholars) who were hitherto the cultural custodians of Islamic faith in the *Ummah* (Islamic community) have increasingly lost their legitimacy in Nigeria's religious market place. The fragmentation of religious authority has increasingly provided the social space for theological and doctrinal disputes and debates over issues such as who is a true Muslim; how should Muslims respond to repression and corruption of the state under non-Muslim rulers; should Muslims work in the public service; and how should Shari'a law be implemented in a multireligious country like Nigeria? For details on the emergence of diverse Islamic movements in Nigeria, see Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Nigeria*, Op. cit.; Adesoji, A. O. "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the response of the Nigerian State." *Africa Today*, 57 (4). 2008; "Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria." *Africa Spectrum*, 45 (2). 2010; Ben Amara, Ramzi. The Izala Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, relationship to Sufis and Perception of Shari'a Re-Implementation, PhD. Thesis, Bayreuth University. 2011; and Thurston, Alex. "Muslim Politics and Shari'a in Kano State, Northern Nigeria." *African Affairs*, 114/454:28–51. 2014.
11. In early 2016, followers of El-Zakzaky were involved in violent altercations with the Nigerian army, which alleged that the Shi'ites wanted to assassinate the Chief of Army Staff, Major General Tukur Buratai, who was visiting military formations in Zaria city. A raid on the compound of El-Zakzaky led

to the death of over 300 of his followers, and the arrest of Ibrahim El-Zakzaky by the soldiers. El-Zakzaky's Islamic Movement in Nigeria has been gaining some support in major Northern Nigerian cities including Zaria, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Katsina and in rural communities, thereby challenging the dominance of the Sufi orders and *Yan Izala* Movement. At the time of writing, El-Zakzaky remains in "protective" custody of the army, which claims that it is for the safety of the cleric.

12. Members of the *Ahlus-Sunna*, particularly late Sheik Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam and his student/protégé Mohammed Yusuf (d. 2009), were part of the Izala Movement, which was founded in 1978 by late Sheikh Ismaila Idris, with its headquarters in Jos. The Salafist Sheikh Abubakar Gumi (1924–1992) was the primary source of spiritual and doctrinal inspiration for *Yan Izala* in Nigeria who stridently challenged the Sufis. *Ahlus-Sunna* represents a group of Northern Nigerian Islamic scholars who went to the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, and upon their return began to emphasize Salafist strain of Islam based on a literalist interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna. The Mohammed Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri provided the platform for these young scholars to popularize their theological and doctrinal interpretation of the Qur'an to their teeming followers. Mohammed Yusuf would eventually mobilize most of his followership from the Indimi Mosque and set up what came to be known as Boko Haram.
13. Dan Fodio's attempt to "purify" Islam in Northern Nigeria through violent Jihad has been reified and romanticized by several Western scholars, especially from the School of Oriental Studies and African Studies (SOAS) and King's College, London. Their narrative, however, is from the victor's perspective, because the analyses insist that dan Fodio's Caliphate lasted for over 100 years and that it represented a model of progressive Islamic government based on Shari'a. Murray Last, for example, claims that dan Fodio's jihad and the Sokoto Caliphate "...that arose out of it, was one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of Nigeria, if not Africa." For works within this genre, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: Life and Times of Shehu Usman dan Fodio*. 2nd ed. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1994; "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the 16th to the 18th Century," *Bulletin, SOAS*, 25 (3), 558–79; Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*. London: Longmans. 1967; and "The Pattern of Dissent: Boko Haram in Nigeria." *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 10, 2009; and "From Dissent to Dissidence: the genesis and development of reformist Islamic groups in Northern Nigeria." In Abdul Raufu Mustapha, (ed). 2014. *Sects and Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. James Currey; and Last, M. "The Search for Security in Muslim Northern Nigeria," *Africa*, 78 (1), 2008. For a nuanced critique of the above perspective, see John Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26 (1): 33–52. 2015.

14. Cited in Johannes Harnischfeger, “Boko Haram and its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State.” In Marc-Antoine Perouse De Montclos (ed). 2004. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. Leiden: African Studies Center. p. 51.
15. Azumah, Op. cit. p. 36.
16. Cited in Azumah, Op. cit. p. 34.
17. Roman Loimeier, “Islamic Reform and Political Change: The example of Abubakar Gumi and the Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria.” In David Westerlund and Evan Evers Rosander (eds) *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*. London: Hurst. 1997.
18. See Azumah, Op. cit. p. 37. Gumi went further to urge the Northern Nigerian government to establish Schools of Arabic Studies in major cities as avenues for Islamic education. Sheikh Ismaila Idris, one of Gumi’s ardent protégés would later establish the *Izala* Movement also known as *Jama’at Izalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat al-Sunna* (Society for the Removal of heretical Innovation and Reestablishment of the Traditions of the Prophet). Gumi has been criticized for introducing the language of *takfir* and *muwalat* into Nigeria’s Islamic discourse and the subsequent rise of violent sectarian confrontations in the 1970s and 1980s. Sufi Orders on their part responded by setting up their joint organizations such as *Kungiyar Jama’tul Halus Sunnati* (Association of the Followers of the Prophet’s teachings) and *Kungiyar Dakarun Dan Fodio* (Association of the followers and defenders of Uthman dan Fodio).
19. Cited in Azumah, Op. cit. p. 37.
20. For a detailed discussion on the *Maitatsine* crisis, see Roman Loimeier. 2012. “Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria.” *Africa Spectrum*, 47 (2–3); N. D. Danjibo, “Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The *Maitatsine* and Boko Haram Crises in Northern Nigeria.” Peace and Conflict Studies Program, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Mimeo. 2009; Adesoji, A. O. “Between *Maitatsine* and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the response of the Nigerian State.” *Africa Today*, 57 (4). 2008.
21. See International Crisis Group, “Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict,” Africa Report No. 168. December 2010.
22. John Paden provides an extensive description of the Sharia riots and related ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, in his well-written book: *Muslim Civic Cultures and Conflict Resolution*. Brookings Institution, 2005. p. 171.
23. Johannes Harnischfeger, “Boko Haram and its Muslim critics: Observations from Yobe State,” in Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine (ed). 2004. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. Leiden: African Studies Center. p. 33–39.
24. Ibid., p. 37.

25. For balanced and grounded analyses on Boko Haram and its emergence, see Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine (ed). 2004. *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. Leiden: African Studies Center; Abdul Raufu Mustapha (ed). 2014. *Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. London: James Curry; Muhammad S. Umar. "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria: A case Study of Boko Haram." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (42). 2012; Roman Loimeier. "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria." *Africa Spectrum*, 47 (2–3), 2012; William Hansen, "Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria." *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2015; Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis," Chatham House, Africa Program Research paper, September 2014; Alex Thurston, "The Disease is Unbelief: Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview" Brookings Institution, *Analysis Paper*, No. 22, January 2016; International Crisis Group, "Curbing Violence in Nigeria: The Boko Haram Insurgency," *Africa Report* No. 216, April 3, 2014; John Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26 (1). 2015. p. 34.
26. Following the extra-judicial murder of its founder, Mohammed Yusuf, in the 2009 Maiduguri uprising, Boko Haram under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau became increasingly violent and targeted several traditional rulers and Islamic leaders. For example, Boko Haram attempted to assassinate the Shehu of Borno, Emir of Kano, Emir of Fika (in Potiskum—Yobe state); in May 2014, Boko Haram ambushed and killed the Emir of Gwoza. Almost all traditional rulers in Northern Borno had to relocate to Maiduguri to ensure their safety. Boko Haram also targeted Sufi leaders such as Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi and Adam al-Nafati. Boko Haram is suspected of involvement in the assassination of Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam in 2007 (Kano), as well as Sheikh Mohammad Awwal Adam Albani in 2014 (Zaria). For a detailed account on the case of Sheikh Ja'afar Adam, see Andrea Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of Wahhabi Da'wa in West Africa: The career and murder of Shaykh Ja'afar Moahmoud Adam (Daura, ca, 1961/1962-Kano 2007)." *Islamic Africa*, Vol. 3. (1), 2012. Boko is also suspected to be behind the attempted assassination of the leader of Izala Movement in Jos, Sheikh Yahaya Jingir in 2015 during a Ramadan Tafsir at their Mosque. It is reported that hundreds of members of the Izala Movement lost their lives during the rampage. Personal Interview, Jos, June 2016.
27. For further details of these differing perspectives on the origins of Boko Haram, see Alex Thurston, "The Disease is Unbelief: Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview" Brookings Institution, *Analysis Paper*, No. 22, January 2016. p. 7–9.

28. Muhammad S. Umar, “The Popular Discourses...” Op. cit. p. 119.
29. For further details, see International Crisis Group “Curbing Violence in Nigeria 11: The Boko Haram Insurgency,” *Africa Report No. 216*, April 3, 2014. p. 11.
30. It is reported that Borno state government under SAS “provided funds to Yusuf through Buji Foi, known locally as a Yusuf disciple whom Sheriff made religious affairs commissioner... Yusuf used the money to organize informal micro-credit scheme that gave his disciples capital to set up businesses. They in turn gave part of their profits as alms to the group, which began amassing arms, mostly Kalashnikovs from neighboring Chad, allegedly with Baba Fugu, Yusuf’s father-in-law who was killed during the 2009 crackdown, as supplier.” International Crisis Group, *Ibid.* p. 12.
31. Several clashes between members of the JTF and followers of Mohammed Yusuf would take place from 2004 to 2008. In one instance, security forces shot some followers of Yusuf while riding motorcycles without the mandatory helmet. The death of some of them later at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital marked the beginning of Mohammed Yusuf’s provocative sermons not only against police and security agencies, along with the SAS government in Borno state, but also accusing the federal government of corruption, deception, repression of Muslims, failure to implement Shari’s law, clinging to Western system of democracy/constitution, instead of Allah.
32. Alex Thurston, “The Disease is Unbelief: Boko Haram’s Religious and Political Worldview” Brookings Institution, Analysis Paper, No. 22, January 2016. p. 7–9.
33. Drawing on al-Maqdishi’s doctrine of exclusive loyalty to Allah, his prophet and fellow true Muslims, Yusuf shifted these lines of theology to assert that loyalty to Islam meant total rejection of modernity, including democracy and Western-style education or *boko*. See Thurston, *Ibid.*, p. 12; William Hansen, “Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria.” Op. cit., especially on the concept of *boko* in Northern Nigeria’s cultural lexicon, and its use as a subtle derogatory critique of Western education—*Yan makarantan boko, ba karatu ba sallah; sai yawan zagini Mallam*. The interpretation of this Hausa street song simply means that those who attend Western-style education do not read (i.e., the Qur’an), but only engage in abusing the cleric (*Mallam* or Teacher). Also see Danjibo, Op.cit. p. 8. The emphasis on Madrassas or Qur’anic education in Northern Nigeria has led to the crisis of *Almajiri* phenomena whereby parents send their children—at an early age of —eight to nine years—to study the Qur’an under an Islamic cleric. Research shows that these children live in appalling conditions with no adequate source of food, access to healthcare or even daily welfare needs. For further debates on the *Almajiri*

- issue, see Hannah Hoechner, “Traditional Qur’anic students (Almajirai) in Nigeria: Fair game for Unfair accusations?” in de Montclos, Op. cit. p. 71–96; Hoechner, “Experiencing inequality at close range: Almajiri students and Qur’anic schools in Kano,” in Raufu Mustapha, Op. cit. p. 98–125, and Moses T. Aluaigba, “Circumventing or superimposing poverty on the African Child? The Almajiri syndrome in Northern Nigeria,” *Childhood in Africa*, 1(1). p. 1–37. 2009. Online Journal of Institute of the African Child, Ohio University, Athens. For details on the doctrine *Al-wala wa-l-bara*, see Joas Wagemakers, “The Enduring Legacy of the second Saudi State: Quietist and Radical Wahhabi Contestations of Al-wala wa-l-bara.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44 (2012): 93–110.
34. Here, Yusuf is crafting a theology of complete loyalty not only to Islam but also to his sect. Through this exclusivist strategy, Yusuf would subsequently establish his authority over the followership, and indoctrinate them into the ideology of terrorism and suicide bombings in Northern Nigeria.
 35. Other Salafi clerics in Northern Nigeria, especially Sheikh Ja’afar Adam, have openly criticized Mohammed Yusuf’s twisted doctrines, especially on issues of Democracy, Western education (*boko*) and Muslims working in public (government) service. For details on these debates and discourses, see Mohammad S. Umar, “The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism,” Op. cit. p. 131–136.
 36. Yusuf’s theological exegesis against democracy clearly demonstrates the dangerous path of his doctrine because once it is allowed to blossom, then it is likely to deepen departicipation in the democratic process, especially among Muslims in Northern Nigeria. For further details, see Alex Thurston, “The Disease is Unbelief,” Op. cit.
 37. Thurston, Ibid., p. 12.
 38. According to Thurston, Op. cit. p. 9. “Salafis treat foundational Islamic texts as manuals that apply literally to their own [contemporary] circumstances, and they reject several aspects of mainstream Sunni identity, such as adherence to recognized legal schools.” This ideology situates Boko Haram within the global Salafist-jihadi groups and they use it within the Northern Nigeria Islamist landscape to legitimize their intellectual stance as belonging to mainstream Salafism. For further incisive analyses, see Mohammad Sani Umar, Op. cit. p. 121.
 39. For details, see International Crisis Group, Op. cit. p. 9.
 40. In the early 1990s, Osama bin Laden was living in Khartoum, Sudan (as the guest of the al-Bashir government) where he met with Nigerian from Borno, Mohammed Ali (leader of the Kannama uprising). Between 1992 and 1996, Ali was studying at the Islamic University in Khartoum and eventually became a disciple of bin Laden. He would later undergo training in Afghanistan, and bin Laden asked him to “organize a cell in Nigeria with a 300 million naira budget (approximately \$3 million in 2000).” Upon his return home in 2002, Ali began “funding religious activities of Salafi groups that were unaware of the plan. Mohammed Yusuf and his group

allegedly were major beneficiaries.” Around 2000–2002, bin Laden released two audio messages urging Nigerian Muslims “to wage Jihad and establish Islamic state.” Most Salafi-jihadi groups worldwide received financial support (as Charities, e.g., Britain’s Al-Muntada) from the Gulf Emirates including Qatar, Saudi Arabia (Islamic World Society), Kuwait, UAE, as well as wealthy individuals from the region. After September 11, 2001, this source of funding was severely restricted by Western intelligence agencies. For details on Boko Haram funding, see International Crisis Group, Op. cit. p. 23; also on a case study of Al-Muntada financial support to Salafi-jihadi groups in Nigeria, see Andrea Brigaglia, 2012b. “Ja’afar Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust: Reflections on the Genesis of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria,” *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, No. 11.

41. Although Kyari Mohammed contends that this may be a reference to Sheikh Ja’afar Adam who was critical of Yusuf’s theology and doctrinal orientation, it could also be referring to SAS, the then incumbent governor of Borno state. Some allege that SAS may have been involved in the extra-judicial murders of Yusuf, Buji Foi and Alhaji Baba Fugu so that his involvement with Boko Haram will not be traced by security agencies.
42. Mohammed Yusuf sermon, audio tape, June 30, 2006. Maiduguri.
43. International Crisis Group, Op. cit. p. 13.
44. By 2014, it is estimated that 14 out of the 59 District Heads in the Shehu’s domain were killed by Boko Haram. Hundreds of Churches were also burnt to ashes. One of the Pastors killed includes Pastor George Orji of the Good News Church, Wulari, Maiduguri, who was abducted and later slaughtered in Yusuf’s *Marqaz* compound along with several other Christians and Muslims. For further details, see Abdul Raufu Mustapha, (ed). 2014. *Sects and Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. James Currey.
45. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, “Nigeria’s Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis.” Chatham House, Research paper, September 2014.
46. Aminu Tashen-Ilimi from Bama, a dropout from the University of Maiduguri, and who was involved in both the 2003 Kannama and the 2009 Maiduguri uprisings, was given 40 million naira (about \$275,000) by Yusuf, to procure arms from Niger Delta militants, quietly relocated to Kaduna where he established a car dealership business. See International Crisis Group for details, Op. cit. p. 22.
47. Raufu Mustapha, Op. cit. p. 151.
48. Field research interview, July 2016.
49. Field research interview, June 2016.

50. Field research interviews (conducted May–June, 2016) reveal that the abduction of these girls, which generated national and international outrage, may have been an opportunistic rather than calculated design by the terrorists. Chibok, as a predominantly Christian community in Borno, may, nonetheless, have been on the radar of Boko Haram from their Sambisa forest hideout. It is reported that at one point, they had to scramble for an additional truck. The initial plan may have been for the plunder of diesel and food stuff; but upon realizing the absence of any security agencies and that the girls may be soft target, they decided to hurl them into trucks and took them to Sambisa forest, where some of them were married off to Boko Haram commanders, while others were forced into servitude and sex slavery. In May 2016, one of the Chibok girls was rescued with her child, and welcomed by President Buhari at State House, Abuja. For details on the Chibok abductions, see Human Rights Watch, “Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp,” 2014. p. 23.
51. Boko Haram attackers in Buni-Yadi Secondary School did not harm the girls, but sent them home with instructions to get married. Field interviews, April 2016.
52. Field research interview, July 2016. Reports from Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Dalori 11, Maiduguri, indicate that the refugees are living in appalling conditions with insufficient food, water or access to healthcare. A recent scathing report by Doctors Without Borders reveals that children in refugee camps suffer from acute malnutrition. About 250 of such children had to be taken for special care in Maiduguri. It is also reported that a graveyard has been set up near the IDP camp to cater for the constant casualties dying at the camp. Although the Governor of Borno state Mallam Kashim Shettima claims that only 345 million naira has been collected as assistance for the refugees, it is on record that a private business man, Alhaji Dangote, alone contributed the sum of two billion naira for the refugees. The report of altercations between soldiers and police in IDP camps over modalities of food distribution indicates the level of ineptitude and corruption that has characterized the state’s response to this grotesque tragedy.
53. For details on these rampages and the ineptitude of Nigerian security forces in responding to Boko Haram attacks, see *Human Rights Watch*, “Those Terrible Weeks in their Camps: Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in North-east Nigeria,” 2014. p. 39.
54. The CJTF is credited with assisting the soldiers not only with actionable intelligence but also in fishing out the individuals whom they know are part of Boko Haram or their accomplices. It was through this effort that Boko Haram was routed out of Maiduguri and had to relocate in the Sambisa forest.

55. See International Crisis Group, Op. cit. p. 30.
56. In spite of this budgetary increase, troops in the frontline often complained about lack of adequate equipment to fight the terrorists who usually out-gunned them. Troops were also not adequately remunerated, and this led to declining morale and even mutiny at the Maimalari cantonment in Maiduguri. Also, when Baga was ransacked by Boko Haram, the troops could not respond effectively due to a lack of adequate military hardware.
57. There are conflicting reports that although Boko Haram may have been “technically defeated,” it nonetheless still holds swathes of land in northern Borno. Field research interview, June 2016.
58. Field research interview, July 2016. Jos, Zaria and Kano are some of the places with Boko Haram sleeper cells. Security agencies recently located some in a Zaria neighborhood, but they claimed to be part of the *Dar-ul Islam* (Land of Islam) earlier uprooted from Niger state.
59. In May 2013, a Dialogue and Reconciliation Committee that met in Côte d’Ivoire brokered a peace agreement between the Federal government and Boko Haram. Even Shekau was pleased with the outcome and asked his lieutenant to go to Abuja and announce a ceasefire. However, on June 3, 2013, the US placed a \$7 million reward on Abubakar Shekau, and another \$5 million on Mokhtar Bel Mokhtar, the leader of AQIM. This scuttled the agreement, and on June 4, the Federal government proscribed Boko Haram and Ansaru, designating their activities as terrorism. For details, see International Crisis Group, Op. cit. p. 30.
60. See Raufu Mustapha, Op. cit.
61. The relationship between Mohammed Yusuf and SAS described in this chapter shows the dangers of such nefarious alliances. It is also reported that the late Abubakar Rimi, the governor of Kano state in the early 1980s, patronized Muhammadu Marwa, the founder of *Maitatsine* sect. Mallam Shekarau, the former governor of Kano, also patronized the late Sheik Ja’afar Mahmoud Adam, and appointed him to the Shari'a implementation Board.
62. The proliferation of religious sects is not just within Islamic Northern Nigeria. Within Christian denominations, there is a similar process underway. For example, in University campuses, instead of Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), there are also Redeemed Christian Students Fellowship, Living Faith Christian Students Fellowship, ECWA Students Fellowship, Catholic Students Fellowship, COCIN Students Fellowship, Pentecostal Students Fellowship, and so on.
63. The current Governor of Kaduna state, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, has proposed such a bill to the State House of Assembly. However, whether such reform of the religious marketplace will be successful remains to be seen, since political elites and religious leaders all have stake in such institutional reform.

64. For details on illicit funding of Salafi-jihadi groups in Nigeria, see Brigaglia, 2012b."Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam, Mohammed Yusuf and Al-Muntada Islamic Trust." Op. cit. p. 40.
65. For other possible scenarios, see de Montclos, 2014. "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency." Op. cit. p. 30.

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CHAPTER 3

Nationalist Sentiment, Terrorist Incursions and the Survival of the Malian State

Jude Cocodia

INTRODUCTION

The conflict that engulfed Mali in 2012 and prompted the intervention of the African Union (AU) is a complex and multidimensional mixture of long-term fundamental grievances by diverse groups within the Malian state. Three distinct but inter-related events coalesced to produce this crisis. First was the secessionist demands by the Tuaregs in northern Mali for an independent state of Azawad. Second was the political crisis that was aggravated by the military coup of 2012. This further weakened the Malian state and heightened Tuareg rebel's hopes for and activities toward secession. Third was the hijacking of this Tuareg nationalist process by Islamist jihadists who attempted to take over Mali and establish an Islamic state based on Sharia law.

The two major non-state actors in these series of events were the rebel groups—National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the Salafist Islamist terrorist group, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). While secessionism has been strong among the Tuaregs of Mali

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since independence in 1960, the issue of Tuareg independence was never raised in official negotiations until the creation of the MNLA in 2011.¹ For this reason, the MNLA is considered as the torchbearer of Tuareg nationalism.² The MNLA's local support deficit in the region saw the rise of AQIM that had strategically integrated its ambitions with that of the local people and subverted nationalist ambitions toward religious ideological expansion.³

The MNLA launched a string of successful attacks against Malian Army posts in the north of the country in 2012. These defeats led to rising dissatisfaction among military officers and the subsequent overthrow of the civilian regime later that year. The coup created a power vacuum and provided the opportunity for the MNLA to gain more territory. AQIM capitalized on the situation, usurped the position of the MNLA and supplanted the self-determination objective of the rebellion with territorial acquisition and the spread of militant Islam. The rapid loss of territory and the ensuing spread of this Salafist interpretation of Islam prompted the Malian government to seek international support in the form of external intervention. Though the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) planned a military intervention, the lack of support from the Malian government and Algeria, and the preference of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for an African Union (AU) initiative, ensured it never went beyond the planning stages. With the responsibility for intervention passed on to the AU came the disappointment that its continental peacekeeping force whose operationalization had been in the works since 2005, still was not ready. This compelled the Malian government to turn to France who responded relatively quickly. Through the course of the mission, France, the AU, the USA and the European Union (EU) played pivotal roles in preserving Mali's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The Islamic militants may have been pushed out of Mali for the time being, but questions remain regarding the survival of the Malian state. This chapter argues that negotiations for peaceful coexistence between other groups within the Malian state and Tuareg nationalists are not enough, bearing in mind that the terrorist threat remains active just across Mali's northern borders in Algeria.⁴ International assistance, accountability in governance, inclusivity of all groups and encouraging local participation hence making the people see the peace process as their own, provide a solid foundation for sustainable peace and security in Mali.

The chapter begins by taking a look at the cause of the crisis from a historical context. It then examines the role of the rebel and terrorist

groups in exploiting the situation and the role of the international community in providing some stability. Using the historical analytical approach, this chapter suggests ways in which the Malian state could move forward, through making its peace agreements more inclusive and participatory.

CONFLICT IN MALI AND THE TUAREG CONNECTION

The Tuaregs were colonized by the French, and like the Kurds and Somalis, they had their territory and people carved up into several states.⁵ The Tuareg number an estimated three million today and occupy a vast swathe of the Sahara, from Libya, through northern Niger, southern Algeria, northern Mali and Burkina Faso. With the largest number of approximately one million Tuaregs living in Mali, they still are a minority even within the north of the country.⁶

Believing that the desert Tuareg domain was economically worthless, the French concentrated their efforts and policies on the agrarian south, populated by the black Africans. As a result, two contrasting economies and social cultures developed in Mali. While the French ‘rolled out their traditional colonial system of direct rule and encouraged the inhabitants to fully embrace French political and cultural norm, ... in the desert, they broke up the larger Tuareg political units and allowed local Tuareg leaders to rule on France’s behalf’.⁷ The autonomy enjoyed by the Tuaregs did not bode well for them in the long run.

With autonomy came the power to reject French educational, administrative and political input. So while the more assimilated south acquired modern administrative and economic skills, the Tuaregs rejected Western education. At independence, it was obvious the black Africans of the south had the upper hand and expectedly dominated post-independent Mali. The Tuaregs refused to accept southern rule and rose in revolt. This rebellion was also fueled by the desire to create the state of Azawad, which was meant to be a unification of former Tuareg territories and had been pieced into states in West and North Africa.⁸ Armed rebellion has thus been a Tuareg tradition since the early twentieth century and has continued into the twenty-first.⁹ The current crisis in Mali is Tuareg-centered and has its roots in decades of fundamental neglect and socio-economic grievances.¹⁰

REBELLION IN MALI

Despite the degree of autonomy they enjoyed, the Tuaregs still wanted an independent sovereign state. With Mali's independence in 1960, the Tuaregs began to push forward their dream of establishing Azawad once again. This met with stiff opposition and repression from the southern block that dominated the corridors of power. This oppression eventually boiled over and became the first Tuareg rebellion (*Alfellaga*) in 1962.¹¹ The rebellion was crushed by the end of 1964, with the Tuaregs condemned to harsher repressive measures that alienated them further. Some of these measures involved land tenure policies, which greatly disadvantaged the traditionally nomadic Tuaregs. This further aggravated the problems of under-development that had fueled the call for an independent state. In neglecting the needs of the Tuaregs, the Malian government fanned the embers of another rebellion.¹²

The 1970s and 1980s were decades of extreme drought and suffering in Africa's Sahel and desert regions, which led to Mali losing 40 percent of its cattle and food production in 1972.¹³ As thousands of herds perished, Tuaregs fled from their homeland to take refuge in the neighboring countries of Algeria, Libya, Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso.¹⁴ This generation of Tuaregs that emigrated came to be known as the *ishumar* (unemployed person). Anger was directed at the state for its inadequate handling of the crisis. The Malian government used the drought to collect international aid, but this was siphoned into private pockets in Bamako with the Tuaregs and their region getting little or nothing.¹⁵ The anger that had been deep seated from the first rebellion boiled over, culminating in a second rebellion in June 1990 led by the *ishumar* and under the banner of the Azawad People's Movement (MPA).

The MPA fought to gain independence from Mali and establish the state of Azawad. In late 1991, President Ahmadou Toumani Toure opted to negotiate with the northern insurgency movements and Algeria was invited to facilitate the discussions. The end document was the more comprehensive National Pact of 1992.¹⁶ It allowed for integration of Tuareg combatants into the Malian armed forces, demilitarization of the north, economic integration of northern populations, and a more detailed special administrative structure for the three northern regions.

Alpha Konaré was elected Mali's first democratic president in July 1992. However, authors differ on their analysis of his level of success in implementing the tenets of the National pact. For Douglas-Bowers Devon,

Konaré furthered the process of Tuareg autonomy by honoring the concessions made in the National Pact, removing the structure of federal and regional governments and allowing authority to take hold at the local level.¹⁷ Decentralization had a greater political purpose, as it ‘effectively co-opted the Tuareg by allowing them some degree of autonomy and the benefits of remaining in the Republic’.¹⁸ Rick Gold perceives the implementation of the pact to be very slow and deeply deficient. This, he argues, was a result of the government’s weak capacity or lack of goodwill.¹⁹ The second assertion helps to explain the continued occurrence of sporadic fighting by MPA splinter groups. This continued until 1996 when all factions returned to the negotiating table, but by this time between 6,000 and 8,000 people had died.²⁰

THE 2012 CRISIS IN MALI AND AU PEACEKEEPING

It is evident that within Mali’s political and social landscape lay an acute combination of the challenges of poor governance, constitutional crisis, Tuareg grievances that exacerbated armed rebellion and growing criminality.²¹ A compounding issue was the rise and spread of Islamist fundamentalism. The crisis in Mali has also been explained as a product of the political fragility of Africa’s Sahel, which is due to the corrupt nature and porous borders of African states.²² This fragility was also accentuated by the fall of Gaddafi in 2011 in Libya and the slow response of international partners in helping to find a solution.²³

Between Mali’s independence in 1960 and the crisis under review, the country experienced two Tuareg rebellions (1962–1964 and 1990–1991).²⁴ The third uprising was not so much a rebellion but rather an insurgency in which members of the Malian military were kidnapped and killed. The insurgency began in May 2006, when a group of Tuareg army deserters attacked military barracks in the Kidal region, seized weapons and demanded greater autonomy and development assistance.²⁵ Despite the government’s attempts to quell this rebellion, the insurgency gathered pace in 2007 and was further exacerbated by an influx of arms from the Libyan civil war after 2011.

The political and security crisis that erupted in Mali in 2012, while owing its existence to Tuareg dissatisfaction, had other precipitating factors. These include long-term governmental neglect of the north in the provision of basic public services and infrastructure²⁶ and the growth of organized crime and drug cartels that enabled drug barons to convert their wealth into

political influence and military power.²⁷ American fears of Al-Qaeda affiliates taking over northern Mali through funds from drug money prompted the USA to encourage the Malian government in late 2011 to reestablish full military control over the north of the country. This action evoked a Tuareg nationalist uprising that led to the formation of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad in November 2011. This uprising, asserts Emizet Kisangani, was also a response to the US security assistance programs such as the Pan-Sahel Initiative: These programs, aimed to foster the Malian government's control over its northern borders to curb organized crime, were construed as ventures to dominate the Tuaregs who had been antagonistic to government policies.²⁸ A second reason argued by Melissa Neelakantan points to development in northern Mali as being security-oriented at the expense of economic development, and this has created more tensions between the Tuaregs and the Malian government.²⁹

THE MNLA AND TUAREG NATIONALISM

The MNLA is considered the backbone of modern Tuareg nationalism. From the start, it was more organized and prepared than previous Tuareg groups.³⁰ The fall of Gaddafi also boosted its influence since it was constituted of Tuareg returnees who had fought in the Libyan civil war and thus had extensive military experience.³¹ Gaddafi was important to stability in the Sahel region, especially Mali. His Islamic Legion recruited thousands of young Tuaregs from northern Mali, who had been forced out by the severe drought of the 1970s and 1980s and who were aggrieved by the Malian government's handling of the crisis.³² The Islamic Legion was the cornerstone of Gaddafi's dream of building a united Muslim state in North Africa, and the Tuaregs were vital to achieving this dream by virtue of their renowned desert-fighting prowess.³³ The return of these young Tuaregs to Mali at the fall of Gaddafi's regime with sophisticated weapons such as anti-aircraft guns, combat experience and lots of cash, coupled with Tuareg resentment toward the government in Bamako, festered the uprising.³⁴ Some authors suggest that a number of the weapons brought by these returnees were originally given by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to anti-Gaddafi factions during the Libyan uprising.³⁵ The fact that such weapons made their way to the hands of Tuareg fighters, as well as other militant groups in the Sahel, suggests the degree of weapons' proliferation in the area.

The MNLA's string of successes began on 17 January 2012 when it launched a series of attacks on Malian army posts in the north. Embarrassed

by their defeat and angry at the political class for a perceived lack of support, the military staged a coup on 22 March ousting the government of Amadou Toumani Toure.³⁶ This military coup dealt a deathblow to Mali's fragile democratic process.³⁷ The coup took place only weeks before the April 29th presidential election in which Toure was to cede power. It created a power vacuum and provided the impetus for the MNLA in April 2012 to declare an independent state of Azawad, which supposedly covered 60 percent of Mali's land area.³⁸

As the situation evolved and the MNLA acquired more territory, they were usurped by the better-organized and more popular Islamist extremist groups.³⁹ This was due to two major factors: first, 'MNLA combatants lost support in the region since they looted, killed, and raped their Tuareg kin. The political leaders of the MNLA may have had an agenda of Tuareg nationalism, but many among the rank-and-file seemed more motivated by opportunism'.⁴⁰ Second, the MNLA was locally conceived as neither representing all northern Malians nor all Tuaregs. As such, many Tuaregs felt that the MNLA's gains would fail to reflect this diversity.⁴¹ An empowered MNLA transposes into power for just a small fraction of Tuareg groups, which would likely lead to increased inter-ethnic conflict between the Tuaregs, Arabs and Songhai who are also indigenous to the region.⁴² Growing resentment and suspicion toward the MNLA made it possible for them to be effectively sidelined by Salafist groups, especially AQIM.

Other Islamist groups that ravaged northern Mali at this time, capitalizing on the weakness of the Malian state, were Ansar al Dine (Defenders of the Faith), believed to be the strongest Islamist group in terms of popular support and territory controlled; AQIM, which has been active in Mali since 2003, using it as a base for its terrorist acts in the Sahel; and the Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa which is an off shoot of AQIM.⁴³ It was AQIM that largely usurped the role of the MNLA in northern Mali.⁴⁴

AQIM'S REIGN IN MALI

Founded in the 1990s in Algeria, AQIM's goals and objectives in northern Mali were mainly financial. Using religion as a cover for kidnapping western citizens, drug and human trafficking in northern Mali, AQIM ploughed the proceeds to finance its terrorist activities in Algeria. However, this strategy changed with the Tuareg/MNLA uprising in 2012, at which point AQIM shifted its focus to territorial control.⁴⁵

AQIM, previously known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, is the only organized, violent Islamist group that has operated in the four Sahelian countries of Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.⁴⁶ Their's was a sophisticated reading of the local context and seamless integration into the lifestyle of northern Mali.⁴⁷ For over a decade, they have forged filial relationships with the diverse ethnic groups in the region. With the government in Bamako despised and MNLA increasingly incurring resentment in the region, AQIM carefully and patiently crafted its strategy for gaining strong support.⁴⁸ AQIM members bought themselves goodwill, friendship and networks by distributing money, phone cards, medicine and treating the sick. They also married locally but into poor families in order to win support among the numerous poor.⁴⁹

The AQIM strategy was a careful and gradual one of integration and penetration into local communities based on a combination of military, political, religious, economic, and humanitarian means. AQIM therefore cannot be seen only as an invading external force, but as an actor that overtime has managed to become integrated with local communities.⁵⁰

Religion was also used to facilitate mobilization of support among the population. In a region where local governing administrators were generally seen as corrupt, AQIM's affiliated Islamist militants presented themselves as honest and pious Muslims and won the admiration and respect of the people in the area.⁵¹

AQIM's penetration of northern Mali, which had been underway for more than a decade, gradually changed from distributing money and small benefits to aggressively promoting its Salafi-inspired interpretation of Islam. This campaign was accelerated after they gained a foothold in northern Mali in 2012.⁵² AQIM has established overtime alliances with local religious teachers who gained prominence via this relationship and thus preached AQIM's brand of Salafist Islam.⁵³ With its name indicative of its affiliation with Al-Qaeda, AQIM's networks extended to Nigeria's Boko Haram and Ansaru, two groups that have been engaged in violent uprising against the Nigerian state since at least 2009.⁵⁴

The fragility and the inherently corrupt nature of the Malian state, notes Hussein Solomon, provided fertile grounds for the growth of militant Islam.⁵⁵ The ensuing corruption and protectionism weakened and undermined the state.⁵⁶ A weakening regime, scholars claim, facilitates the growth of dissidents, which explains why revolutionary upheavals often emerge in the wake of military defeat.⁵⁷ The administrative void created by Mali's

coup fanned tensions between different populations and became more lethal as small arms were traded in high quantities.⁵⁸ AQIM capitalized on the increasing state of chaos and moved swiftly—a feat that was facilitated by the defeat of the Malian army—and seized control of this lawless area in northern Mali. By mid-July 2012, most major towns such as Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao were under Islamist control, experiencing the destruction of heritage sites, the implementation of strict Sharia law, which included torture and amputation and the recruiting of children into armed groups.⁵⁹

While it is acknowledged that grassroots deprivation in northern Mali played into the hands of AQIM, some contend that in the long run, AQIM would have been unwelcome in the region. Taking cognizance of the porous borders and socio-economic conditions in the Sahel, Christopher Chivvis and Andrew Liepman argue that though the regional environment was dangerously ripe for insurgency, the general conditions were somewhat less conducive for AQIM's long-term dominance.⁶⁰ They explain that although the Sahel is largely Muslim, much of the region rejects AQIM's violent Salafist creed. Mali's mostly tolerant Sufi culture hardly meshes with AQIM's extremism, which considers Sufism to be idolatrous. Even if there were some compatibility, Salafist's racist tendencies would almost certainly undermine its long-term prospects for co-opting local populations.⁶¹

AQIM's acceptance in northern Mali at the time was made possible mainly by the deprivations suffered in the area, which was the offshoot of government neglect.⁶² This strongly indicates that resolving the problem in Mali lies in the political and economic realms rather than the use of force. In recognition of this concept, the AU and the UN have sought, beyond deploying peacekeeping forces, to develop initiatives aimed at building governance capacities in the region. One such initiative is the establishment of the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel whose mission is to facilitate national reconciliation processes and promote regional cooperation between the countries of the Sahel in the security and development realms, so that they can work on the root causes of conflicts.⁶³

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY RESPONSE

At first, the international community had looked to the African Standby Force (ASF), which had been in the works since 2005, to get operational and be tested in Mali. Disappointingly, it still was not ready. This forced the AU to revert to its traditional ad hoc approach of soliciting troops from willing states. Pending on when and whether this contingent would be ready for deployment, the government of Mali turned to France for help.

For the first time in an AU peace operation, and contrary to the cliché, ‘African solutions to African problems’, the lead nation was a foreign state.

Convinced that the Malian government could not handle the crisis alone, the international community got involved. ECOWAS denounced the coup and urged the junta to immediately relinquish power to the rightful government.⁶⁴ To enforce this, ECOWAS imposed economic and diplomatic sanctions on Mali on 30 March 2012 and launched a coordinated military operation to recapture rebel-occupied areas in the north. This was to be achieved through the ECOWAS Mission in Mali (MICEMA).⁶⁵ However, obstacles including the junta’s hostility to a foreign-armed presence in Bamako and the lack of consensus with Algeria (a non-ECOWAS state) compounded issues and ensured this decision never went beyond the planning stages.⁶⁶ Logistics and financial constraints also made it impossible to deploy in the absence of external international support.

The AU suspended Mali’s membership on 23 March and began playing a more active role from June 2012.⁶⁷ It found it expedient to mediate and made some, albeit limited progress. First, it developed a harmonized Concept of Operations, which gave the Malian army the lead role in the envisaged military operation, and to address Algeria’s opposition to an ECOWAS mission, the AU transformed MICEMA into the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). Finally, in collaboration with the Malian government and relevant international actors, the AU developed a strategic concept that framed the military action in a more global perspective.⁶⁸

AFISMA was to be drawn from the Western African Standby Brigade, which is the ASF’s West Africa unit. However, the ASF was still more of a concept than it was an operational reality, despite ten years of planning.⁶⁹ This operational delay of the ASF precipitated three major events: First, on 10 January 2013, 20 days after the UNSC adopted Resolution 2085 authorizing the deployment of AFISMA, the insurgents capitalized on the delay of the ASF to deploy and advance toward Bamako. Alarmed by the capture of Konna, the regime in Mali sought France’s help.⁷⁰ This request prompted the second event, which was France’s deployment of Operation Serval on 11 January. With 4,000 troops, France’s Operation Serval dramatically altered the dynamics on the ground and greatly influenced the international response. By the end of January, all the major population centers in northern Mali had been retaken and the rebels displaced.⁷¹ The third outcome draws largely from the second. In order to show itself up to the challenge, despite being unable to activate the ASF, AFISMA deployments were accelerated under a new program, where

troops were pooled from a coalition of the willing to make up the contingent. AFISMA's 7,464 troops were drawn from 21 countries, the bulk of which were not only from ECOWAS but also included countries such as Chad. As Tony Curtis, Senior Military Adviser to the AU explains, 'the forces that went in were from Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) that had volunteered to go in to establish AFISMA'.⁷²

Paramount to the peace operation in Mali was France's direct involvement, which reversed the Islamist extremist incursions as they were pushed back forcefully.⁷³ There was also the willingness of the international community to work with the Malian transition authorities (and vice versa), irrespective of the low level of legitimacy the regime enjoyed within and outside Mali.⁷⁴ The low level of legitimacy derived from the fact that, due to international pressure on Mali's military junta to hand over power to a civilian administration, the government of national unity that was formed in August of 2012 was perceived among Malians as a construct of the junta.⁷⁵

Donor conferences held in Addis Ababa in January 2013, and in Brussels three months later, saw states cooperate under umbrella bodies such as the UN and EU and on individual levels. Experts had warned that 'in the absence of rapid, firm and coherent decisions at regional, continental, and international levels ... the political, security, economic and social situation in Mali will deteriorate'.⁷⁶ International cooperation swung into action to halt this decline and get Mali on the path to stability. One program established toward this end was the EU Training Mission, which focused on capacity building of the Malian Defense and Security Forces.⁷⁷

France's intervention, which was the start of the international collaboration effort on the ground, was robust. The offensives pushed back the armed Islamists and stabilized the situation in northern Mali.⁷⁸ The operation in Mali and its rapid success is a strong indicator of how indispensable external support still is to major peace operations in Africa. Although the international community was slow to act in Mali, when they did, it was done with zeal. AFISMA's troop deployment, which had dragged on for months prior to the sudden incursion of the rebels and France's intervention, picked up its pace in late January 2013. It deployed over 3,000 troops within two weeks. Another act illustrating the zeal of the AU with reference to AFISMA was the deployment of civilian staff, which is much more complex due to the varied expertise needed to meet the tasks to be

undertaken. Beverly Mitchell, a UN official at the AU, explains the complexity of civilian deployment in peacekeeping:

To some degree the military seems easier to be up and running because it already exists. Whereas with the civilian component, you are talking about pulling experts from a variety of different fields, and a variety of different countries and areas, so those are not necessarily just ready to go.... Unlike the military we can't just deploy them. These are civilians so you have to think about your safety regimes, where are you going to house them, how are you going to look after them, how are you going to transport them. So civilians, unlike the military that come as a group and unlike the police that come as a formed unit, civilians really do come as individual people.⁷⁹

Despite the complexities behind civilian deployments, the AU in Mali tried to work around the difficulties to get civilian personnel on the ground in good time. According to Eustace Chiwombe, Senior Rostering Officer, AU Peace Support Operations Division:

We got 37 positions approved for AMISOM in July 2013. It is April 2014 and we do not have anybody on the ground.... It takes us (the AU) an average of six months to fill one position.... But when you look at Mali, and CAR, we have quite a number of positions that have already been approved and were on the ground within three months.⁸⁰

This was due to a rostering system where vacancies are put out well before the relevant skills are needed and the data or successful candidates are stored. These candidates are then employed by the AU and called up when their expertise is needed on a mission.⁸¹ This method saves time and proved to be expedient during the Mission in Mali. Because the problem in Mali was more political than it was military, there was a real need for a strong civilian presence on the ground.⁸²

By April, discussions of AFISMA re-hatting into a 12,600 strong UN peacekeeping mission had begun. On 1 July, authority was transferred from the AU to the UN, and forces from AFISMA officially donned the blue berets of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). A month later, in August 2013, Mali successfully elected its new President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, in a process deemed free and fair by the International Peace Institute.⁸³

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE AND THE WAY FORWARD

On 20 June 2015, a peace deal was signed between the Malian government and the Coordination of Movements for Azawad (CMA), the main rebel coalition in northern Mali—but excluding AQIM who by now had been disowned by the Tuaregs. Experts are cautious about this agreement restoring stability in the region because previous agreements (1992 and 2006) with similar intent failed as the government lacked either the resources, the will or both.⁸⁴ Challenges in forging a way forward will be difficult given that northern and southern Mali are divided on this. While the north opts for greater autonomy, the south feels too many concessions have been made already.⁸⁵ This section explores the various options for ensuring peace and stability in Mali.

Since history has shown the Tuaregs to be restless under political domination, some scholars contend that peace will be better served if the Malian government makes serious concessions to Tuareg aspirations for self-determination.⁸⁶ There is, however, a downside to this perspective. Autonomy does not mean government taking a hands-off approach and leaving the people of the autonomous region to their fate. This will only fuel local grievances, spur a return to conflict and create the platform for the return of AQIM and other Islamist extremists. Despite the regions of the north being autonomous, Malian government policies should derive from grassroots participation and deliberation of Mali's northern ethnic groups. Second, officials of the Malian government and its autonomous regions should be wary of groups who would exploit this greater degree of freedom to pursue a further secessionist agenda.⁸⁷ It also sets a dangerous precedent in a region where many local groups are calling for autonomy or independence.

However, it is important to indicate that partnership with the northern ethnic groups should not undermine Mali's sovereignty, security and survival. Given that most African states suffer from porous borders, it would take partnering with the Tuaregs and other ethnic groups of the north to secure Mali's northern borders from further infiltration by violent terror groups such as AQIM.⁸⁸ This will only be possible when these groups know they have a stake in the survival of the Malian state. Placing the Tuaregs' knowledge of the desert—and their goodwill—at the service of the state is a critical factor in keeping Mali's borders secure from the increasing terrorist threats in the region. Some authors believe that 'it is clear that AQIM sees itself as here to stay: it knows that the French will eventually leave, as will MINUSMA;

therefore for AQIM and other Islamists, victory is just a matter of holding ground one day longer than the international forces do'.⁸⁹ The Tuaregs and other ethnic groups in the north are indispensable partners if Mali is to secure its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

International assistance is definitely central to peace and development in Mali. However, the pacts that have emerged from international involvement have taken a top-down approach—drafted by the international community, handed down to local elite and rebel factions but are sometimes oblivious of the people whose needs they are meant to address. As a result, these pacts fail because they alienate the people whom they are meant to serve. Local participation is inevitable if peace agreements are to be viable and successful.⁹⁰ The importance of grass-roots initiatives for peace in Mali is well illustrated by events following the 1992 peace agreement. Lecoq and Klute note that: ‘though the National Pact formally ended the 1990 rebellion, fighting was not over. Between January 1993 and October 1994, Tuareg rebels continued to fight among themselves’.⁹¹ The 1990 rebellion, which was waged through mobilizing regional solidarity, had slowly fragmented along inter-ethnic lines.⁹² Consequently, a workable peace strategy was one that had to go beyond the signatories and involve all communities and peoples who had been affected. As Lode observes:

The negotiated agreements between government representatives and the armed factions were unable to bring the conflict to a conclusion.... Without the involvement of local guarantors of the settlement at the community level, implementation floundered and peace remained elusive on the ground. It was only when thousands of people throughout the north engaged directly in inter-community peacemaking that the path to national reconciliation opened.⁹³

International assistance, accountability in governance, inclusivity of all groups, encouraging local participation and making the people see the peace as their own will be effective foundational blocks for sustainable peace and development in Mali. As noted by Pezard and Shurkin, ‘examples from Mali’s past provide cautions and suggestions on how to engage local actors today’.⁹⁴

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: BOTTOM-UP INITIATIVES TO COMBAT ISLAMIST TERRORISM

This chapter on Mali discusses two violent non-state actors. First is the MNLA, which sprung up in 2011 capitalizing on the grievances of minority Tuaregs. Fostered by evolving dynamics in the Sahel, the fall of Gaddafi in Libya and the weakness of the Malian state, this group sought to actualize the Tuareg aspiration of secession from Mali and the creation of a state of Azawad. The second group discussed is AQIM, which took advantage of the resentment against the government by ethnic groups in the north, the country's porous borders and the political vacuum created by Tuareg rebellion in 2012 to penetrate Mali. AQIM usurped the Tuareg rebellion and embarked on spreading its extremist Salafist ideology across Mali. Its invasion of Mali threatened the sovereignty of the Malian state.

This chapter also discussed the strategy of militant intervention through integration adopted by AQIM and from which there are lessons to be learned. In areas plagued by poverty and where facilities to meet human needs are seriously lacking, radical organizations that step in to provide these needs eventually command the allegiance of the people. When such organizations are terrorist groups or possess such inauspicious affiliations, then the security in the region is heavily compromised. A paramount lesson learned is that governments and local elites should endeavor to meet the needs of their people, lest the latter fall prey to extremist ideologies and movements.⁹⁵

The current (2015) agreement signed, which grants more autonomy to the Tuaregs, will not solve the problem, if the Malian state still remains too weak to implement the negotiated reforms. Previous agreements failed largely because of the Malian state's inability to implement reforms, not because it did not want to, but because it lacked the capacity to do so. Beyond the promises of negotiations, more concrete and proactive measures involving robust local people's participation, national, regional and international cooperation are essential if the Malian state is to survive the nationalist and terrorist threats it faces.

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CHAPTER 4

Islamic State in Libya

Larissa Jaeger

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on a violent non-state actor whose existence dates back to the early 2000s, but who only caught global media attention with its takeover of northwestern Syria and Mosul in northern Iraq in the beginning of June 2014. The group came to be known under many different names: ISIS (short for Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), ISIL (short for Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, Islamic State, or Daesh. This chapter refers to the group as “Islamic State”, albeit without using the definite article in front, as this would legitimize the group as a quasi-state. The rationale behind calling the group “Islamic State” is that it reflects the general consensus of most media outlets and policymakers, even though they might be using a particular acronym instead of the group’s full name. The chapter aims to shed light on the historical factors and political processes that led to the formation and expansion of Islamic State in Libya. In doing so, it will demonstrate how the propagation of its ideological doctrine facilitated radicalization and recruitment, as well as position the group’s strategy

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within the current political context. Finally, it will assess past and present efforts at combating Islamic State in Libya and propose new actions for a successful counterterrorism strategy.

INSURGENCY VERSUS TERRORISM

There has been much controversy around the issue of how to classify Islamic State. Both the media and politicians tend to refer to the group as terrorists, but the definition is not as clear-cut as one would hope it to be. For purposes of simplification, “terrorism” will here be understood as the unlawful use or threat of violence by a non-state actor—generally motivated by a particular ideology and in pursuit of a political goal—that deliberately creates fear to effect a reaction from a wider target audience, such as a government or a civilian population.¹ While it is certainly true that the group uses terrorist tactics to achieve their objectives, it also engages in a number of other activities that suggest Islamic State has moved beyond the rather narrow definition of terrorism. The term “terrorism” represents only a fraction of Islamic State operations and neglects other important aspects, such as governance activities and wider ideological and political aspirations. It appears that the term “insurgency” is a better approximation of the group’s actions and motivations. Insurgency can be understood as “a protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations”.² The significant difference between insurgents and terrorists is that the latter simply seek to inflict damage for a political goal, but they do not actually aspire to create their own quasi-state in a specific area. Furthermore, insurgent groups have at their disposal a vast scope of activities, including guerrilla warfare, terrorism and governance provision. Therefore, it is more appropriate to refer to Islamic State in general as an insurgency rather than as a terrorist group.

ISLAMIC STATE AND ITS MEMBERS IN LIBYA

Before getting into detail about Islamic State in Libya, it is necessary to provide some context about the formation of the group in Iraq and Syria. Its origins can be traced back to the early 2000s, when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian leader of the militant group Jama’at al-Tawhid w’al-Jihad (JTJ), aligned his organization with Al-Qaeda and rebranded it Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).³ In 2006, Zarqawi was killed in a US airstrike.

His successors then split with Al-Qaeda and renamed their organization Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). Both in Iraq and in Syria, Islamic State was able to expand, taking advantage of the deep-seated disenfranchisement of the Sunni population: On top of the frustrations with the ruling Shi'a minority, the divisive politics under Nouri al-Maliki in Iraq and the sectarian civil war in Syria presented key opportunities on which the organization could capitalize.⁴ As the years passed and the political chaos in these countries remained, the organization steadily grew stronger and eventually accumulated enough strength to take over the city of Mosul, Iraq, in June 2014. In Libya, Islamic State made its first official appearance in November 2014: The Islamic Youth Shura Council (MSSI), a local jihadist group, that had taken control of the eastern city of Derna, publicly announced that their territory would now be considered part of the Islamic State Caliphate.⁵ To celebrate the new alliance, they even organized a large-scale propaganda event that attracted hundreds of people at the al-Sahaba Mosque.⁶ Since then, Islamic State has managed to spread westward across the country and allegedly controls a sizeable area of the middle coastal belt of Libya, spanning from Sirte to Bin Jawwad.⁷ Additionally, the group has operations in Tobruk, Al Bayda, Ajdabiya, Misrata, Tripoli and more recently Sabratha. An important takeaway from these locations is that they are all strategically important for the country's oil and natural gas sector. If Islamic State manages to consolidate its power in these areas, it will gain access to a major source of income, which will significantly enhance its influence and power in the region.

According to US intelligence, the size of the Islamic State contingent in Libya reached between 4,000 and 6,000 fighters in April 2016, although the numbers fluctuate due to incoming foreign fighters from other North African countries who then move on to Syria and Iraq to receive training.⁸ Officially, Islamic State has divided the country into three administrative provinces: Wilayat Fezzan (southern region), Wilayat Tarabulus (western region) and Wilayat Barqa (eastern region). Each province has its own delegates that preside over the area. In terms of the organization's top leadership in Libya, however, there exist several conflicting accounts. A former Libyan jihadist now working with Quilliam Foundation reported that in September 2014, Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi sent senior IS commander and Iraq veteran Abu Nabil Al-Anbari to Derna to enlist other Islamist groups in the cause of Islamic State.⁹ More than a year later, the Pentagon announced that US airstrikes had killed Al-Anbari, the leader of Islamic State in Libya, while other sources refuted the accuracy

of this statement.¹⁰ In its own propaganda outlet, the magazine *Dabiq*, the name Al-Anbari, has never appeared. Instead, in the 11th issue of *Dabiq*, which is periodically published in many different languages, named Abul-Mughirah al-Qahtani as the delegated leader for all three Libyan provinces of Islamic State. Yet, al-Qahtani has never appeared anywhere but in that particular issue of *Dabiq*.

In the volatile domestic environment of Libya, alliances are often short-lived and subject to rapid changes. Thus, it is difficult to identify who the members of Islamic State in Libya are at any given point in time. Yet, it is nevertheless possible to discern a few key elements of the organization's branch in Libya. First, there are evidently junior and senior members of Islamic State in the territory of Iraq and Syria who went to Libya in order to co-opt local Islamist groups, such as Abu Nabil Al-Anbari. Second, Islamic State fighters from Iraq and Syria reportedly incorporated smaller jihadi groups such as Ansar al-Sharia's Benghazi branch in Sirte and the Brigade Tarek Ibn Ziyad from the Southern Sahara under its command.¹¹ This is quite a successful tactic for Islamic State expansion in Libya; instead of creating new networks, it capitalizes on the domestic chaos and instability by building on existing structures of other Islamist groups, thus saving both significant effort and resources that would otherwise be needed.¹² Third, there are repeatedly reports of fighters from Wilayat West Africa, commonly known as Boko Haram, traveling to Libya to fight as part of Islamic State.¹³ This development is beneficial to both sides: The Libyan contingent of Islamic State can increase its manpower on the ground while Boko Haram, having faced increasing military pressure from its opponents in Nigeria, gets access to better combat training and battle experience.

ISLAMIC STATE'S OBJECTIVES IN LIBYA

The efforts of Islamic State in Libya are part of the organization's greater political strategy, which includes establishing a theocratic state—Caliphate, based on strict implementation of Islamic Shari'a law throughout the Muslim world. Various news sources have reported that Islamic State controls a territory the size of Maryland in Iraq and Syria, but in reality the actual area that it can forcefully defend against external incursion is still limited at the time of writing. What prompted many to argue that Islamic State territory had become as large as Maryland was the fact that in many areas of northern Iraq and Syria, the group can already move around relatively freely and its operations face little risk of resistance or

counterattack.¹⁴ In Libya, Islamic State allegedly controls territory along the middle coastal belt of Libya between Sirte and Bin Jawwad, yet this is more likely to be an area of free movement where the organization currently has the upper hand over local militias. Overall in Libya, Islamic State presence is still in its early stages and thus very vulnerable to counterattacks of local armed groups and coalitions of militias, such as the Libya Dawn coalition in the west and Operation Dignity in the east. While the group keeps launching attacks on new cities, as they did in Sabratha located just 50 miles west of Tripoli in December 2015, they have also suffered significant defeats against their domestic enemies. Only in July 2015, Islamic State lost control of the city of Derna to an Islamist coalition known as the Shura Council of Mujahideen in Derna.¹⁵

Yet on the whole, despite minor setbacks in the organization's advance, the strategic importance of Libya is critical for Islamic State and the group appears determined to stay. First, the location of the towns it targets corresponds to the map of the main oil and natural gas pipelines. The cities of Ajdabiya and Sabratha, where it has carried out military and security operations, are the end points of major pipelines coming from the interior of the country. Libya's largest oil export port in Sirte is located in the area where Islamic State has at the time of writing established the most control in Libya. Furthermore, its presence in various towns along the coast of the Gulf of Sidra gives it the ability to intercept the pipeline leading from the natural gas fields in the east to Tripoli. With its strategic locations along major pipelines, Islamic State has positioned itself at the pulse of Libya's economy. In 2012, oil and natural gas amounted to almost 96% of government revenue and to 98% of export revenue.¹⁶ But Islamic State control of pipelines not only cripples Libya's economy. By intercepting the flow of oil to nearby Italy and the rest of Southern Europe, the group claims it can cause "economic breakdowns" in those countries with very little effort.¹⁷ Yet, there is at this point no statistical proof that this statement is accurate. The major oil pipeline *Green Stream* that connects the Libyan port of Mellitah with Italy has thus far remained unharmed. Rather, the attacks on oil fields and facilities seem to be targeted at crippling the Libyan domestic economy that is already on the verge of collapse. The Libyan National Oil Corporation recently estimated that the country had missed out on US\$68 billion in potential oil revenue since 2013, which is mostly due to facility shutdowns and port disruptions.¹⁸ Attacks on oilfields and major pipelines by Islamic State have further exacerbated the dire economic situation.

But beyond the economic benefits of controlling the oil pipelines, Libya is also extremely well positioned geographically to act as a recruitment and training hub for jihadists from all over Africa. Prior to the organization's expansion into Libya, jihadists had to travel to Iraq and Syria to receive training and expertise from Islamic State. Now, the organization can easily recruit individuals from a number of radical Islamist groups in North Africa, such as AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) in Algeria and Mali, and Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia. This also rings true for Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria, Islamic State's newfound affiliate, albeit to a lesser extent than for the above-mentioned North African radical Islamist groups. The process of recruitment is exacerbated by the extensive borders with Libya's neighboring countries. Libya shares around 1000 km each with Algeria, Chad and Egypt, 450 km with Tunisia, 380 km with Sudan and 350 km with Niger. The length of these porous borders, combined with the fact that they are very poorly secured, affords Islamic State fighters easy access to the Sahara desert that connects Libya with Algeria, Egypt, Niger, Chad, Sudan and Mali. The In Amenas hostage crisis of January 2013 is a further case in point: The terrorist attack on an Algerian gas facility that caused the deaths of 40 hostages was launched from nearby Libya and northern Mali. Therefore, it is very easy for Islamic State to funnel jihadists into and out of Libya and in the process further expand its influence throughout the region.

THE RISE OF ISLAMIC STATE IN LIBYA

Islamic State established the first contact with Libyan Islamists in 2006/07, when radicalized individuals joined Islamic State in Iraq to fight alongside it against US occupation. Quite interestingly, almost half of the Libyan recruits came from the eastern city of Derna.¹⁹ This appears to be a consequence of the decades of sustained exclusion and systematic marginalization of the people living in these regions during Qaddafi's reign. A few years later in 2011/12, Libyan recruits also participated in the Syrian civil war as foreign fighters, notably in the Battar Brigade. Upon their return to Libya, they founded the Shura Council of Islamic Youth together with elements of Ansar al-Sharia, another Islamist militia in Libya.²⁰ MSSI, consisting of former Battar Brigade fighters and other Libyan Islamists, would eventually pledge allegiance to Islamic State in 2014, which established the Libyan connection from the mid-2000s onwards with Islamic State in Iraq. This pledge is significant in the sense that Islamic State can now

benefit from their battle experience during the Iraq War and the Syrian Civil War. The veterans of both Iraq and Syria who returned to eastern Libya would serve as the vehicle through which Islamic State would later emerge in Libya and consolidate its influence after the overthrow and assassination of Qaddafi.

QADDAFI'S LEGACY AND ISLAMISM IN LIBYA

In the aftermath of the revolution in 2011 and Qaddafi's assassination, Islamism in Libya began to proliferate and expand on a massive scale. While many are quick to put the blame for the ensuing chaos in Libya on NATO's intervention and support for the rebels, such analysis fails to acknowledge the pervasive history of military manipulation under Qaddafi. During the dictator's years in power, Libya experienced a significant military buildup, with consistently high arm imports and rising military expenditure.²¹ However, the degree of militarization did not translate into increased battle effectiveness of the Libyan armed forces. Instead, strategic ineptitude and tactical incompetence of junior officers plagued the Libyan military.²² Owing to pervasive coup-proofing measures designed to prevent the military from attempting to overthrow Qaddafi, the internal cohesion of the military institution deteriorated severely as the years progressed. Qaddafi's increasing reliance on paramilitary security forces to police the military, the exploitation of personal loyalties and the restriction of the military to external missions rather than including them in domestic tasks are but a few of an entire arsenal of coup-proofing strategies.²³

Ultimately, a significant part of Qaddafi's legacy was a fundamentally incoherent military that was never capable of consolidating a strong internal cohesion, despite the consistent emphasis of the Qaddafi regime on militarization throughout the decades. This reality, together with the exclusion of the army from domestic affairs and the lack of contact between the military and the population, systematically sabotaged civil-military relations in Libya, which was instrumental in providing Islamist movements with a strategic opening after the revolution in 2011. The reason that the eastern regions in Libya in particular appeared receptive to Islamism can be found in a combination of Qaddafi's political and economic policies. He relied heavily on patronage and economic distribution, which benefited only select tribes and communities in the western regions, at the expense of the eastern regions in Libya.²⁴ Furthermore, Qaddafi had effectively abolished all channels of democratic participation under the pretense that

they constituted obstacles to a true democratic rule of the people in the *Jamahiriyya*. This meant that civil society disappeared entirely, and Qaddafi managed and contained political participation in a top-down manner, only allowing individuals loyal to him access, and, therefore, further isolating the eastern regions from domestic politics.²⁵ Furthermore, the eastern region already had its grudges against Qaddafi because he overthrew the Sanusi Monarchy, which had been based in Benghazi. The exclusion of the eastern province (Cyrenaica) from decision-making and distribution of oil wealth therefore only exacerbated the people's bitterness toward Qaddafi's authoritarian rule.

In this climate of economic and political marginalization as well as Qaddafi's monopoly of participation in both spheres, it is not surprising that religion, more specifically radical Islam, became the prominent channel for expression of public dissent. Yet Qaddafi had previously dispersed the community of Islamic scholars (*ulama*) and discredited the authority of the prophet's teachings (hadiths), leaving the Quran as the single religious authority. The lack of a formal religious institution blurred the lines between religious and political Islamism in Libya, and thus caused a hybridization of Islamist activism that could attract a much wider group of potential recruits. With the current central power vacuum after 2011, the appeal of Islamism as a political alternative has reached its peak in Libya's recent history.

POWER VACUUM POST-REVOLUTION

Although the popular uprisings succeeded in toppling Qaddafi together with NATO's intervention, the Libyan state did not make the transition to democracy. Instead, it quickly descended into political and military chaos. Members of Qaddafi's opposition declared a National Transitional Council (NTC) to serve as the interim authority of Libya in 2012, but the rebel factions did not consider it a legitimate governing force. In this sense, while the NTC had legal legitimacy in the form of international recognition, it did not claim to have revolutionary legitimacy like the *thuwwar* revolutionary groups did.²⁶ As a result, both the revolutionary movement and the NTC began to compete fiercely for authority in the post-revolution environment. The NTC reestablished two "formal" state institutions to undertake security sector reform in Libya: the Libya Shield Force (LSF) under the authority of the Ministry of Defense acted as the interim military, while the Supreme Security Committee (SSC)

under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior was responsible for police functions.²⁷ Yet due to the virtual nonexistence of the armed forces after the revolution—many troops had defected from the military—these institutions depended on the cooperation of armed groups within the *thuwwar* revolutionary movement.²⁸ The resulting security structure thus took on a hybrid character, in which formal institutions were infused with informal forces. A key mistake was that the two ministries integrated the militias as entire units instead of breaking them up among different divisions.²⁹ This enabled the militias to pursue their own parochial agendas while at the same time being on the payroll of official state institutions. In practical terms of security sector reform, it effectively rendered both the LSF and the SSC incapable of unified action.³⁰ The General National Congress (GNC) was elected as the new legislative authority in 2012, taking over from the NTC. But widening internal divisions within the GNC between Islamist and secular factions showed that the post-revolution environment was far from unified. In the face of a growing Islamist discourse, General Khalifa Haftar launched the anti-Islamist “Operation Dignity” in Libya’s East, to which the Islamist-leaning contingent led by Misratan militias responded by forming the “Libya Dawn” coalition in the West.³¹ When the GNC refused to hand over power to the newly elected legislative authority (House of Representatives) in 2014, the simmering tensions escalated. Smaller armed groups and local military councils began to align themselves with either side, and thus two rival power centers in Tobruk (House of Representatives) and in Tripoli (General National Congress) emerged. This political polarization between the East and the West and the local power vacuum in the regions lying between these two poles provided Islamist movements in Libya with a strategic opening after 2011. Yet it was not immediately after the NATO intervention in 2011 that IS appeared on the domestic stage of Libya. In fact, Islamic State first gained a foothold in Libya in October 2014, three years after the toppling and assassination of Muammar Qaddafi. Furthermore, the country’s descent into a full-blown civil war in 2014 is due to the failure of the National Transitional Council to unite all relevant stakeholders under the common objective of national reconstruction rather than due to NATO’s involvement three years prior. What specifically aided Islamic State advances into Libya beyond the domestic political situation was its powerful ideological doctrine, which offered the radicalized people in Libya a consistent belief system to adhere to, amidst the never-ending conflict between the warring militias.

ISLAMIC STATE IDEOLOGY

Religion has become the dominant vehicle for spreading the message of Islamic State. It is so powerful that it determines even the type of political ideology that the group espouses: In the most basic sense, Islamic State seeks to establish a state that encompasses all Muslim lands and that is ruled solely by Islamic law (*Shari'a*). This political objective is inward-looking and represents a fundamental departure from Al-Qaeda's outward-looking strategy of attacking the "enemy" abroad. But before the ideological roots of Islamic State can be identified, it is necessary to clarify a few key terms surrounding Islamic ideology. Media outlets have used many terms to describe Islamic State, but the terms Islamists, Jihadists and Salafists are often misunderstood and wrongly applied.

"Islamism" is the result of applying the religion of Islam to political and social issues, and denotes a politicization of religious doctrine. While it can be argued that Islam already is political, seeing as the religion has many social, economic and political aspects, these elements are primarily normative. When they are joined in a coordinated and systematic program designed to exercise political power rather than religious influence, Islamism is formed. "Jihadism" then signifies a subset of Islamism that represents religiously sanctioned militancy.³² According to the jihadi political doctrine, violence is a justified means to exercise political power that centers on Islamic principles. Jihadism is therefore a particularly violent strain of Islamism. The term "Salafism", however, is a theological construct rather than a political ideology. It stands for a more rigorous and puritan interpretation of Islamic doctrines that often includes a fundamental rejection of modernity. Islamists frequently describe themselves as Salafi in order to assert legitimacy over rival political or religious groups, seeing as its primary connotation is that of "doctrinal purity".³³ The origins of Islamic State ideology therefore can be found within salafi-Jihadism, which is essentially Jihadism as a subcategory of Islamism but with the added claim to legitimacy through the Salafi connotation.

ISLAMIC STATE AND SALAFI-JIHADISM

The now deceased Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was among the most influential ideologues of Islamic State. The Jordanian Islamic scholar first developed an affinity for Salafism when he met Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi in the Afghanistan War of the 1980s.³⁴ When the two were imprisoned together

in Jordan during the second half of the 1990s, the spiritual guidance of al-Maqdisi, a key figure in jihadist scholarship, helped shape the salafi-Jihadist thought of al-Zarqawi into a more drastic form of Jihadism aimed at ridding the Muslim community of impurity and immorality.³⁵ The emerging ideology was extremely uncompromising and unforgiving of any deviations from the designated “right” path.³⁶

Al-Zarqawi went on to form his own jihadist organization in Iraq, but eventually pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden in 2004.³⁷ Yet there was already a visible rift between the jihadist ideologies of bin Laden and Zarqawi: While the former emphasized attacking the far enemy and waging jihad against occupying “crusader” nations, the latter thought it more pressing to purify the Muslim lands internally.³⁸ Islamic State uses this difference in outlook at least in part to justify its attacks against Muslims: because it seeks to establish a pure “Caliphate”, it simply declares Shi'a and moderate Sunni Muslims to be “infidels” (*takfir*), which makes their killing religiously permissible.

The salafi-Jihadist doctrine that Islamic State espouses builds on two concepts that feature prominently in the teachings of the Egyptian Islamic theorist and leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood Sayyid Qutb, who himself was profoundly influenced by the Indian-Pakistani Islamic scholar Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi.³⁹ The first concept, *hakimiyyah*, affirms the supremacy of *Allah* as the ultimate source of sovereign authority over mankind.⁴⁰ The second one, *jahiliyyah*, means “the age of ignorance” and refers to the perception that the Muslim world is in decline and constantly under attack from both secularism and Judeo-Christian religions.⁴¹ For salafi-Jihadists, engaging in armed struggle (waging “jihad”) is the third main concept. It is the only legitimate path of action through which it is possible to overturn the existing corrupt and impure order that is taking root in the Muslim world. The ideology of Islamic State in this manner eschews the values of materialism, imperialism and other modes of thought common in modernity.⁴²

A subcategory of Salafism that also permeates the ideology of Islamic State is the Wahhabi movement. Originally developed by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab in the Arabian Peninsula during the eighteenth century, Wahhabism has created its own interpretation of jihad that seeks to purge Islam of all polytheistic elements. Therefore, adherents are frequently seen destroying elements of religious worship such as shrines and tombs, as well as Shi'a sites of worship.⁴³ There have been various times when Islamic State has attacked cultural artifacts and religious sites, as happened in Syria

(Palmyra and Raqqa), in Iraq (Mosul and Tikrit), and in Libya. After the organization stormed the city of Sabratha in western Libya, which has an enormous Roman theater, it seemed very likely that Islamic State would destroy this site as well. The influence of Wahhabism on Islamic State ideology can also be observed in its periodical magazine *Dabiq*. The organization cites the teachings of al-Wahhab on several occasions to invalidate both religious and secular beliefs opposed to it, by accusing them of blindly and unquestioningly following the false and corrupt beliefs of their “scholars”.⁴⁴

IDEOLOGICAL STRATEGY FOR EXPANDING THE “CALIPHATE”

Islamic State is utilizing various media channels to propagate its ideology and garner a wider basis of support. The organization has created an impressive social media empire, operating thousands of Twitter and Facebook accounts. These accounts target especially the young demographic of individuals around the world, mainly the disenfranchised and disillusioned youth, and thus facilitate particularly quick and cheap radicalization. Through regular tweets or posts, it incites radicalized individuals from all over the world to join it, and releases periodical magazines and reports such as *Dabiq* and Islamic State Report. Despite the great efforts of several governments to shut down Islamic State accounts and block its channels of communication, the group has thus far succeeded in promulgating its message further, creating hundreds of accounts every day. One probable reason for this is that the message of Islamic State is fairly easy to appropriate, which enables any radicalized person to spread the ideology. Furthermore, the group is not dependent on social media networks to disseminate its propaganda, but also operates its own media centers, called *Al-Hayat* and *Al-Furqan*. In a series of reports issued through this center, Islamic State openly publicizes its religious education programs, its organized collection and distribution of the religious tax (*zakat*), as well as its state-building and policing projects in Raqqa (Syria) and Mosul (Iraq).⁴⁵ The purpose of these publications is to give legitimacy to the cause of Islamic State, and portray the group as a provider of domestic security rather than as a violent non-state actor. For example, in the early issues of *Dabiq* magazine, Islamic State glorifies the ideal of the “Caliphate” and calls on Muslims to join its cause and reunite in one single community.

There is a flip side to Islamic State’s radicalization and recruitment propaganda. Apart from idealizing its ideology, the group also publishes several videos and images intended to threaten and intimidate its opponents. *Al-Furqan* Media is the channel disseminating many of these

videos, which often feature brutal executions and footage of bloody village takeovers. Even in *Dabiq* magazine, this aspect of Islamic State propaganda is noticeable. In the 11th issue, the group had put two prisoners, one Norwegian and one Chinese, up for sale. It offered private information of the two captives and even attached a phone number to communicate with interested buyers.⁴⁶

The sheer arrogance with which Islamic State presented these prisoners is beyond comprehension, calling the nations of the two prisoners “crusaders” and “pagans”, as well as appropriating the commonly used advertising note “this is a limited time offer”.⁴⁷ And yet, its propaganda has reached unprecedented levels of efficacy. Available in multiple languages and with a highly sophisticated graphic design, *Dabiq* magazine appeals to and is accessible to virtually anyone. According to Rob Wainwright, the director of Europol, at least 5,000 individuals are estimated to have left their homes in Western countries and joined Islamic State’s ranks as foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the group has maximized the efficiency of its online propaganda in many ways. For twitter posts, Islamic State firstly attaches a hash tag that identifies it as its own authentic material, and secondly attaches other hash tags with trending topics that are unrelated to Islamic State itself, thereby reaching many more individuals who are looking up trending hash tags.⁴⁹

Islamic State’s online strategy is, however, not suitable for all contexts. In order to expand its reach and territorial influence, the group also sends emissaries into Libya to supervise the progress of the “Caliphate”.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Islamic State engages in various forms of ideological outreach: conducting forums, distributing propaganda leaflets and giving out charity to the poor (*zakat*).⁵¹ When Islamic State first appeared in Derna in October 2014, it staged a massive military parade in the town to show off its power.⁵² These activities, however, have focused mostly on the eastern regions of Libya, because these regions already have a historical connection with Islamic State. The following section examines the rise of the organization in Libya and identifies key factors that contributed to its emergence.

SITUATING ISLAMIC STATE WITHIN THE LIBYAN ISLAMIST MOVEMENT

The Islamist movement in Libya can be divided into a more moderate and a more radical groups, according to their behavior after the revolution in 2011. While the groups belonging to the former contingent attempted integration into the political structure of post-revolution Libya,

those belonging to the latter rejected cooperation with the new “state” institutions and proceeded to pursue their independent agendas.

The moderate Islamist movement is mainly composed of the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG, currently known as Libyan Islamic Movement for Change) and the Libyan Islamic Group (branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood). In the months following the fall of the Qaddafi regime, both of these groups were largely integrated in the formal and informal political structure. This can be seen in the appointment of Abdelhakim Belhadj from the LIFG as the head of the Tripoli Military Council and in the participation of the Libyan Islamic Group’s leadership in local councils, business networks and other groups of civil society.⁵³ Elements of the Libya Dawn coalition can also be considered part of the moderate Islamist movement. Though the conflict is often described as a radical Islamist Libya Dawn fighting against a nationalist-federalist Operation Dignity, the fault lines of the conflict are infinitely more complex.⁵⁴ Both the General National Congress (GNC) in Tripoli and the House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk claim legitimacy as the governing body of Libya. The fact that Libya Dawn supports the GNC and recognizes its claim to legitimacy suggests a certain political moderation of the coalition, regardless of the Islamist influence.⁵⁵

The radical Islamist movement in Libya is made up of smaller Islamist groups that have affiliations with Libya Dawn, Operation Dignity, Al-Qaeda, as well as Islamic State.⁵⁶ Ansar al-Sharia is the largest group with any visible mode of organization. It operates two branches in Libya, one in Benghazi and one in Derna. Although its activities initially concentrated on ideological outreach (*da’wa*) and the provision of social services, the split in state institutions in 2014 and the proliferation of armed groups caused it to prioritize armed struggle (jihad) against rival militias and Islamist groups.⁵⁷ This radical change in strategy severed the ties it had previously established with the civilian population, and even though it facilitated jihadist recruitment into their organization, the new emphasis on fighting against rival armed groups destroyed any remaining cohesion within the movement. Therefore, the pervasive lack of coherence, as well as the deeply embedded localism, is a major obstacle to the collective success of the radical Islamist movement. In the face of Islamic State incursion, none of the radical Islamist movements have thus far been strong enough to defend the territory by themselves, and the moderate Islamist groups are too caught up with the power struggle against the secular forces in the East to organize an effective counteroffensive. Islamic State has managed to exploit this situation through a two-pronged strategy.

DE-LEGITIMIZATION OF POLITICAL RIVALS

One major pillar of Islamic State's Libya strategy is the tactic of undermining the legitimacy of all other political actors. First, they explicitly de-legitimize both rival parliaments in the east and in the west in the eighth issue of their propaganda magazine *Dabiq* by stating that:

The mujahidin [fighters of Islamic State] had no need to distinguish between those who betrayed Islam by adopting the kufr [blasphemy] of secularism [Tobruk parliament], and those who betrayed Islam by adopting the kufr of democracy [Tripoli parliament], for both factions had entered the camp of kufr.⁵⁸

Furthermore, they quite eloquently discredit the more moderate Islamist groups by arguing that the former leaders of jihad in Libya, specifically Abdelhakim Belhadj, Abdel Wahab Qaid, Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi and Sami Mustafa as-Saidi, “fell into blatant apostasy” when they joined the “tyrant” parliament and participated in democratic elections after the revolution in 2011.⁵⁹ The integration of Islamist groups into formal political structures and the groups’ acceptance of competition for elected political power is what Islamic State calls the “*ikhwanization*” of jihad (a mockery of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose Arabic name is *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), and the organization argues that the Libya Dawn coalition was also created in the process of “*ikhwanization*”.⁶⁰

What is particularly striking in Islamic State’s tactic of discrediting opposing movements is their complete omission of criticizing radical Islamist groups. They discredit moderate Islamists due to the movement’s relative coherence and its nationalistic narrative, but make no reference to radical Islamists. This is presumably because of the highly fragmented structure of the radical Islamist movement, the pervasiveness of localism and the lack of a common narrative. It is possible that Islamic State either does not consider radical Islamist groups a threat to its expansion or that it actually welcomes their existence, assuming it will eventually incorporate them into its own structures. In any case, it is evident that Islamic State does not make the effort of discrediting the radical Islamist movement explicitly. They have, however, elaborately framed early Islamic history in a particular way that enables them to discredit any rival jihadi groups if need be. An example taken from Islamic State propaganda illustrates this argument. The group heavily criticizes the *Murji'ah*, a religious sect from the early centuries of Islam, by saying that their lenient approach toward

all Muslims significantly weakened Islam as a religion.⁶¹ Furthermore, by equating the *Murji'ah* with Jews and citing Saudi Sunni preacher Abdullah Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abdil-Wahhab (the founder of Wahhabism), Islamic State shows its disdain for the sect and thus pushes for a more purist, radical interpretation of the Quran, the Hadiths and the Shari'a. This sets the groundwork for justifying its rigorous understanding and often violent implementation of the religious teachings.

ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES AND MEETING ASPIRATIONS

Apart from systematically undermining the legitimacy of opposing groups in Libya, whether these are secular or Islamist, Islamic State utilizes another tactic for the expansion of the Caliphate: They exploit the political impasse in the current conflict by building on central elements of Qaddafi's military legacy. The defining feature of the current conflict is the devolution of power into the hands of a plethora of political and armed groups and their fierce competition to monopolize state power. This devolution is owing to the military's disintegration during the revolution in 2011 and their inability to get the relevant stakeholders to rally behind a unifying national narrative following Qaddafi's demise. The utter failure of the Libyan military after the collapse of the regime is a function of its weaknesses in both professional expertise and institutional cohesion, which are the essence of Qaddafi's military legacy. Islamic State has managed to mold this situation to their advantage, mainly by adapting their ideological propaganda to address the grievances and satisfy the aspirations of the various stakeholders.

Regarding the grievances of the population, Islamic State spares no effort to portray itself as a provider of domestic security and as a legitimate governing authority in its various propaganda outlets. By bringing relative stability into Libya's chaos, Islamic State could potentially gain the acquiescence of the local population to its presence. In a series of reports issued by Islamic State's Al-Hayat Media Center, the group openly publicizes its religious education programs, its organized collection and distribution of the religious tax (*zakat*), as well as its state-building and policing projects in Raqqqa (Syria) and Mosul (Iraq).⁶² Though the extent of these programs is still limited in Libya at the time of writing, an interview in *Dabiq* with Abul-Mughirah al-Qahtani, the delegated leader for the three Islamic State provinces (*wilayat*) in Libya, suggests that such efforts are well underway. Al-Qahtani issues a call for potential recruits in the interview, emphasizing

the group's need for medical and administrative personnel, as well as for Shari'a scholars to consolidate Islamic State presence in Libya.⁶³

In terms of meeting the aspirations of the various stakeholders in the Libyan conflict, Islamic State claims to go beyond their narrowly conceived objectives. It fundamentally rejects the notion of nationalism, arguing that it divides the Muslim community (*ummah*) as the French and the British did in the Sykes-Picot agreement.⁶⁴ The partitioning of the Levant under colonial mandates in 1916 fuelled Arab nationalist sentiment and staunch anti-colonialism, which culminated in a plea for Arab unity by the Ba'ath party in Iraq and Syria in the late 1940s and Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in the 1950s.⁶⁵ Qaddafi in Libya was one of the later rulers who would still push for the ideal of pan-Arabism, but Islamic State ridicules his ideas as well as his self-assigned title as "king of the kings of Africa".⁶⁶ Though the ultimate goal of pan-Arabism was the integration of all Arab lands as one geopolitical entity, Islamic State positions itself as superior even to this unifying concept:

Indeed, the pan-Arabism of the Baathist regimes – including those of Bashar, Saddam, and Nasser – is beneath the feet of the Arab mujāhidīn of the Khilāfah, amongst whom are those who traveled as far as Khurāsān [Afghanistan] to sacrifice their blood and their wealth for the cause of Allah, and to defend their non-Arab brothers when the Russians first invaded several decades ago, and once more when the Americans invaded in "2001".⁶⁷

The mention of *Khurasan* (referring to contemporary Afghanistan) is significant in this context, especially considering that it is located outside the Arab world. This suggests that Islamic State does not merely seek to unite the Arab states, but instead strives to create a Caliphate encompassing all Muslim lands. This powerful narrative of pan-Islamism outshines the ideology of Libyan nationalism, the pan-Arabism of the Arab rulers such as Saddam Hussein, Hafez al-Assad and Gamal Abdel Nasser, and dwarfs particularly Qaddafi's failed attempt at pan-Arab unity. The pan-Islamic discourse of Islamic State provides the Libyan population with a powerful narrative that has the potential to unify divided Islamist groups under a common denominator.

LOGISTICS AND FUNDING

Islamic State has been able to incorporate smaller jihadi groups such as Ansar al-Sharia's Benghazi branch in Sirte and the Brigade Tarek Ibn Ziyad from the Southern Sahara under its command, which significantly

accelerates the group's expansion.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the group in this manner capitalizes on the domestic chaos and instability, but it is simultaneously building on existing structures of other Islamist groups rather than creating new ones. This saves both significant effort and resources that would otherwise be needed if it were to establish new networks.⁶⁹

This opportunist approach toward rival Islamist groups is also evident in Islamic State's strategy of acquiring weapons. While Qaddafi was in power, his extensive military buildup led to the accumulation of vast arms stockpiles that were hidden around the country. After his overthrow in 2011, the National Transitional Council (NTC) failed to guard the storage facilities and thus various armed groups have had easy access to them.⁷⁰ It is likely that Islamic State is now taking advantage of this situation by seizing control of the still abundant stockpiles throughout Libya and using them to supply its affiliates throughout North Africa.⁷¹ A report by the UNSC Libya Sanctions Committee confirms the existence of large arsenals of small arms and light weapons with their appropriate ammunition, chemical and biological weapons, as well as man-portable air defense systems in Libya.⁷² Furthermore, a large amount of the available weapons are being trafficked mainly into Algeria, Chad and Niger via established trade routes through the Sahara desert.⁷³ This strategy of utilizing locally available and insufficiently guarded arms stockpiles is much more feasible and cost-effective than funneling weapons from Iraq and Syria into Libya, and therefore saves critical resources for Islamic State.

In terms of the group's funding in Libya, the sources of revenue are not yet sufficiently consolidated like in Iraq and Syria. Although Islamic State has on various occasions attacked major oil ports and occupied territory along oil and natural gas pipelines, its capabilities to generate revenue from this occupation were still limited in 2016. The highly fragmented domestic security environment is rife with infighting of armed groups over control of resources and territory, which prevents Islamic State from establishing and maintaining control over oil fields, refineries and pipelines.⁷⁴ This suggests that Islamic State in Libya is still highly dependent on the core organization operating in Iraq and Syria for income. In the Middle East region, Islamic State has managed to diversify its sources of income considerably over the course of recent years. It generates revenue by controlling oil fields and refineries (like in Mosul), by taxing goods as well as the population, by engaging in criminal activity such as robbing banks, theft and kidnapping for ransom, and by receiving donations.⁷⁵ Yet despite its limited source of funding within Libya itself, Islamic State has severely

disrupted ongoing efforts aimed at resolving the current political conflict. The following section analyzes the elements of Libya's response to Islamic State and clarifies what challenges remain for the political stakeholders to successfully combat the expansion of the organization throughout the country.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: COMBATING ISLAMIC STATE IN LIBYA

Due to the ongoing struggle for power between the two rival governments and the apathy of the international community, there has been no effective coordinated action against Islamic State in Libya to date. While there has been fighting between smaller Islamist militias that attacked Islamic State positions to drive them out of cities like Derna, these incidents are still quite isolated and their success a rare occurrence. In March 2015, the Libya Dawn coalition allied with the General National Congress sent forces from its main power base in Misrata to defend the area around Sirte from Islamic State.⁷⁶ Yet judging from news reports, Islamic State consolidated its presence in Sirte, and successfully fended off attempts at retaking the city by other militias. This appears to be due to insufficient logistical support and military backing from the rest of the Libya Dawn coalition for the Misratan brigades.⁷⁷

Preoccupation with the Domestic Political Conflict

The Libya Dawn alliance and affiliated militias are so caught up with fighting against the secular forces under General Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity from the east that they cannot organize coherent action against Islamic State. Meanwhile, Haftar's contingent in the east is fighting both Libya Dawn and Islamic State. Yet limited progress is visible regarding a potential resolution of the political conflict in Libya: lawmakers of the rival governments signed a UN-brokered peace deal in December 2015. The agreement sets up a Presidential Council of nine members that will lead the formation of a new unity government, but the heads of both current governments have rejected the deal.⁷⁸ It is crucial now to proceed with creating the new government and making sure it is adequately protected. However, its implementation faces some key challenges: It is doubtful that the recent agreement is representative of all political stakeholders in Libya. Seeing as many of them were not present during the talks in

Skhirat, Morocco, there is the risk that they may feel alienated and reject the authority of the new unity government. This would cause a further deterioration of the security climate and considerably set back the peace process. In this sense, any prospects of combating Islamic State would also be decimated. Furthermore, there is still no effective army in Libya, and the military alliances are highly divided along the line of the GNC against the HoR. In the aftermath of the revolution in 2011, the National Transitional Council already made the mistake of integrating the various armed groups and local militias as entire units, which also left their parochial agendas intact. This time around, it is crucial that the new unity government does not make the same mistake. In addition, a more effective counterterrorism strategy led by a unity government in cooperation with regional heads of state as well as influential Islamic scholars is crucial to not only combat Islamic State on the ground but also undermine its ideological appeal.

Toward a New Counterterrorism Strategy for Libya

Fighting Islamic State and driving it out of Libya is an immediate priority for the establishment of security. In the immediate context, the urgency of large-scale coordinated action against Islamic State cannot be overstated. It might even be possible to use the looming threat of Islamic State to involve more stakeholders in the political dialogue. Nevertheless, as long as the organization is still operating in Libya, the peace process between the warring factions cannot begin. Though the opposing sides may forge a tactical partnership to fight Islamic State, the continued presence of armed conflict will hinder efforts to reconcile the various armed groups and get them to lay down their weapons.

The ethnic, religious and political fault lines of the conflict in Libya are still very deep-seated, and it will be extremely difficult to overcome them. Furthermore, the ideological appeal of Islamic State through its aspiration to pan-Islamism remains uncontested. It is therefore imperative to produce a strong counter narrative to curb the group's expansion throughout North Africa. Yet it does not suffice to contest its religious doctrine, since Islamic State has transformed its ideology into a fortress that only the most knowledgeable and influential Islamic scholars can contest. And so far, the will to do so has been extremely limited across the Muslim world. It is also necessary that both key political figures and civil society highlight the corruption of Islamic State on secular grounds, and point to their

countless attacks on civilian populations, first and foremost in Muslim countries.⁷⁹ There are considerable discrepancies between what Islamic State promises to do and their actual conduct on the ground. There are only a few selected individuals in the organization who enjoy a privileged lifestyle due to their position within Islamic State, while the vast majority remains subdued and hierarchically controlled. Taxation and human rights abuses such as persecution and killing of political and religious “enemies”, and even sexual enslavement are being carried out in the name of its ideology. If more efforts and resources are being directed at exposing these gratuitous and arbitrary measures, then this could essentially diminish the attractiveness of joining Islamic State for radicalized individuals.

The involvement of Western countries in fighting Islamic State in Libya cannot be avoided, but these nations need to be extremely careful in their engagement with the Libyan stakeholders. The NATO involvement during the revolution in 2011 continues to be a major source of antagonism against Western countries. Therefore, their role in the current conflict should be limited to providing logistical support and mediation rather than direct military intervention. Ultimately, the only way that Islamic State can be defeated in Libya is if the warring parties and opposing military alliances resolve their struggle for power. If they launch a joint offensive on the organization, both on the ground and in terms of Islamist ideology, they might be able to drive Islamic State out of Libya.

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PART II

Rebels

CHAPTER 5

‘Islamist’ Rebels in DRC: The Allied Democratic Forces

Jesper Cullen

INTRODUCTION

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has been responsible for periodic bouts of violence in the Beni area of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), close to the border with Uganda, since its formation in the mid-1990s. Its attacks have targeted civilians, security forces and previously the Ugandan state. It has struggled to pose a credible challenge to state security forces, however, and it primarily operates in remote areas along the border with Uganda.

There is also a growing body of evidence to suggest that ADF’s objectives have changed since its formation in 1993. Initially, a rebel movement trying to replace the Ugandan government with an Islamic government, it seems that ADF now prioritizes both legal and illegal commercial activities over its earlier political and religious objectives and associated rebel activities. It currently has little or no presence in Uganda but operates instead in rural parts of eastern DR Congo. It has gradually become less of a Ugandan movement than a Congolese criminal group.

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There is little reliable and publicly available information about the ADF. It rarely issues statements or other information that may give some insight into its strategy and objectives. This has allowed speculative accounts to describe ADF as being everything ranging from a small criminal group to an Islamist terrorist group posing a regional threat. This chapter draws on open source secondary literature as well as interviews with several well-placed human sources to determine what threat ADF poses and to whom. To do this, the chapter examines what the group's current intent and capabilities are, and how these have changed since it formed in 1993, when it initially attempted to challenge the Ugandan government.

The threat ADF poses in the Beni area of eastern DRC is largely determined by the group's narrow objectives of sustaining itself divorced from outside influences rather than any significant limitations on its capabilities to operate in this remote area. There is little effective security presence that can prevent ADF from operating or mounting attacks in this remote and rural area, which is not a priority for either the Congolese or Ugandan states. That the group does not carry out more frequent or larger-scale attacks appears to be in large part because it is content with its current position, sustaining its community away from outside influences and the threats to its existence that the Ugandan and Congolese armies may pose.

Outside the Beni area of DRC, ADF poses a low or negligible threat. This is due to the group having no notable operational capability outside Beni. Although ADF's original objective was to fight the Ugandan state, there is now nothing to suggest it is able to maintain any notable level of militant operations in Uganda. This is in part thanks to effective deployments of Ugandan security forces in the border region, which ADF is unable to challenge.

Even inside DRC, there are also indications that ADF is no longer intent on projecting power outside the enabling environment of the Beni area. As I note below, the objectives of ADF have changed gradually. The group has shifted its focus from challenging the Ugandan government. It has become more insular and content with sustaining itself as an independent society. In some ways, ADF has moved away from being a rebel or insurgent group and is now more akin to an isolated community with a violent criminal wing.

According to the Ugandan government and media reports, ADF is part of a wider network of Islamist militant groups in East Africa.¹ There is little evidence to support these claims, which as I explain below are arguably part of a Ugandan government attempt to attract foreign financial support for its security sector. Although there is an Islamic aspect to ADF, as far

as my research has gathered, it plays a relatively minor role in the group. ADF members have not always been exclusively Muslim, and there have been few attempts in recent years to spread Islam or convert people in eastern DRC. Given this, it is unlikely that ADF would seek to integrate itself as part of the network of Islamist terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia or Al-Hijra in Kenya.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

There has been a gradual shift in the objectives of ADF since the early 2000s. The group has shifted its focus away from trying to replace the Ugandan government with an Islamic-led government. Instead, the available evidence suggests that it is seeking to sustain and protect itself as an independent society separate from outside influences. In doing so, it has also diversified its activities, built a broad network of commercial interests and developed ties to other communities in eastern DRC. Indeed, it is now firmly embedded in DRC and with a considerable Congolese membership; the description of it as a 'foreign' rebel group is probably no longer accurate.

This does not mean that ADF is no longer intent on mounting offensive attacks. During 2015, the group increased the frequency of its attacks against security forces and civilians in eastern DRC. But the motivation for mounting these attacks is probably more self-defense than attempts to expand its influence. ADF seems to be trying to push other insurgent and criminal groups, as well as the Congolese army, away from its area of operation, to protect its society as well as its smuggling operations, primarily of consumer goods, gold and timber.

Nevertheless, there no longer appears to be a single overall objective that unifies ADF. Instead, different factions and units and individual members have varying motivations and goals. Since the arrest of the ADF leader, Jamil Mukulu, in April 2015, there have been some early indications that this divergence in strategy between members has widened further. Understanding how and why these motivations vary between members will be central to the success of future attempts at demobilization and peace talks.

ORIGINS OF ADF-NALU

As an amalgamation of several rebel groups, ADF has had numerous objectives in its 20-year history. These have at times been contradictory, adding to uncertainty about what ADF is trying to achieve. Initially, a common opposition to the government in Kampala acted as a unifying force for the

various units that made up ADF. As such, the main objective of ADF was to overthrow the government of Uganda.

However, the reasons for ADF members' opposition to the government in Kampala were not uniform. From the early years of the movement, there have been signs that the leadership has had a range of objectives other than solely rebelling against the Ugandan government. These have at various times included developing commercial activities such as timber and gold smuggling and operating legitimate businesses, creating an independent community and social code among its members based in part on Islam, and less commonly acting as a mercenary force for other non-state as well as state actors.

There were two broad elements of ADF at its formation. One was from the Islamic Tabliq community in central Uganda. The other was from western Uganda and comprised mostly non-Muslim remnants of earlier separatist rebellions in this historically restive part of the country. It was the Tabliq faction that seems to have had the most pronounced and long-lasting influence on the objectives of the group.

The root of the Tabliqs' grievance with the government was a power struggle within the Islamic community of Uganda. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, elements of the Tabliq community perceived that the government was interfering in religious affairs and sidelining them in favor of another group called the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC). The Ugandan government appeared to side with UMSC as it viewed the Tabliqs as being the more radical of the two factions. This sidelining and alleged harassment by the authorities led fringe groups of Tabliqs to start to mount low-level attacks and physical assaults against its rivals in Kampala. Because of this, several Tabliqs were imprisoned.

It was during this time in prison that the militant Tabliqs developed a clearer objective, strategy and structure for the rebel group. No longer was it an informal and unsophisticated group engaging in a tit-for-tat sporadic violence with rival religious groups. Instead, it was beginning the transition into an organized armed rebel movement. Its intent also became more ambitious, moving its targeting from its rival religious movement to challenging the Ugandan state itself.

This Tabliq group had a distinctly religious motivation for its rebellion. But upon his release at the end of their prison terms in 1993, their leader Jamilu Mukulu led his followers to establish a base in the Hoima district of western Uganda. It was here that the movement's religious agenda began to be diluted. They engaged with other rebels and their intent to fight the Ugandan government seems to have gradually receded.

From its base in western Uganda, the group of militant Tabliqs started to mount attacks against government targets and raid towns and local businesses. These were mostly low-impact attacks that did not pose a credible threat to the authority of the Ugandan state in this area. Ugandan military offensives in 1995 were quick to push the militants out of Uganda across the border into eastern DRC. ADF lost control of all its camps in Uganda and found it increasingly difficult to even mount cross-border operations from DRC into Ugandan territory. But despite the lack of success in its militant operations, the intent of ADF at this stage was clearly focused on challenging the authority of the Ugandan state.

It was after being forced to retreat into DRC that the Tabliqs started to work together with what would become the other main element of ADF. The National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) did not share the Tabliqs' religious motivations, but it did have the same objective of removing the Ugandan government. NALU had deep ties to the area along the border between western Uganda and eastern DRC—an area that had a long history of supporting rebellions against Kampala.² Led in part by members of the former government of Idi Amin, NALU had mounted a campaign of grenade attacks in Uganda, particularly in Kampala, in the early 1990s in an attempt to destabilize the incumbent government and force it to recognize the secessionist Kingdom of Rwenzururu. But similarly to the Tabliqs, by the mid-1990s, NALU had been forced to retreat from Uganda into Eastern DRC because of Ugandan military operations against them.

By forming this rebel coalition with NALU, the Tabliqs gained a boost to their operational capabilities and a more established support network in the DRC-Uganda border region. In the period from 1996 to 2001, ADF-NALU was responsible for a spate of mostly small cross-border raids on police posts and state-linked buildings in western Uganda as well as infrequent grenade attacks in Kampala. Some attacks were relatively large, for example, the killing of around 80 students at a technical college in Kabarole district in June 1998.³ However, the group seems to have struggled to evade strengthening security measures along the border. The deployment of the military to this border region suggests that the Ugandan government saw the presence of insurgents there as a threat to its authority and reputation as an effective government.

With its opportunities in Uganda increasingly limited, the group changed its focus, although it is unclear if this was intentional or even if the group was aware of its drift. It became engaged in cross-border trade and caught up in DRC political disputes and power struggles. This ranged

from negotiating issues such as land access and paying off local political and security forces,⁴ to issues of regional importance such as acting as mercenaries for the government in Kinshasa, as I discuss in more detail below. As Titeca and Vlassenroot explain, it was at the formation of the coalition with NALU that ADF really began to move away from its Ugandan origins and original objective of replacing Uganda's government.⁵

EVOLUTION OF ADF'S OBJECTIVES

ADF's intent to target Uganda fell over time, and now appears to be nonexistent. It has instead become more engaged in its Congolese environment. It has diversified its activities, developed close ties to local communities, recruited locally, and is now financially reliant on its involvement in cross-border smuggling, particularly the timber, gold and consumer goods trade. Having been a distinctly Ugandan rebel group in its early years, ADF has now become a hybrid armed movement, which is more representative of the Uganda-DRC borderlands environment and the absence of any permanent or effective state presence there. As Scorgie-Porter has written extensively, it is now perhaps more accurate to describe ADF as a 'transnational phenomenon' than a Ugandan rebel group.⁶

This shift in geographical basis of ADF is important in terms of the threat that ADF poses. It raises questions about the accuracy of the Ugandan government's portrayal of ADF as a terrorist group that poses a credible threat to Kampala. Regardless of whether ADF has the capability to mount offensive operations against the Ugandan state, there is now little evidence to suggest that it has the intent to do so. It is perhaps in part because of this and the ADF's lack of clear political objectives that the USA removed ADF from its list of designated foreign terrorist organizations in 2013.⁷

To determine how ADF's objectives have changed and what the group's main focus is now, I will examine individually the roles that religion, political ambitions and commercial interests play in the group. I will also look at previous attempts to start peace talks and demobilization programs, and the demands ADF was making at these points. This will provide an indication of what ADF is trying to achieve and to whom it might pose a threat. Furthermore, I will look at the military capabilities of ADF to determine if it is able to follow through on any threats and achieve its objectives.

Ties to Foreign Islamist Militant Groups

There are signs that the leadership of ADF has historic and possibly current ties to foreign Islamist groups. But there is little to indicate that these links are now anything more than sporadic informal contact. Nor is there any reliable evidence to support reports that ADF shares expansive or jihadist objectives similar to those of regional Islamist militant groups, such as Al-Shabaab or Al-Hijra. Indeed, based on interviews with people living in the Beni area of DRC, enforcing its Islamic social code on non-members does not appear to be a consistent part of the ADF's strategy.

The Ugandan government has repeatedly said that ADF is part of a wider Al-Qaeda network in East Africa. In particular, it has emphasized alleged links to Al-Shabaab, and even accused ADF of working alongside Al-Shabaab to carry out the 2010 bombings in Kampala.⁸ There is no credible evidence to support these allegations. There are probably financial reasons for the Ugandan government to exaggerate the extent of the terrorism threat in Uganda. The strongest evidence points to the Kenyan Islamist militant group Al-Hijra as having helped Al-Shabaab in the 2010 attacks, and that assisting with such an operation would have fallen outside the intent of ADF.

The UN Group of Experts has found no evidence to support recurring claims of links to foreign terrorist groups,⁹ and it is likely that the allegations from Kampala are politically motivated. According to a diplomatic source in the region, there is a feeling within the diplomatic community that Uganda is exaggerating the terrorist threat.¹⁰ This is allegedly to maintain the security-related financial support it receives from the USA, reportedly in the region of \$170 million each year.¹¹ As my diplomatic source put it, 'Uganda is not seriously threatened by terrorism. It's a money-making scheme'.¹²

Although the UN has found no evidence to support claims of ongoing ADF ties to foreign terrorist groups, it is clear that some senior ADF members have previously been engaged in Islamist environments elsewhere in East Africa. In the 1990s, ADF leader Jamil Mukulu reportedly established relations with Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya, Al-Shabaab's predecessor in Somalia and Kenya. It is unclear what these ties entailed, but they do seem to have lasted in some form—people linked to Al-Shabaab's Kenyan affiliate, Al-Hijra, allegedly paid the bail for the release of Jamil Mukulu's son in Nairobi in 2011.¹³ And according to the UN citing Kenyan intelligence sources, Mukulu has been in contact with 'Al-Shabaab agents residing in Eastleigh' in Nairobi, Kenya.¹⁴

There are possible, albeit unconfirmed, signs that ADF has continued to have at least sporadic ties to foreign Islamist elements. According to a civil society source in the Beni region who has had close contact with arrested ADF combatants, ADF has received visitors from countries including Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea and Tanzania.¹⁵ This source was unable to shed much light on the nature of these foreign visits, but a local journalist with good access to armed groups in eastern DRC told me that some visits were reportedly linked to military training.¹⁶

These unconfirmed suggestions of foreign training support are in line with some official reports. The UN Group of Experts found in 2013 that ‘foreign Arabic-speaking men conducted military training courses and operations with ADF’.¹⁷ Similarly, in 2010, the same UN group reported that ADF received ‘sessions on urban warfare and terrorist tactics’ from Pakistani and Moroccan nationals.

The UN was not able to determine who any of these men were, nor whether they were members of a particular organization. In the course of my research, no sources were able to provide further clear evidence of these foreign visits. Instead, such reports appear to have been based on hearsay. Without further information from credible sources, it is not possible to determine if this is evidence of links between ADF and foreign Islamist terrorist groups.

The arrest of Jamil Mukulu in April 2015 has probably further weakened ADF’s connections to foreign Islamist groups. As an official political source working in Beni told me, ‘ADF will now lose some financing and some international contacts, including with the Nairobi-Kenya based Islamist groups’.¹⁸ However, the sources or size of foreign funding is unclear, and successive UN reports have provided few details other than describing the use of ‘international money transfers’, such as Western Union payments from the UK.¹⁹

Regardless, this disruption has come at a time when foreign ties have been falling in importance anyway. Rather, Islam has taken a more prominent role in guiding the group’s internal organization and rules in recent years. This is in line with the group’s gradual shift in strategy to become more inward-looking and less interested in projecting its influence.

This uncertainty about the nature of ADF’s international Islamist ties has allowed speculation about the group’s links to Al-Qaeda to develop. There are unconfirmed reports about ADF leaders including Mukulu receiving training in Afghanistan in the 1990s, reports of Somalis in eastern DRC, and even rumors that the Al-Shabaab militants who attacked Garissa University College in Kenya in April 2015 had trained with ADF in eastern DRC. Such speculation risks creating a misleading perception about ADF’s objectives being much more offensive and far-reaching than is actually the case.

Regional Support

ADF has previously received financial, operational and material support from the Sudanese and Congolese governments as part of regional disputes and attempts to undermine or destabilize the Ugandan government. There are still signs that the group has ties to some local politicians and Congolese army elements. But it appears that large-scale government backing has long since dried up. This is most probably because of changes in the personnel and strategies of these governments, rather than because ADF is no longer seeking to accept such support.

According to an official source who worked on ADF-related matters until recently, Jamil Mukulu had a house in Khartoum and maintained close relations to the Sudanese government during the early years of ADF's rebellion.²⁰ Other ADF commanders reportedly received training in Juba, while Sudan supposedly sent material support such as weapons to eastern DRC by air. The Sudanese government allegedly provided support to several foreign Islamist insurgent groups during the 1990s. This was driven in part by Hasan al-Turabi, the leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front, a key force within the Sudanese government. As Holt and Daly put it, al-Turabi came to be seen internationally as 'standing up to the enemies of Islam' and as an 'exporter of revolutionary violence'. Islamist militant groups found a source of support in al-Turabi with his distinctly Islamist views. Another probable motivation for Sudan to support anti-Ugandan groups is that Kampala itself was backing the separatist SPLM group in southern Sudan in its struggle against the government in Khartoum. Supporting a non-state group fighting Kampala could have been a reaction by Sudan.

However, Sudan's approach seems to have been supporting its enemy's enemy, irrespective of its religious alignment. The Sudanese government also helped non-Muslim groups who were engaged in a fight against Khartoum's rivals. This was the case with its assistance to Lord's Resistance Army, a Christian movement that was rebelling against the Ugandan government—and is discussed further in the Warlords section of this volume. Given this, it is unclear whether Sudan's support for ADF was because of the religious element of the group or simply because they shared a common enemy. Drawing parallels between Sudan's support to ADF and to Al-Qaeda are therefore speculative. This again risks portraying ADF incorrectly as an Islamist militant group engaging in an offensive jihad.

The support ADF received from the Congolese government had a similar basis to that from Sudan, and again one that was not directly linked to

ADF's own political or religious ambitions. Instead, according to one usually reliable political source who has worked extensively in the Beni region of eastern DRC, ADF was behaving like mercenaries, willing to work with others if there was some alignment in their objectives and if it would lead to greater financial, material or strategic military backing.

Titeca and Vlassenroot reached a similar finding, stating that the government in Kinshasa used ADF to help in the fight against other militia groups that were operating in the Beni region.²¹ However, this relationship broke down when Kinshasa saw that the benefits of fighting a weakened ADF outweighed the benefits of using the group as a proxy force.

Islam as an Internal Social Code

Although there is little publicly available evidence to suggest that the group is currently trying, or has ever tried, to project Islamic influences onto its neighboring communities, Islam does seem to play an important role within ADF's community. It now acts as a form of internal social guide, influencing aspects of the group's education and legal systems.²² For example, religious positions such as religious education teachers are influential in the group. And the legal system is partly based on the Koran, but as it is not codified it is not possible to determine the extent to which it is based on Sharia law.²³ That said, ADF's history shows that it has taken a pragmatic approach to its religion. Previously, not all members were Muslim, and the union with the non-Muslim NALU is itself evidence that there was an acceptance within the ADF leadership of the need to cooperate with non-Muslims.

This approach changed after NALU left the rebel coalition in 2007 with its leadership surrendering to UN peacekeepers. Since then, the ADF leadership has enforced a stricter adherence to Islam within the group. For example, conversion to Islam gradually became more important and eventually obligatory for all members. Based on documents that the UN recovered from camps ADF abandoned during a Congolese military offensive in 2014, members who did not convert to Islam can be sentenced to death.²⁴ Teaching of the Koran also reportedly took a more prominent, but still minor, role within the ADF school system.^{25,26}

However, interviews with several sources who have engaged with current and former members of the group revealed that ADF members are still not unified in the importance they place on Islam.²⁷ Some do seem to have an Islamist agenda that bears some similarities to those of jihadists.

Other ADF members seem to have minimal commitment to religion. As with so much of the information on ADF, the contradictory signals resulting from this lack of consistency add to the uncertainty surrounding the group and allow room for speculation.

ADF's approach to conversion of non-Muslims to Islam is one example of how members have differed in their interpretation of their religion and their group's strategy. A UN Group of Experts report in January 2015 cited an ADF civilian and a local source in Beni as saying that ADF forces people to convert to Islam. It is unclear from this report if these religious conversion efforts are targeted at members and new recruits only, or if the UN's sources are suggesting that ADF also tries to convert people who are not members of ADF.

A well-placed UN official in eastern DRC I spoke with said he was not aware of any evidence that ADF is trying to convert non-Members to Islam.²⁸ He said there are perhaps two reasons for this. First, ADF has 'been on the move and has been disrupted' since 2013. The Congolese army has been mounting operations against ADF bases. This has led to a split in ADF as militant units have scattered. The group has also lost a large number of combatants as well as some of its leadership. As my UN source said, maintaining basic things such as a food supply is clearly now of far greater importance than other possible earlier activities such as religious conversion.

The second reason the UN official gave for religious conversion no longer featuring highly among ADF's goals is that the group wants to keep contact with civilians to a minimum. As I explained above, ADF has shifted its focus inwards and is now trying to sustain itself as a self-sufficient and independent society. The UN official I spoke with said 'this has been a strategic move from ADF as it wants to create space for itself and make sure civilians are not near them. Civilians are now a threat in ADF's eyes as they might cooperate with the Congolese authorities'. Motivations for civilians to inform on ADF to the authorities can range from financial to a general distrust or fear of ADF.

My findings from interviews with other civilians as well as with official and civil society sources in the Beni area have been inconsistent on the question of conversion of non-members. There are anecdotal reports since 2013 of ADF members threatening non-members in an attempt to get them to convert to Islam. But there are also reports of people being able to live nearby or trade with ADF without religion being an issue. It appears that targeting non-members for conversion is partly dependent on the ADF units or individuals involved and perhaps also the nature of the interaction. In particular, trading partners seem less likely to be forced to convert.

The lack of a coherent approach to dealing with non-Muslims is particularly important for an analysis of ADF in two ways. First, it suggests that the leadership does not exert tight control over the implementation of a religious strategy. It is not possible to say whether this is because the leadership does not see it as a priority or whether it is because the leadership lacks full control over its members. Second, the inconsistencies in ADF's approach to religious conversion further dispel the Ugandan government's claims that ADF works together with and shares the objectives of Al-Shabaab and the wider Al-Qaeda movement. This is because Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda more broadly, has a clear and consistent strategy of offensive jihad. ADF meanwhile seems to be content with using Islam to guide its internal rules, such as on education and social customs.

Peace Talks

Ugandan, Congolese and UN attempts to hold peace talks with ADF or start demobilization programs for ADF combatants have been unsuccessful. But they do provide some insight into the group's objectives. Although some low-ranking fighters have shown interest in returning to civilian life, the ADF leadership appears to be wholly uninterested in engaging with the authorities. The prospects for successful negotiations are probably also falling, now that ADF is less driven by political goals and is more focused on protecting its society from outside influences.

The last time ADF showed any notable interest in peace talks was in 2009. Even these were at most scoping talks, far from being full-blown peace negotiations. This process in 2009, as well as earlier demobilization and negotiation efforts aimed at ADF, exposed a divergence between the goals of the leadership and lower-ranking members. According to a trusted source who was involved in brokering the peace talks with ADF in 2009, there was a 'discrepancy between local combatants and Mukulu', which led to the collapse of the process.²⁹ The ADF leader Mukulu was not in favor of talks, and when he found out about the process he intervened to stop them.

My source, who was involved in the talks, explained that lower-ranking members are reportedly willing to engage and seek routes for demobilization. This is probably because junior members are now often forced-recruits, including from abductions. The UN has said that the group abducted around 300 people during the course of 2013.³⁰ As a result, these members have a much weaker commitment to the leadership's strategy and operations. This seems to apply both to ADF's original objective

of fighting the Ugandan government and to its newer objective of sustaining an independent community based in part on Islam.

Reports from the UN as well as information from my sources in Beni and those who have interacted with the group suggest that the poor living standards of junior members is another reason for some combatants being open to demobilization. This is particularly acute given a perception that the leadership enjoys comparatively good conditions, with Mukulu reportedly having traveled comparatively widely, including having lived in the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.³¹

Most of the demands from ADF members at the 2009 peace talks were linked to socioeconomic issues and seeking assurances of employment after demobilization.³² The lower-ranking members did not state any demands related to ADF's declared objectives of earlier years, such as opposition to the Ugandan government or Tablis' representation within the Ugandan Islamic community and their rivalry with other Islamic groups in Uganda.

The opposition of Mukulu and other senior members to peace talks seems to have grown stronger in recent years. Since the collapse of the 2009 negotiations, it has reportedly become more difficult to contact the group. As one official source in the Beni area put it, 'they see few opportunities or benefits of peace negotiations, and are instead focused on pursuing their social and commercial objectives [in eastern DRC]'.³³

With few signs of any clear political objectives among the ADF leadership, the authorities are left with little to attract the group into negotiations. However, the engagements that there have been with ADF members do indicate that there is a split within the group. This is probably undermining the leadership's authority as it lacks support among junior members. This will most likely also affect its ability to continue its militant and commercial operations at the level it has previously.

Commercial Activities in Rwenzori and Beni

ADF has built an extensive and varied network of commercial interests in the DRC-Uganda borderlands. This process appears to have started soon after the Ugandan security forces forced ADF to retreat from western Uganda to eastern DRC in 1995. While in the early years commerce was a means of financing its military and political objectives, it has since become the group's primary activity and an objective in itself. As one well-placed and usually reliable diplomatic source in the region put it, ADF has 'gradually transformed into a mafia-like business enterprise'.³⁴

There is scant detailed and reliable information about ADF's commercial activities, and no specific information available at all about the revenues it receives or volumes of goods it sells. Based on reports by the UN Group of Experts and interviews with a range of sources in the Beni region, timber and gold are two of the main commodities that ADF is involved in.³⁵ This involves operating mines and selling licenses for tree-felling operations, then smuggling these goods across the border into western Uganda where it sells the goods on to others who then transport them further into Uganda and beyond.

ADF has also reportedly smuggled consumer goods such as coffee, chocolate, pharmaceuticals, fuel, motorcycles and car spare parts across from Uganda into DRC, filling a gap in the supply of such products to the remote Beni region.³⁶ There are also relatively well-documented reports of ADF being involved in the motorcycle and car taxi business in Beni.³⁷ According to the UN group of experts and some of my sources in the Beni area, some members of the local authorities are complicit in ADF's activities, allowing the group to operate businesses and sites such as mines, as well as use transport routes.³⁸

The commercial interests of ADF seem to have been important for the group in establishing relations with the local community in eastern DRC. One Congolese journalist based in the area told me that ADF has created job opportunities and that many see the group as being 'good business partners', albeit ones they are often afraid of.³⁹ As he put it, 'when you work with them, you share the profit, which is different to the Congolese army that takes everything'.

An official in Beni who is involved in countering ADF's activities told me that ADF has been forced to change and reduce its commercial operations since early 2014.⁴⁰ He explained that military operations have disrupted ADF's supply lines, smuggling routes, and mining and timber sites. They have also successfully split ADF into separate units and killed some of its leaders, causing some organizational disruption to its trading. This seems to have prompted ADF to retaliate and mount a military offensive, which I detail below.

ATTACK TARGETING PATTERNS

ADF has periodically mounted offensives in the Beni area of DRC, during which it has increased the frequency of its attacks targeting civilians and security forces. This was the case during 2015, when there were up to five attacks

a month that the DRC authorities attributed to ADF. According to the UN, the group was responsible for more than 500 civilian deaths between October 2014 and November 2015.⁴¹ This raises the question of why the group would mount such unprovoked attacks if the other evidence suggests it is trying to keep a low profile and operate as an independent community.

Attacks attributed to ADF have varied from targeted killings of individual people to large-scale assaults on towns, resulting in dozens of deaths. There were 39 alleged ADF attacks in 2015, with the largest resulting in 37 deaths.⁴² The vast majority targeted civilians in small villages in the Beni region, probably because these are remote and comparatively poorly protected locations. There have also been attacks on DRC security forces and UN peacekeepers, but these have tended to be much less common.

There is a great deal of uncertainty over who is responsible for the various violent incidents. Although the local authorities and media reports blame ADF for almost all attacks in the Beni area, other armed groups and militias are active there and are fighting over a range of political and local grievances. These include community self-defense militias, remnants for former rebellions such as the RCD-K/ML group, and mutinous or corrupt factions of the state security forces.⁴³ The UN Group of Experts has also said it has doubts over ADF's involvement in some attacks and has suggested that other armed groups and the Congolese army are responsible for some incidents.⁴⁴ Although it is not possible to comment on the motivations for such attacks here, this would not be surprising. There are deep-rooted problems of corruption in the Congolese army as well as links between it, militias, and community self-defense groups.

Determining which of the numerous groups is responsible for individual attacks is close to impossible. But it seems clear that official and media reports give a misleading picture of the tempo of ADF operations. Although most of my sources in DRC and Uganda suggested that ADF is only responsible for a minority of the attacks in the Beni region, ADF is certainly sustaining some level of offensive militant operations.

Two main motivations for ADF's offensive operations have emerged in the course of my research. First, attacks are an attempt by ADF to create space for itself. This is based on the idea that ADF is trying to push civilians and security forces away from its camps and cross-border trade routes. The locations of some attacks support this idea, with some occurring near to strategically important sites for ADF, such as gold or timber producing areas or smuggling and transport routes. However, others have occurred in areas away from ADF bases or trade routes, which indicates that this is not the sole reason.

Second, a civil society source who has worked with former ADF combatants said that another motivation for attacks might be to punish people who have betrayed the group, either by informing the authorities of ADF activities or by not abiding by commercial agreements.⁴⁵ He explained cases where individuals have received warnings and subsequently been attacked. These people have ranged from farmers, businesspeople, politicians and members of the military. Such attacks aimed at enforcing loyalty, or at least deterring opposition, fit with the theory that ADF is trying to protect itself and its operations from external powers.

CAPABILITIES

ADF's military capabilities are limited and probably falling. The available information suggests that the group, with just a couple of hundred members left, is only able to operate in areas with little or no state security presence. This means that the threat posed by ADF outside the remote Beni area of eastern DRC is likely to remain low for the foreseeable future. This is even if ADF's intents were to change and again become more outward looking, offensive and targeted against the Ugandan or Congolese states. Given the absence of effective state or security presence in much of eastern DRC, offensives against ADF do have the potential to displace the group elsewhere in that part of the country. However, the group's limited capacity and troop numbers would still mean that ADF would pose only a localized threat in areas where there are already no established and capable armed groups.

A Congolese army offensive against ADF throughout 2014 hit the group's capabilities hard. According to the UN Group of Experts, ADF membership in April 2014 had dropped from between 1000 and 1200, and by 2015, it remains just between 150 and 200 members. Of these, it claims just 30–70 members are in combat roles.⁴⁶ The UN peacekeeping mission in DRC has given a higher estimate of 500 combatants.⁴⁷ It is unclear how up to date this estimate is, but given that ADF has a large proportion of members in non-combat roles, such as women and children, it seems likely that this estimate refers to ADF's size before April 2014. The drop in ADF's numbers that the UN Group of Experts details is the result of combatants dying in fighting with the Congolese army, starving to death due to irregular food supplies, or the group simply abandoning weak members while they were evading army assaults. In this respect, the army's offensive has been successful in reducing the scale of the potential threat the group poses.

However, my source who is an official involved in combating ADF told me that those combatants who have survived are the 'core elite'.⁴⁸ The loss of troop numbers may not have significantly affected their ability to mount relatively frequent attacks across a wide area of Beni territory. He described how they now operate as a number of 'small but well-experienced and determined groups, who know the terrain and are extremely mobile'. And as the UN Group of Experts has reported, recruitment networks were 'not significantly affected' and ADF retains the 'potential to regroup and rebuild'.⁴⁹ These networks use both voluntary and involuntary methods, such as recruiting through mosques and schools in DRC and to a lesser extent Uganda, tricking people into thinking there are education or work opportunities by joining, or by simply abducting people.⁵⁰ Disrupting these networks, which involve civilians in some major cities in eastern DRC and Uganda, will require more nuanced approaches than military offensives.

Equipment and Attack Tactics

Attacks that ADF has mounted indicate that the group's militant capabilities are unsophisticated. This is despite around 20 years of experience operating as an armed group. There has been no notable development in the ADF's tactics, use of weapons or explosive devices during this time. In encounters with Congolese, Ugandan or UN security forces, ADF has tended to be unable to pose significant resistance and has instead chosen to retreat. Given this, it seems most likely that the threat ADF poses will remain limited to remote areas of eastern DRC where there is little or no DRC military or effective UN peacekeeper presence.

Some ADF attacks have been large, killing several dozen people at a time. For example, the group was probably behind the killing of 58 people in an attack in Mbau in November 2014, and then 37 people in the same town in May 2015.⁵¹ Based on reports of raids in the Beni area, ADF has faced minimal resistance from the DRC police or army.⁵² So it seems that the relatively large casualty figures are less indicative of ADF's capabilities than of the absence of effective protection for rural communities in the Beni region.

A typical tactic in such incidents is for the assailants to enter a rural town, a few armed with firearms, but mostly with crude weapons such as machetes, knives and axes, which are widely and easily available for civilians in eastern DRC. There is evidence to suggest that ADF is not

entirely indiscriminate in who they choose to kill. Kidnapping children, rather than killing them, appears to be a priority. This is probably because of the role children can have in working at ADF camps, and later becoming combatants. This source of manpower appears to be important for the group, particularly since it has lost troops through death and desertion. Looting private property, particularly targeting food and medical supplies, also appears to be a primary objective in such raids, more so than inflicting a high number of fatalities.

That ADF combatants are not all carrying firearms is another sign that the group's militant capabilities are limited. The UN Group of Experts has said in previous years that ADF may have more sophisticated equipment than AK-47s.⁵³ This reportedly includes PK machine guns, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank mines, and anti-aircraft weapons. The UN report based this on information from Congolese and Ugandan intelligence and from local community sources. The use of such weaponry has been rare, however, according to reports in the media and on information from several official and civilian sources in the Beni area. If ADF is in possession of these items, it is probably in low numbers or, as the UN has also suggested, in a state of disrepair.

This raises some questions about the accuracy of the reports the UN Group of Experts has received. The veracity of reports of ADF having anti-aircraft weapons is particularly uncertain. There have been no verified or credible reports of ADF using such weapons. The UN has said that its helicopters carrying out surveillance missions over ADF territory have come under fire.⁵⁴ But this was reportedly from automatic rifles rather than more sophisticated weapons with a higher altitude range.

One factor that I suspect has caused some damage to ADF's military capabilities is disruption to its arms supply networks. According to an official involved in combating ADF activities and local political sources, ADF now rarely receives weapons from foreign backers or from purchases.⁵⁵ Instead, it is now almost entirely reliant on taking weapons and ammunition when fighting and looting from the Congolese army and less frequently from local communities.

CONCLUSION

The picture of ADF that emerges is not one of a rebel group engaged in a fight against the state. Nor is it one of an extremist Islamist militant group that is part of a wider jihadist movement in East Africa. Rather ADF

appears to have primarily transitioned into a business enterprise, albeit a violent one, with aspects of it more akin to a cult around the leadership of Jamil Mukulu with strict social and religious-based rules. That is not to say that ADF no longer poses a threat to security, but that this threat is limited to rural areas of Beni territory in eastern DRC, away from effective deployments of security forces.

The threat ADF poses to Uganda has fallen as the group has drifted from its original objective of overthrowing the Ugandan government from power. While this is in part because of a lack of intent on ADF's part, it is also the result of robust security measures by the Ugandan state. There is nothing to suggest that ADF would be able to sustain any notable level of militant operations inside Uganda, particularly outside the Rwenzori region bordering DRC. And given the Ugandan military's far superior capabilities, it seems unlikely that ADF would risk jeopardizing its commercial operations by attacking Uganda and provoking a retaliation. It is probably for similar reasons that ADF has not spread to other areas of eastern DRC but has instead remained in the Beni region. The group's objectives are not political or indeed at all expansive. Instead, maintaining and protecting its commercial activities in and around Beni are the priority.

The group is likely to be reluctant to spread itself too thinly by moving elsewhere in eastern DRC where other armed groups operate. ADF lacks the troop numbers and equipment to do so. And given its increasingly reclusive nature, collaborating with other armed groups seems unlikely on current indications, while a move away from the DRC-Uganda border region would jeopardize its smuggling activities and remove the group from a terrain it knows well. Regardless of whether its intent was to become more offensive and political, ADF has a long way to go, if it is to pose any credible threat to the Ugandan or Congolese states.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 6

The Séléka and anti-Balaka Rebel Movements in the Central African Republic

Wendy Isaacs-Martin

INTRODUCTION

Since independence in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) has experienced numerous violent conflicts as a result of competitors attempting to usurp power or maintain political leadership. Due to the declining state institutions, including the lack of democratic social and political structures, coupled with a faltering economy that cannot incorporate the majority of the population, the country is plagued by instability arising from activities of violent non-state actors including rebel armies, militias, armed youths, bandits and civilian criminality. This is a state synonymous with violence, extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention and rampant state corruption. The 2013–2015 conflict is popularly understood as a simplistic dichotomous religious ideological confrontation carried out by government troops and militias in civil and community confrontations. Indeed, the characterization of the conflict as Islam versus Christianity, government troops versus paramilitaries and militias versus civilians does not capture the true extent and complexities of the conflict.

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This chapter investigates the time period in the CAR from 2000 to 2014 and seeks to clarify the ‘religious’ conflict that has plagued the country since 2013. The questions posed in the chapter are first, to what extent does the Muslim-Christian conflict differ from past and continuing conflicts in the CAR, and second, are there any structural and institutional continuities between past and present conflicts in the country? The rationale for selecting the time period is that within this decade the CAR experienced four changes in political leadership. These changes in presidential political leadership happened within an environment of violence. Two were the result of a coup (Bozizé and Djotodia): one was democratically elected (Patassé), and another was recently appointed as the current nonpartisan president (Samba-Panza). The period under investigation reveals the existence of an increasing number of militias from the various prefectures (provinces) that are either in partnership or in conflict with government forces, other militias and civilians.

Furthermore, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that there are two interrelated forms of violence in CAR. The first form of violence is the long-standing pattern in which a change in political leadership is accompanied by violence. Second, this change in political leadership is linked to a new and different path of violence that involves civilians and militias. The objectives of this research are to determine whether violence between the various groups are consistent over the decade under study, and whether religion or ethnic identities are motivations for this violence.

A descriptive case study method is used to demonstrate a timeline of reported events. There is no intention to extrapolate to other regions or to find similarities, such as cooperation or where there are working relations, between militias and political leadership. For the purposes of this chapter, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) news stories and brief notes were used as primary sources of data for a credible story that highlights the phenomena—namely the events and the participants limited by time and space. These stories and notes provide a chronology that allows for themes to be extracted and to demonstrate whether there is a link to religion or ethnicity in the patterns of violence. As a corpus, they provide a detailed and differentiated picture of the changing patterns of violence in the CAR over the years.

A chronological survey serves to carve out patterns according to which conflict and violence occurred over the four presidential periods. Each president’s term shows an escalation of violence, competing claims to leadership, political legitimacy and power, as well as the changing alliances

among leaders, armies and militias and the conflicts after the presidents were deposed. Furthermore, the movement of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees reveals the trajectory of government troops, militias and bandits attacking particular zones. These paths of persistent violence and attacks create an environment of fear, hopelessness and desperation that elevates tensions between village and urban communities. The research reveals that the recent violence in the CAR is a continuation of earlier practices of social violence, although there are new dimensions, especially the manipulation of religious identity for the purposes of mobilization, and perpetration of violence in the September 2013 crises.

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND STATE BUILDING

State formation and state building remain complex in Africa due to persistent economic, political and security fragility.¹ This can be partly attributed to the knowledge that the original purpose of state formation in Africa was for European colonialism, expansion and resource extraction. These states, from a security perspective, were always vulnerable. Many, including the CAR, were weak to begin with and have over time descended into violence and disintegration. To maintain regime longevity and relative stability, political authority and power in Africa has mutated into an institution of personal power rather than institutional leadership. As leaders use ethnic and religious affiliations in the form of client relationships to maintain political power, this has directly undermined the potential for nation building and political stability. The state in Africa has become the means by which elites have for decades enriched themselves and serviced their personal interests, rather than the state existing for public good and economic development. Like several other states in Africa, the CAR could be described as a failed state. Due to internal and external forces that are sometimes beyond the control of the African leaders, states, such as CAR, may be unable or unwilling to protect the innocent civilians during violent conflicts.

For example, in the CAR, violent conflicts among civilians may arise when a particular religious or ethnic group considers others to be favored by government or by militias. More often than not, most groups in CAR may believe that they are exploited, excluded or repressed by the state. These sentiments have political consequences, which can result in destructive ethnic cleansing and expulsions.² However, scholars such as Kalyvas (2006) argue that it might be erroneous to explain violent conflicts by focusing on identities and social divisions such as ethnicity and religion.³

In general, ethnic groups are defined, either within or outside the groups, as sharing a common descent, history, culture, language, religion or territory.⁴ These traits are often internalized and defined as organic by many within the group identity. This sense of belonging suggests an extension of kinship and community where the group has a distinct identity with established boundaries.⁵ These boundaries define the characteristics and the sentiment of those within the community. According to prevailing theories, this creates an emotional connection in which certain members are willing to kill those who are outside the group and even those within the group who are seen to be traitors to the identity of the group.⁶ Leaders in particular, in seeking to retain or increase their political and community authority, use these sentiments to evoke images of unity and blood connections to raise hostilities toward outsiders.⁷ History demonstrates that it requires little effort for these sentiments to be translated into issues of self-defense, preservation and opportunism.⁸

Using these sentiments and traits of identity and in-group cohesion, ordinary civilians are capable of murder, especially if such behavior is supported or encouraged by institutions perceived to be legitimate. Often this behavior is interpreted as self-defense and ironically it is often the perpetrators that consider themselves the victims. Alternatively, the ethnic tensions are such that perpetrators consider their violence to be a necessary pre-emptive attack as they perceive that their lives are inevitably in danger.⁹

Like ethnic violence, religious violence stems from perceptions and interpretations of humiliation and exclusion, according to general studies on discrimination and violence.¹⁰ Often members of the aggrieved population feel that they are being humiliated, excluded and discriminated against by political authorities with the support of certain ethnic or religious groups. While these humiliations may be real, in the form of discrimination, poverty and exclusion, it may be ideological and a misperception.¹¹ These feelings of humiliation provide the psychological motivation, but not the justification, for the violence that ultimately results in radical conceptions of good and evil. Those who are perceived as evil in the bifurcated scenario can now be dehumanized and depersonalized. Ethnic and religious identities are then seen to be permanent and cannot be malleable. Agents who think along this pattern take the alleged immutability of the opponent's identity as a moral justification for killing and extermination. This psychological misperception of the 'other' coupled with fear, uncertainty and insecurity in the context of weak state

institutions is what forms a cognitive framework and purpose for violent non-state actors such as militias, renegade government troops, armed civilians and rebels engaging in ethno-religious cleansing.

Militias occupy an ambiguous position and are defined in this chapter as armed men and youth that are either pro- or anti-regime or pro- or anti-political leadership. They are often created in the villages and are essentially violent non-state actors that operate outside institutional frameworks but can cross over into the government-controlled political environment and usurp political leadership. Militias often consist of a motley crew of ex-soldiers, mercenaries, unemployed youth with guns and bandits, and can project membership of a dominant ethnic or religious group. These groups are quick to form and exit alliances in which they seek access to material gains in the locality in which they often originate, and they can also monopolize violence in a particular area or region.¹² While the interests of militia vary, one of the elements that they seek to protect is that of a particular identity. This is often a regional or local identity, which may be ethnic or religious. In terms of the protection of identity, their aims are regarded by militias themselves as self-defensive and acting against the predations of competing armed groups.

When governments are dominated by a single ethnic group, they may purposely exclude other groups from participating in the economic, social and political benefits of the state. Thus, the perception created is that prosperity is linked to ethnic identity, patronage and access to state power. In most African countries, such as CAR, where economies are state monopolies, usurping control of the state institutions becomes a goal, or ‘the’ goal to get access to political and economic power.¹³ The result is a zero-sum competition for presidential power, which in turn increases the proliferation of multiple ethno-religious militias that exacerbate violence against innocent civilians, state employees and state institutions.

CAR’s ‘RELIGIOUS’ WAR

The characterization of the violence in the CAR as a Muslim-Christian confrontation is not only simplistic but also erroneous and naive. What is conveyed is a prevailing dichotomy, which is currently evident in popular interpretation. In fact, conflict is often reduced to two opponents that must for obvious reason display contrasting beliefs, aims and objectives. A language dichotomy is created particularly with regard to religion, which opposes Islam versus Christianity, suppression versus freedom,

evil versus good, intolerance versus tolerance and so forth. Therefore, such dichotomous portrayals reduce complex interactions to a simplistic confrontation where, for example, attacks against Muslims are heralded as a defense by anti-Balaka ‘Christian’ civilian forces against the Seleka ‘Muslim’ armed militia that attack innocent civilians. In such scenarios, Christians characterized in positive terms are portrayed as having had little choice but to react to the attacks on them by ‘Muslim’ militias. However, such misinformed analyses disguise the truth of the attacks on all civilians, Muslims, Christians and Animists alike. By misreading and therefore misunderstanding the conflict in the CAR as a binary between Muslims and Christians, there is a failure to recognize a pattern of temporary coalitions that emerge and disappear between various ethnic and religious groups, under different leadership and then coalesce against a new enemy or enemies, depending upon the interests being pursued or protected. Interpreting the violence in such a situation is complicated by the manner in which attacks are carried out. For example, state and violent non-state armed groups target particular villages and civilians, leaving victims and witnesses to read into the actions of the perpetrators and therefore interpreting the conflict.¹⁴

Thus, the conflict in the CAR is not only multi-layered but also dominated and manipulated by the use (or misuse) of state power. New groups, vying for political power and resource access, challenge the existing state structures to secure their interests. The path of violence and particularly mass violence engages the communities that it affects, who then become participants (actively or passively), so that these actions tend to destroy social bonds.¹⁵ Yet the hostilities between armed groups, ranging from government forces, armed militias, bandits and civilians, remain localized, intimate and haphazard.¹⁶ This is in line with scholarship based on other case studies looking at protection units, militias and armies globally.¹⁷ There is a similar pattern and trajectory with localized hostilities as with the current focus of violence in the CAR; support in terms of ethnicity or religion is dictated by armed groups.

However, general scholarship about solidifying ethnic or religious identities causing violence applies only with some qualifications or differentiation to the CAR. Ethnic groups in the CAR are fluid, and they tend to change in response to social and economic circumstances.¹⁸ Before independence in 1952, the French colonial authorities delineated eight ethnic groups based on administrative perceptions of differences and similarities (Mahmood Mamdani 2002). Later studies recognized 31 distinct ethnic groups.¹⁹ These included the Gbaya Manja (or Manza), Banda

(many of whom converted to Islam under the sultanate of Dar al-Kuti), Ubangians (a riverine population that lived between the Kemo and Mbomu rivers), Sara (and NzaKara originally from southwestern Sudan), Zande and Muslims (a floating group of traders that are not an ethnic but a religious group and popularly termed Hausa) and Cameroonians (refugee mountain groups in the northwest).²⁰ Main groups are divided further into smaller groups: for example, the Ubangians comprise Mbaka and Yakoma. Both O'Toole (1986) and Falck (1971) noted that while the Muslim minority was a distinct group, the other ethnic groups did not distinguish themselves according to religion. The form of Christianity was enmeshed with traditional beliefs and many, even at present, continue to adhere to animist faiths distinguishable by talismans and amulets. As the society was and remains based on kinship and lineage relationships, this is used and exploited by the political leadership and state bureaucratic employees. Ethnic affiliation, however, is exploited for self-promotion among the bureaucratic elites in a society where the civil service remains a source of status employment.

Although ethnic groups remain distinct and there are underlying tensions, the CAR hasn't had a lengthy history of ethnic conflict and almost never experienced any religious wars, even though the country has faced continuous economic difficulties, deprivation and marauding bandits in the rural areas. Since 2002, much of the violence has been attributed to competing political elites rather than between communities of different ethnic identities.²¹ As Lumba, Van Dyk and Van Dyk noted in their study, the general opinion among respondents was that ethnicity had been abused by 'outside groups' and this was among the causes of the continuous conflicts in CAR.²² Individuals and groups may show a loyalty to a particular identity, ethnic, national or religious group, not because they were born into it but because there is an assumption of material benefits associated with it.²³ Thus, identity groups with diverse interests may join together to target others, for example, Muslims. This leads to taunts, assaults, murders and expulsion of individuals and groups, which occurred during the period 2013–2014, and demonstrates a boundary shift in identities (Cohen 1985 and Gerlach 2010).

There is a complex relationship between political leadership, government troops, the Presidential Guard, militias and communities in the CAR, and this cannot be simply reduced to ethnic and religious identity. The movement of displaced people and the inability of refugee populations to settle effectively within the country are indicative of extensive problems

that cannot be limited to ethnic and religious identities. It stands to reason that there are other interests that are being overlooked and that the paths of violence in CAR are not only fluid but also persistent and complex.

REPORTING CAR'S CONFLICT

This section offers a qualitative case study of a conflict that is still ongoing. Therefore, the most reliable information is limited to websites and news media, although these are subject to bias and distortion. The main data source used here is a set of UNHCR documents covering the CAR during the period from 2000 to 2014. According to its tasks and realm, UNHCR's texts are mainly about refugees and victims but also perpetrators of violence. The UNHCR news and briefing notes provide, over the period 2000–2014, a consistent, differentiated and competent account of the unfolding events. The notes often focus on one particular event, for example, an attack on a particular area or community, located in one of 16 prefectures, the armed groups involved, the violence perpetrated against civilians and the movement of civilians, or entire communities, from the site of violence to areas perceived as safer or to refugee camps. Other documents put these events into a larger trend or timeline of increasing or subsiding conflict and violence. Often, accounts of violence are based on victims' reports, but the number of displaced individuals is tallied by the UNHCR. This provides a twofold narrative from the briefing notes. First, the accounts of particular events are related by those who witnessed, experienced, or fled the violence, and second, the UNHCR estimated numbers give an impression of the intensity of the violence. Each report provides an event, a place and an outcome and often, although not always, includes the number of people displaced, supported by maps. The reports describe antagonists in struggles for political leadership, political change, violence, conflict, displaced populations, refugee sites and armed forces.

Reports were extracted for the period from January 2000 to December 2014 and no more than seven briefing notes and news stories were extracted for any single year, for a combined total of 100. The potential limitations of this data should be noted: as the UNHCR, like other organizations working with refugees, may elevate numbers of refugees in order to create a greater sense of urgency.²⁴ However, specific numbers of refugees are of minor importance for the arguments made in this chapter.

The UNHCR briefing notes also reveal the tensions that arise between ethnic groups within the refugee sites in the form of insults and demands

for exclusion and expulsion of various groups from the camps, which often mirror events in the prefectures. Thus, within the refugee camps, this results in populations separating along ethnic and religious identities.

The period under discussion, 2000–2014, includes four designated presidencies, namely those of Patassé, Bozizé, Djotodia and Samba-Panza. Patassé, the fifth president of CAR from 1993 to 2003, was the first democratically elected president since independence in 1960. He served two terms, but the second term in 2000 was marred by revolts that led to further conflict within the various prefectures. This period also marked the beginning of accelerated violence in the CAR. Links to political and armed forces in neighboring states exacerbated internal conflict that led to increased numbers of IDPs and refugees from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Chad entering CAR.²⁵ The UNHCR briefing reports and the news stories can thus be seen as a narration of trajectories of violence that include various actors with differing motivations, coalescing and parting again.

IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE PATHS OF VIOLENCE

The CAR possesses large reserves of natural resources such as minerals and timber, and its continuous political instability makes the territory a prospect for illicit entities seeking economic gain, including existing elites or competing armed groups. Thus, ethnic and religious identities become channels of mobilization exploited by elites to serve their political interests and secure material gains. Contrary to the dichotomous portrayal of the recent conflict in the CAR in which two armed groups, the Seleka and the anti-Balaka, are projected as good and evil (even though both are perpetrating crimes against civilians), the UNHCR documents reveal a fragmented country, experiencing a multi-polar conflict. Patterns—such as various armed groups targeting villages and suburbs in what appear as revenge attacks and opportunistic violence perpetrated by urban youth—emerge of escalating violence, and greater brutality, acted against targeted groups particularly in the rural areas. Violence is central to identity differentiation, and to those who participate and target ‘others’. Furthermore, the cycle of violence perpetrated by the various groups against each other as well as innocent civilians provides a sense of community collectivity.²⁶

The information reveals a consistent pattern of coerced emigration and displacement but the latest violence also suggests another dimension. Similar patterns of rioting, looting, rape, assault, razing property and

murder occurred throughout the period under discussion. Since 2013, there has been an escalation of violence and forced emigration, assisted by foreign government troops from neighboring countries such as the Chad, Gabon, Cameroon, the DRC and the Republic of Congo and further afield such as South Africa, Angola and France. The escalation of violence had its origins in the second presidential term of Patassé, setting a precedent for those occupying political leadership.²⁷ Lack of popularity was not seen as an obstacle to securing political power; rather violence and the intimidation of opponents became instruments for ensuring political domination and access to state power. Once political power is attained through this strategy, it is followed by employment of those from similar ethnic background and regional affinity into the armed forces and in the civil service, thereby asserting firmer control over territories and prefectures in the country.

The first path to the recent violence in CAR began in 2001 where political strife between former president Kolingba (from the Yakoma ethnic group) and then-president Patassé (Sara-Kaba group) resulted in unsuccessful coup attempts in 2001 and 2002. The fallout of these failed coup attempts resulted in government troops using excessive force against civilians, particularly villagers, accusing them of supporting opposition forces simply because they shared an ethnic identity with Kolingba. For example, in 2001, in the south of Bangui, 60,000–70,000 civilians were displaced when they fled violence orchestrated by forces loyal to Kolingba. These armed groups stormed the presidential palace in Bangui in an attempt to wrest power from Patassé. It is estimated that hundreds of civilians were killed in a tit-for-tat conflict where government forces loyal to Patassé killed ethnic Yakoma civilians while armed militias loyal to Kolingba killed ethnic Sara.²⁸ Chaos ensued with civilians, ex-government forces and armed militia members fleeing to DRC, where government forces extorted money from those crossing the border.²⁹ Ethnic tensions and intimidation within the refugee populations were also rife. Furthermore, in the refugee camps, suspected militia members would deny their identities and affiliations. They would also refuse to surrender their weapons without orders from their commanding officers. Thus, the presence of armed militia groups exacerbated tensions within the refugee population in the IDP camps.³⁰

During the conflict in CAR, refugees were confronted with two problems. The first was that armed groups often moved among civilians, posing as refugees by concealing their weapons. Up to 1250 former

soldiers posed as civilians in refugee camps.³¹ Often, these ex-soldiers exacerbated tensions between ethnic groups, although they had all fled the same violence and conflict zone. The conflict forced the UNHCR to separate Sara-Kaba and Yakoma ethnic groups into different refugee camps.³² Communities that had previously coexisted became hostile toward and suspicious of those outside of their ethnic group.³³ Civil servants who had fled to DRC found that on returning to Bangui, they had been sentenced to death or life imprisonment *in absentia* as supposed supporters of former president Patassé. Returnees demanded reinstatement in the civil service; their removal demonstrated a link between political support and ethnic affiliation, as their replacements would have been Bozizé supporters. Many civil servants share the same ethnic identity and also come from the same area as the political elite that possess authority under a current leadership.³⁴ Political leaders and supporters maintain a patron-client relationship in which political leaders need the support of their ethnic group and in return these supporters are rewarded with employment in the civil service. Perceived supporters and allies of Patassé and Kolingba, based simply on ethnic identity, fled Bangui and the area of Bitou.³⁵ Such strategic targeting, and particularly repeated displacement, resulted in the formation of rigid ethnic and religious identities.

In 2002, government-sanctioned aerial bombings increased ethnic tensions among civilians. Bozizé launched an attack against one-time ally Patassé, leading many to describe the level of violence as a civil war.³⁶ The complexity of the violence in the CAR shows the temporary arrangements between political leaders, those seeking political power and their militias. Ethnic affiliation is used to gain support and legitimacy for the violent actions but these presumed divisions may not necessarily account for the dynamics of violence.³⁷ For example, Patassé highlighted his ethnic northern Sara-Kaba identity (the Sara group found in southern Chad) but sought support from the transnational militia, which had a Ugandan background but was located in the DRC and headed by Jeane-Pierre Bemba of the Mouvement de Liberation du Congo (MLC). Bozizé, on the other hand, is from the Gbaya ethnic group from the Gabon and is believed to have had military support from Chad and the Banyamulenge militia in the DRC. Both Patassé and Bozizé, as former political leaders, used the state resources to reinforce boundaries and kinship relationships within ethnic identities, which reinforced notions of unchanging ethnic ties among the populace.³⁸

The second path of violence began with Bozizé seizing power in 2003, when Patassé was in the Niger. From this period, continuous fighting between militias and government forces also resulted in targeting civilians. In the same year, conflict erupted between the armed groups under the leadership of Bozizé and Michél Djotodia, the leader of the Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR). Djotodia held the presidency in 2013 but resigned in 2014.³⁹ President in exile Patassé and former General Kolingba's supporters merged their militias in opposing Bozizé's authority. This volatile political leadership resulted in a change of ethnic dominance in terms of state employment. Members of the military, the Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA), now composed predominantly of the Yakoma ethnic group, also revolted against Bozizé due to issues of employment and remittances.⁴⁰

Several ceasefires and peace agreements failed to reduce the fighting as politically interested militia groups, including FACA, proposed political appointments from within their ranks. This represents the third path of violence when internal displacement as a result of various domestic conflicts reached critical levels in the period 2005–2006. Between 2005 and 2009, FACA was accused of orchestrating mass violence against villagers, mimicking, if not surpassing the atrocities of the militias. The militias, army, insurgents and bandits killed, maimed and tortured civilians with impunity during this period. This was problematic as FACA was meant to restore and maintain order but were themselves displaying behaviors consistent with militias in the rural areas. Like many armies in Africa, FACA is understaffed, poorly trained, ill-disciplined and ill-prepared to confront rebel movements and militias. Furthermore, their erratic behavior was, and continues to be, compounded by the Presidential Guard, also drawn from the membership of FACA, that act outside of the prescriptions of the military structure and commit atrocities against civilians.⁴¹

In 2005, increased fighting in the northernmost part of the country forced 6,000 refugees into Cameroon and 27,800 into Chad.⁴² In September 2005, the town of Markounda in Ouhama prefecture was attacked, forcing the inhabitants to flee across the border. In 2005 again, violence erupted between the Armée pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie (APRD) and other militia groups in the northwest; in 2006, the UFDR led a rebellion in the northeast.⁴³ In October 2006 and March 2007, the UFDR attacked Barao in the Vakaga prefecture resulting in the mass exodus of the entire town. More than 700 homes were razed; all food supplies and farming stocks were destroyed. In June 2007, villagers fled

to northwest CAR as a result of the fighting between government forces and militia during which houses were looted and burned. The UNHCR estimated that 212,000 civilians from the north were displaced forcibly in the 18 months after December 2005.⁴⁴ Razed houses and scorched crops were common in at least five prefectures, all along the Ouham-Pendé to the Vakaga prefectures.⁴⁵ While the UNHCR and several assisting NGOs attempted repatriation, few IDPs returned to their homes. As a result of the lack of security and fear of returning militias and fallow land that increased food shortages in the region, many IDPs moved to the disputed northern areas of Bangui where there was less fighting.⁴⁶

From the perspective of human displacement in conflict situations, the history of the CAR continues to be defined in terms of flight, security and shelter.⁴⁷ Refugees from neighboring countries fleeing violence and famine in Sudan and Chad settled in the CAR.⁴⁸ At the same time, IDPs in CAR fled, and continue to flee, across borders into Chad, Cameroon and the DRC. In 2010, herdsmen and militia clashed in the Ouham prefecture resulting in 1500 IDPs and the destruction of 13 villages, and in 2011 the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militia that moves across the state borders of Uganda, the DRC and Sudan, continued to attack, murder and kidnap villagers in the CAR.⁴⁹ In 2011, the United Nations observed that militias and transnational bandits have been involved in criminality in the east and northeast of the CAR.⁵⁰ Conflict in the area was largely between the UFDR and the Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP) in the Vakaga, Haute-Kotto and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures bordering Chad and Sudan, where militias share the same religion but are of different and often opposing ethnic identities. Conflict between armed groups, population movements and levels of violence raised ethnic tensions and brought the northern-southern divide to civilian consciousness, thereby bringing about the fourth path of violence, specifically under the regime of Michel Djotodia in 2012.

As stated earlier, Presidents and other political elites upon ascending to power in CAR awarded their supporters with positions in the civil service and armed forces. This was the continuation, and escalation, of a process that began with the CAR independence where originally the Mbaka ethnic group was favored by the first two presidents, David Dacko and Jean Bedel Bokassa.⁵¹ The failure of the 2007 and 2008 peace agreements was attributed to Bozizé reneging on promises he had made to militias like the UFDR to integrate its fighters into the state army—the objective of many members in the militias. The brief notes and news stories between 2003

and 2011 demonstrate that employment within state structures was rated highly as it served as one of the few stable employment opportunities in the country.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES AND POLITICAL POWER

The greater the violence perpetrated by militias, the greater the opportunity to enter negotiations with those who control central state power structures. Herein lay the dual purpose of militias. In CAR, the recruitment of members to, and the formation of, militias are twofold. First, militias are established to protect villages from the bandits—*zaraguinas*. Men, and to a lesser degree women, join militias to preserve traditional structures and are not, *per se*, to support political authorities. Second, many individuals recruited into these armed groups are often motivated by poverty, deprivation, exclusion and fear. The irony in CAR is that the militia represents, to some extent, both security for self-preservation and economic and political opportunity.

Due to a vacuum of power, traumatized communities, particularly for those who relocated to Bangui, have long been a target for marauding groups of youth who terrorize residents and target foreigners.⁵² Looting and vandalism of properties are widespread along with murders, assaults, rape and kidnappings. Without a respite in violence, the communities experience, and possibly themselves perpetrate, extensive and continual criminality.

Integration of refugees and IDPs into existing CAR communities remains problematic. The failure of the cotton-based economy and physical insecurity contributed to communal tensions in the Ouham prefecture for example. This led to the repatriation of Chadians living near Bossangoa in 2005 in an area that would in time become rife with inter-religious violence between so-called Christians and Muslims.⁵³ In 2009, after all parties reneged on the peace treaty in 2008, the Mouvement des Libérateurs Centrafricaines pour la Justice (MLCJ) launched an attack against villages and state troops. Clashes between militias—usually to claim territory or access to resources or supply routes—transformed into clashes between, and within, communities, for example, in the conflict between the UFDR and the CPJP, which resulted in widespread displacement in the Haute-Kotto prefecture. Villagers claimed that the violence was retaliatory, since militias would attack towns in the northern prefectures, while government forces would react to that assault by (re)capturing the

town attacking individuals and surrounding villages.⁵⁴ Government troops intimidate villagers and then militias steal their property and forcefully recruit their young children as child soldiers.⁵⁵ For example, during 2006 and 2009, bandits targeted the Peul/Fulani ethnic group demanding ransoms for kidnapped children and forcing communities to sell their cattle.⁵⁶ Communities, especially in the rural areas, became zones of uncertainty, fear, anxiety, hostility and violent criminality by marauding militia groups. An environment of immense fear led to abandoned villages, lack of economic activity and employment for inhabitants. Not only do villagers fear the armed groups, but also fear and are suspicious of other communities (read ethnic and religious identities) too.⁵⁷

2013: THE SELEKA, EX-SELEKA AND ANTI-BALAKA MILITIAS

Wresting power from Bozizé in March 2013 brought about a new path of violence. Djotodia was identified in media reports as the first Muslim leader of the CAR and from an obscure ethnic group, the Goula. Usurping political power through the use of militias and by incorporating loosely banded armed groups that lacked resources, Djotodia, like his predecessors Patassé, Kolingba and Bozizé, attempted to incorporate members of the coalition umbrella militia called Seleka into the state institutions, particularly in the military and civil service bureaucracy. This practice ensured future and continuing armed support and longevity for the political leadership. However, the coalition fractured, most likely because of unmet personal ambitions and expectations from existing and new warlords, linked to various armed factions that were incorporated into the Seleka coalition.

On disbanding the ‘collective militia’ Seleka, Djotodia’s authority and control over certain segments of the group diminished. The Seleka disintegrated into factions because the group lacked cohesion, a shared ideology and equal access to resources. Furthermore, these coalitions were comprised of smaller armed individuals who owed their loyalty to their localized leaders or warlords rather than to the coalition leadership of Djotodia. They disintegrated into factions (splinter groups) that no longer followed Seleka objectives and instead resorted to violent criminal activity against Bangui civilians. These groups under different leaders became known in the media as the ex-Seleka. This chaotic period allowed Bozizé, while in exile, to recall le Front pour le Retour de l’ordre Constitutionnel en Centrafrique (FROCCA), a militia composed of former government

soldiers, to support the anti-Balaka militia, another militia claiming to be a self-defense religious focused group, as a maneuver to oust Djotodia from political office.⁵⁸

During the fighting in Bangui in 2013, the Seleka, ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka militias took up arms against each other and civilians, thereby transforming the capital into a zone of violent conflict and hostilities. Unlike the rural areas, where communities formed loosely collective units, Bangui is comprised of neighborhood *kudros*. The *kudros* are comprised of ethnically stratified neighborhoods constructed around kinship, and lineage as originally found in the rural areas.⁵⁹ The violence in Bangui resulted in increased criminality in the ethnic self-contained *kudros* neighborhoods. There is little interaction between *kudros*, thus producing zones of potential conflict from regionalism to ethnic and religious identities.

However, it should be noted that the popular narrative that the conflict is a religious Muslim-Christian ideological confrontation between Djotodia and Bozizé is erroneous. Both individuals are leaders of umbrella militias that are comprised of various smaller armed groups that are not characterized by ethnicity, religion or even nationality. Political contenders, particularly Bozizé, have raised religious identity for the possible reason that creating a bifurcation offers a larger political base than using a discourse focused on ethnic and regional identity. Bozizé's actions altered the nature of the conflict and resulted in candidates being chosen due to their religious affiliations.

In CAR, militias most often coalesce through convenience than purposeful affiliation. Due to the competition in accessing resources and financial gain, they can be opposed to other armed groups by claiming differences linked to ethnic, regional or religious identities. For example, the APRD, which emerged in 2005, is composed of the Sara-Kaba ethnicity and has among its membership former ex-Presidential Guards from the Patassé regime. Their aim is to reclaim the civil service positions they occupied under the former government. The UFDR and the Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricaine (FDPC), formed in 2006, are predominantly Muslim Gula. These groups operated in the Vakaga and Haute-Kotto prefectures. The CPJP is predominantly Runga and Arabic speaking from the Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture. These militias have worked together and against each other depending on the arrangements of their leaders in any given period.

The origins of the anti-Balaka armed group are like those of any militia. It is popularly reported that the group was created by Bozizé but its

origins are most likely to have begun as a self-defense group in the 1990s as a response to attacks by bandits from the north of CAR, stealing cattle from villages. At its initial inception, its goal was to expel Chadian cattle farmers from agricultural lands belonging to villagers. Since the removal of Bozizé, ex-government troops and ex-presidential guards have sought re-entry into civil employment and joined the anti-Balaka. Like the Seleka (alliance) the anti-Balaka became, and remains, a coalition of interest groups. The Seleka recruited militias from Sudan and Chad, as groups moved across borders seeking new coalitions and economic opportunities. The violence of early 2013 was a result of conflict between Seleka and Bozizé troops and militias supporting these forces. It must be noted that the religious dimension, which has become part of the conflict, is simply another aspect of pre-existing conflicts that are ultimately linked to resources and gaining control over certain areas that are mineral rich or serve as access routes to these resources.

Bozizé's attempt to reclaim political power, as a Christian, happened against the onslaught of an old rival Djotodia, who happened to be a Muslim and from another ethnic group in the Vakaga prefecture. The Seleka were, and remain, a heterogeneous opportunistic militia, opposed to the Gbaya communities, from which Bozizé hails. There are tensions between various militia groups in neighboring prefectures of the CAR. For example, the UFDR and the FDPC are antagonistic toward ethnic Kara and the CPJP toward the ethnic Gula.⁶⁰ Yet these three groups from the northeast prefectures formed part of the Seleka coalition that together considered the Gbaya, Bozizé's ethnic group, to be the common enemy.

The movement of the Seleka into Bozizé's traditional or ethnically defined territory led to accusations of religious incursions that were part of a multi-layered conflict. At present, the militias and the civilian population serve equally, if not more so, as effective tools to support political leaders and reinforce legitimacy. The population is forced, manipulated or intimidated into providing support in the form of food or young men to serve as new recruits.

The Seleka are not a religious based coalition and neither are the anti-Balaka. By targeting Muslim and Christian communities simultaneously, militias can deprive other groups of resources, particularly food, medicines and recruitment, thereby restricting the movement and numerical expansion of the targeted militias. The Seleka set the precedent by moving beyond their prefectures of origin in the north and targeting the south where particular ethnic identity groups have held political

authority (as earlier mentioned, the North-South division). Djotodia's very short presidency introduced the ethnic Gula, with ethnic links in Chad, to political power and institutional access. It is not religion that is the salient linkage here but the desire to gain economic access and political control to legitimize militia actions. Ethnicity and religious identities contributed to the violence in the CAR but it is neither the primary explanation nor the reason for the conflict perpetrated by various armed groups. To date, militias have shown little focus or interest on national or regional issues.⁶¹ Utilizing mobs that identify themselves in terms of a particular religious identity is a new element to the violence.

What can be viewed in the CAR is a modern complex genocide, decimating a once tolerant peaceful population by reducing their numbers through killing and expulsion. As Mamdani explained in *Making Sense of Political Violence*, the destruction of one group by another is located in seeing them as inferior. While the events in CAR should not be extrapolated, the manner in which identities are construed within the socio-political environment are common across the continent and lead to the victimization and marginalization of 'others'.⁶²

CONCLUSION

Central Africa and the Great Lakes region have in general experienced, and continue to experience, internal and external population displacement as a result of ongoing conflicts in the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Chad and the CAR, as well as regional conflicts in Nigeria, Mali, Uganda and the Cameroon. The violence has now affected the majority of civilians within the CAR. Population displacement coupled with tense social and political environments created by the army, militias and bandits raised suspicions and uncertainty between various groups. As agreements between many armed groups are temporary, there is no specific targeted group of victims but rather all civilians are fair game. This firmly demonstrates that broken alliances result in new groups of victims and that ethnicity and religion are not particular motivators of violence. Rather, the political elites manipulate such identities in the pursuit of state power. More often than not, alliances are easily entered into and dismantled, with little or no clear ideological, ethnic or religious rationale. These alliances occur for reasons of self-interest, self-preservation and material gain.

The current violence, which is portrayed as a religious confrontation between Muslims and Christians, has its roots in the 2003 conflict between

Bozizé and Djotodia and their access to competing armed militias and members of the armed forces. This confrontation began as a challenge to political leadership and power. Djotodia wanted to usurp it and Bozizé wanted to retain it.

The brief notes and news stories based on UNHCR reports indicate that the use of militias and rebel armies was a practice used by elites to destabilize the country and its population and demonstrate their authority and armed prowess to one another. The attacks on what each militia perceived to be the locus of support for a rival group, communities, villages or ethnic groups, were an attempt to deprive the other of resources, recruits and political support.

When alliances were formed, the new coalitions were comprised of ex-soldiers, unemployed youth, aggrieved peasants and professional soldiers. These coalitions and alliances exhibit different aims, different enemies, different agendas and the support of different leaders. The complexity of understanding the conflict is that the aims are temporary, as are the coalitions, where today's allied fighters become tomorrow's hated enemies, as seen with the factional militias and the eventual disintegration of the Seleka coalition.

The military has a dual role in the violence. It seeks to eliminate the political opposition to the state, and therefore particular leaders, but many within the ranks seek personal and material gain, such as earnings from roadblocks and extorting civilians that equally contribute to the devastation of villages and communities. This is often due to the unreliable source of state income and job security. Similarly, the militias seek economic gain and political access, and in the process sow discord and fear among the population. In certain instances, the violence begins with the actions of the legitimate armed forces and militias and then filters to the members within the communities, where it becomes widespread and often personal.⁶³ When communities appear to create discord among themselves, it is often done with the tacit consent or cooperation of the armed groups. The difference lies in the rationale for the violence: Communities claim their violence is defensive and preempts attacks from potential enemies. More recently, communities have claimed they are defending religious identity, as in the case of Seleka and anti-Balaka described above.

However, this chapter contends that it is erroneous to assume the so-called Muslim and Christian armed groups represented by Seleka and the anti-Balaka, respectively, are the primary sources of CAR's recent violence. Another problematic portrayal of the CAR crisis is the depiction

of the anti-Balaka movement as a community-based response initiative. The claim is that the group exists to thwart attacks by the Seleka on so-called Christian communities in CAR. However, it is important to note that the anti-Balaka militia is composed of various factions fighting for access and material gain. They hide behind the façade of self-defense and self-preservation.

The latest round of violence in CAR is different in that the scale of the operations has increased, more individuals seek access to political power, and the militias expanded violence into the capital city Bangui. When the Seleka coalition, under the leadership of Djotodia, collapsed and fragmented into factions, half of Bangui's population fled the fighting and a fifth of the national population was displaced. The fighting and looting escalated beyond villages and infiltrated the rigidly ethnically defined neighborhoods of Bangui, including the PK-12 that is home to refugees fleeing disputes in neighboring prefectures and states. The majority of these inhabitants were affected by the atrocities and many more became victims to criminal opportunists and to communities demanding justice and retribution for lost relatives.

Currently, it appears that the violence is between villages and neighborhoods in Bangui and the role of militia groups has been reduced due to negotiation attempts. Violence in CAR extends beyond a simple Muslim versus Christian dichotomy. It also includes private and personal grievances between villagers and communities. Differences, however slight between community members, lead to conflict as identity boundaries shift. Popular portrayals of communities living together peacefully are somewhat inaccurate. Instead, communities and neighborhoods are characterized and segregated by ethnic, religious and social differences coupled with underlying tensions and suspicions ripe for manipulation by elites and interest groups in order to secure or maintain their political positions and economic advantages. The current 'religious' conflict is an aspect of a wider violence that corresponds to an overwhelming assertion of political authority and economic access to state resources in the CAR.

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Rebel Movements in Ethiopia

Berouk Mesfin

INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, many rebel movements are currently mobilizing resources and populations in the process of a protracted armed struggle for legitimacy, political power, autonomy and secession. Among these rebel movements are the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front, the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement, the Sidama Liberation Front, the Gambella People's Liberation Front, the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). This chapter is designed to provide a deeper and more systematic analysis of the structural factors that shape the existence of these rebel movements. It is inconceivable to undertake an objective in-depth assessment of the nature and complexities of these rebel movements without dealing in great detail with the numerous determinant factors in the politics underway in Ethiopia for the last 40 years. Indeed, the idea that African rebel movements can be analyzed without reference to the underlying conditions and contextual factors cannot be sustained simply

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because they do not exist in a vacuum. Their development, their strategies and tactics are especially affected by the configuration of governments and institutions to which they are confronted.

In order to consider all these issues and processes in the most satisfactory way, the chapter is divided into three parts. The first part will begin by defining the ethnic, historical and political context in which rebel movements are established and operate in Ethiopia, which has never experienced a peaceful transfer of political power. Currently in Ethiopia, the practice is extreme centralization and personalization of political power, which can only be gained and lost through the use of force. The second part tries to build a profile of the two most visible rebel movements operating in Ethiopia, the OLF and the ONLF, even though information about them is often fragmented and anecdotal. The third and final part tries to piece together a picture of the organization and conduct of counterinsurgency in Ethiopia. This is shrouded in secrecy and has long been elusive to academic inquiries. Despite such an organization, the chapter is bound to have manifest inadequacies in terms of obviously significant gaps and points of ambiguity as complete and updated information about the leadership, organizational structure, financial source, personnel levels, social composition, morale, discipline, training, intelligence, sources, quantity and quality of equipment, external assistance, facility locations, current activities and potential in the future is extremely sparse, if not entirely lacking.

THE ETHNIC, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SETTING

Overview of Ethiopia's Ethnic Structure

According to the latest 2007 census data, the total population of Ethiopia had reached 73 million, with an unsustainably high growth rate of 2.7%, which, if left unchecked, will give Ethiopia 117 million people by 2025. This is distributed among 80 ethnic groups influenced by centuries of migration and interaction but that have distinct traditions and languages. The largest ethnic group, the Oromo (27 million people), is widely diffused in the central and southwestern parts and accounts for about 36% of the population. The second largest group, the Amhara (17 million people), who mainly live in the northwest, accounts for 23%. The Somalis (4.4 million people, mainly found in the Ogaden) make up 6% of the population, more than the Tigreans (4.3 million people) who are mainly

Table 7.1 Distribution of Ethiopia's main ethnic groups in 1994 and 2007

Regions	1994		2007	
	Number	%	Number	%
Oromia	18,732,525	35.0	27,158,471	36.7
Amhara	13,834,297	25.9	17,214,056	23.3
Somali	3,198,514	6.0	4,439,147	6.0
Tigray	3,136,267	5.9	4,314,456	5.8
Total	53,477,265	100.0	73,918,505	100.0

Source: Central Statistical Agency's 1994 and 2007 Censuses

in the north and form about 5.8% of Ethiopian inhabitants. Moreover, there is a large Ethiopian Diaspora in the Middle East, Europe and North America. The Diaspora in the United States is estimated to be 250,000 people, mainly concentrated in Washington DC (Table 7.1).

The Burden of History

Ethiopia's political history is characterized by bitter and chronic interne-cine conflict. Among the prominent causes for this state of affairs were confrontational propensities displayed by individual political aspirants (succession to the throne, rivalry and resentment) coupled with the prospective gains from capturing the established authority and its resource base and spontaneous popular uprisings in reaction to oppression and exploitation. The prominence of warfare in Ethiopia's political history was matched by the organic link between military values and responsibilities and the social, political and economic organization of Ethiopian society. The structure of the society as a whole reflected more or less the structure of the military system, to the extent that the social place and advancement of a given individual whether at the top or at the bottom of the social ladder depended largely on the weight of his service and ability in the military. Emperors and lords typically awarded land, or other economic reward and political appointments, to those individuals who demonstrated their loyalty or reliability, bravery, high competence and tenacity in the battlefield. In a society in which a culture of military ethos, symbols and themes are inculcated pervasively and permanently, military service was an inescapable calling for any individual interested in social improvement in the hierarchy of political power and wealth.

The commander-in-chief of the military, the head of state, the chief executive and the chief justice in the modern terminology were one and the same person in the Ethiopian political tradition—that is the emperor. This tradition encouraged the development of a personality cult around the emperor. At the same time, it curtailed the development of permanent political and judicial institutions, the prerogatives of which were essentially assumed by emperors who were not always able and judicious administrators. Thus, insurrections were the only means available to the peoples to express their discontent. These insurrections were mostly provoked by the excessive demands imposed by soldiers looking for provisions on local peasants or the violation of peoples' traditional laws and practices. They were usually quelled through military means rather than the provision of a kind of autonomy, the reduction of taxes, the reinstitution of traditional practices and the punishment of soldiers guilty of plunder.

During most of the 1960s and the early 1970s, political opposition developed in response to the autocratic regime of Emperor Haile Selassie. In addition to ill-organized and ill-fated plots, conspiracies and the Gojam and Bale peasant rebellions of 1968 and the 1960 abortive coup d'état, there was a protracted student opposition to this regime. The students gave prominence to the exigency for land reform as well as the pressing need to do away with the incompetence and corruption of the regime's senior officials. The regime's credibility was crucially undermined by its indifferent handling of the 1972–1974 devastating famine that reportedly killed 200,000 people in Tigray and Wello provinces. A marked increase in food prices and petroleum products in early 1974 followed the famine. Moreover, the regime's failure to quell rebel movements in the province of Eritrea further exposed its vulnerabilities. This state of affairs led to a wave of mutinies in the military, labor strikes and intensified student demonstrations in Addis Ababa, culminating in the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution and ultimately in the concentration of political power in the hands of Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, the head of the *Derg* (*Derg* being the appellation of the 1974–1991 military regime).

In 1974, the *Derg* declared Ethiopia a socialist state. A network of peasant and urban dwellers' associations was established and, along with the ensemble of mass organizations and trade unions, a pervasive secret police became a key tool of political control. Nevertheless, there was much unrest throughout Ethiopia, with Eritrean rebel movements intensifying their offensives and numerous rebel movements proliferating in other parts of the country. The *Derg* launched a series of offensives against the

Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the largest rebel movement in Eritrea. Despite the superior number of troops and firepower involved, all Ethiopian offensives, which placed too much stress on big-unit tactics instead of more mobile and flexible tactics, failed and resulted in high Ethiopian casualties. The most important offensive was the Red Star Campaign of 1982, which involved some 200,000 troops.

These troops used tanks, heavy artillery weapons and rocket launchers, and they were assisted by aerial bombardment of rebel positions as well as the wholesale razing of villages to deprive the EPLF of its material support base. The long, drawn-out and multi-pronged strategy outgunned the EPLF forces, which sustained high casualties in its retreat to the far north of Eritrea, at Nacfa. Nevertheless, the Ethiopian forces' failure to capitalize on their military gains and destroy the rebel movement permanently shifted the strategic initiative away from them. For most of the mid-1980s, the 400-kilometer-long Nacfa front separated the two warring sides.

In 1987 however, the EPLF broke out of Nacfa and attacked the strategic town of Afabet, which was 100 kilometers north of Asmara and was fitted out in 1979 as the command center in Eritrea and the supply center for the area of greatest fighting. It was, in fact, the largest garrison in Ethiopia where the most sophisticated weapons were stored. The stage was set for the turning point in Ethiopia's protracted internal war. After 48 hours of combat, the EPLF captured the town, took prisoners and killed around 15,000 Ethiopian troops. It also seized around 50 tanks along with a large number of artillery pieces, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns, almost doubling its military strength. The success of the EPLF can be attributed to its adoption of mobile and subsequently fixed positional warfare, to the dramatic execution of the Nacfa front commander, Brigadier General Tariku Ayene apparently on Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu's orders, and to the fact that Ethiopian intelligence was generally mediocre and the enemy had more valuable information.¹

Likewise, the *Derg* suffered a second major defeat at the battle of Shire, as will be examined with sufficient detail in this chapter's other sections. The Afabet and Shire debacles and the subsequent loss of territory practically reduced the morale and discipline of the Ethiopian military and consequently sapped its combat effectiveness. In fact, the military virtually ceased to serve as an effective offensive force. Mutinies, desertions and defections proliferated among its battle-hardened soldiers who had gained a reputation for tenacity on the battlefield. But, most importantly, many demoralized senior officers, including the Chief of Staff, the Commander of the Air Force and the Commander of the Army mounted a coup d'état to oust Lieutenant

Colonel Mengistu. The two-day coup epitomized the growing discontent with the unwinnable, bloody and destructive war in northern Ethiopia. Yet, this did not deter Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu from engaging in a comprehensive purge, which enabled him to eliminate any opposition from the entire military. But, in the long run, the purge further undermined the effective command of units, which suffered from low morale and ultimately disintegrated. At the end, in May 1991, feeling the swelling pressure of dozens of rebel movements, the *Derg* collapsed (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Selected rebel movements in Ethiopia since 1961

<i>Rebel movements</i>	<i>Tentative year of origin</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Active regional backing</i>
Eritrean Liberation Front	1961	Secession	Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria
Eritrean People's Liberation Front	1972	Secession	Sudan, Saudi Arabia
Tigray People's Liberation Front	1975	Autonomy and change of regime	Sudan
Oromo Liberation Front	1974	Secession	Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea
Western Somali Liberation Front	1961/1976	Secession	Somalia
Gambella Liberation Front (Gambella People's Liberation Movement)	1980 (1985)	Autonomy	Sudan
Benishangul People's Liberation Movement	1970s/1980s	Secession	Sudan
Ogaden National Liberation Front	1984	Secession	Eritrea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia
Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia	1986	Secession	Sudan, Saudi Arabia
Oromo and Abo Liberation Front	1991	Secession	–
Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front	1991	Autonomy	–
Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front	1998	Change of regime	Eritrea
Gambella People's Liberation Front	2004	Secession	Eritrea

Source: Author's compilation

In 1991, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took political power. The EPRDF was created in 1989 by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF, which was created in 1975, is undoubtedly the core of the EPRDF as it was instrumental in forming it and has provided its ideological direction as well as much of its leadership.² The EPRDF presided over the ratification of a federal constitution in 1995, guaranteeing every ethnic group the right to self-determination up to and including secession. The constitution also established a federation of nine regions based on ethnic criteria. The regions are namely Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia,³ Somali, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Harari and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. All these regions have, in reality, a multi-ethnic population even though one group is usually dominant in a particular region (85% in Oromia and 95% in the Somali region) and is therefore identified with it. Furthermore, there is a huge disparity between the regions in terms of basic infrastructure and income. The regions have their own organs of government including legislative councils, executive committees and judicial bodies. Different administrative bureaus were established in each regional government and undertook tasks similar to sectorial ministries and commissions of the federal government. The regions are hierarchically structured into zones and then *woredas* (districts) while at the lowest level there is the *kebelle*.

Senior- and middle-level posts in the federal government's civil bureaucracy, the military and the security services are dominated by Tigreans who are evidently immune from critical evaluation and even institutional scrutiny. They are the ones who make all the major decisions from economic strategy to key political appointments. Simply, the TPLF retains political power through networks of political allies, security forces and business partners, having engineered a system of indoctrination and loyalty forcing the bureaucracy, the military and the security services into closer alignment with its political regime.⁴ The few handpicked individuals of non-Tigrean origin who hold key government and party posts are politically impotent as they are not autonomous in their decision-making capacities. The TPLF obsessively fears in-depth change in the distribution of political power, which might negate Tigrean hegemony and make scant efforts to solve differences or conflicts through consensual means rather than manipulation and intimidation.

The TPLF as a government has not been transparent because there is no forceful legislature checking its activities and no autonomous judiciary ensuring its adherence to the rule of law. It is also responsible for

the restrictions on the freedom of expression and the incarceration of journalists. Furthermore, it stubbornly resists involving civil society organizations in Ethiopia's political process, including the electoral process and the monitoring of human rights. The TPLF also makes sure that no viable opposition develops and effectively cripples the existing legal opposition.⁵ The opposition is accordingly on the defensive, driven by internal conflict and suffering from the absence of a clear vision and strategy on how to effectively confront the TPLF. The latter engages in the mistreatment of political prisoners and is often accused of instigating the incarceration, extra-judicial disappearance and killings of hundreds of political critics. More worryingly, the TPLF uses repressive measures 'including, detention, torture, extrajudicial killings, blackmail, harassment, seizure and confiscation of property and looting'⁶ to induce compliance and to reduce potential challenges of citizens.

The political strategy and makeup of the TPLF largely depended on the outlook of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi until his death in August 2012. Meles had uncontestedly made himself, just like Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu and Emperor Haile Selassie before him, the sole decision-making authority in every significant phase of Ethiopian political affairs.⁷ He always made his own views prevail against any contrary opinion, especially after 2001.⁸ His predominance was achieved by the fact that docile individuals who were personally loyal to him were placed in key positions through marriage alliances and family associations, which are reminiscent of the practices of nineteenth-century Ethiopian politics. The party machines and the entire government structure were highly centralized and answerable only to him. They were all mostly tasked to protect Meles and his hold on political power from potential threats such as military coup d'états and strong political rivals. He constantly shifted military officers, making it harder for any one of them to challenge him or have political ambitions. Meles personally did not tolerate open debate as well as public scrutiny and was determined to stay in power indefinitely, even though he may be facing overwhelming problems exceeding his capacities.⁹

Based on a succession plan eventually leading to the retirement of the old guard and handscripted by Meles himself, Meles was replaced in an orderly and peaceful way by Hailemariam Dessalegn. Nonetheless, Hailemariam is relatively new to the position of Prime Minister and cannot be expected to have the kind of authority that Meles had.¹⁰ He will have to rely more on advice from other senior officials for key decisions. Hailemariam's easy-going manner and consensual style has prompted

some to question whether he is dogged enough to tackle the entrenched interests of the TPLF. Hailemariam would need to build his own network. More significantly, he will probably never gain the political high ground in the longer term if he does not control the military and security organizations and also if he does not recognize, on his own, opportunities to assert himself, prepare for them and then capitalize on them. The big question remains: What will happen following the national elections of 2015, which enabled the EPRDF and its allied parties to control the entirety of the seats of the House of Peoples' Representatives? As an immediate issue, Ethiopia's political destiny is eventually dependent on the person Hailemariam. His capacity in maintaining control over the highly complex system of ethnic co-optation, engineered by Meles, will impact heavily on political and economic options leading into 2020.

PROFILE OF SELECTED REBEL MOVEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA

The Oromo Liberation Front

The OLF was formed in 1974, produced a political program in 1976 and opened an office in Khartoum (Sudan) in 1978. The organization was formed by young educated Oromo coming mainly from the Wollega area, lurching ideologically to the left and usually claiming incomparable following from most Oromo areas. It endorsed the colonial thesis according to which Oromia was under Ethiopian colonialism and contended that the Oromo people were struggling against occupying colonial regimes. It has not been able to decide, as demonstrated during the 1998 Mogadishu Conference, if its ultimate objective is the establishment of an independent republic of Oromia or the sharing of political power and a larger degree of autonomy in a genuinely federal Ethiopia.¹¹ The OLF also advances the argument that the Oromo people constitute the most populous ethnic group of Ethiopia¹² and possess the bulk of the Ethiopia's richest natural resources. Thus, it contends that the Oromo are unable to play a role commensurate with their demographic position, faced a severe imbalance in political power and resource distribution, have become culturally and socially subjugated and are alienated from their economic resources which have been exploited by the successive Ethiopian governments.

To achieve their objectives, the OLF engaged in an armed struggle. The OLF is a decentralized and largely heterogeneous unit as it is organized loosely into smaller groups that are politically fragmented.

Its leaders lack the skills and determination to organize. The OLF is also not able to articulate a political strategy that could unite and mobilize all the Oromo and a political program, which could define their central economic problems. It has only been conducting hit-and-run raids against military garrisons and police stations and proved rather ineffective at sustaining military operations in the geographically separated areas of Wollega, Arsi and Hararghe.

After 1991, the OLF participated along with the TPLF in setting up a Transitional Government. However, the OLF found itself politically and militarily outmaneuvered and withdrew from the Transitional Government following disputes over the encampment of military personnel and prior to the 1992 regional and local elections. The uneasy alliance between the two rebel movements ended at that point.¹³ Since then, the rather diminished military force¹⁴ of the OLF has launched sporadic guerrilla attacks on government installations and forces once more without any real political impact. One assessment of the weaknesses of the OLF contends that the latter

was unable to build a strong united leadership, and was unable to move beyond shallow nationalist politics towards a deeper articulation of the needs of the Oromo peasantry. In part, this was because of the high degree of class, regional and religious differentiation among the Oromo, and also the continued existence of powerful traditional elites. This meant that the OLF remained a more pluralistic and diffuse organization than the TPLF, with many different loci of power and authority, and differing local forms of organization. While this was democratic, it also meant that building an effective military machine was almost impossible. In addition, the organization was unable to build upon the concrete experience of Oromo peasants to build a political program.¹⁵

The relationship between the OLF and the TPLF was actually exacerbated after the creation of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization, made up originally of former Oromo prisoners of war.¹⁶ The Oromo People's Democratic Organization considered the OLF as a narrow nationalist movement and rejected the latter's colonial thesis in favor of the idea of national oppression.¹⁷ It proceeded from the premise that the current Ethiopian federal system is democratic and propitious enough to ensure the self-determination of the Oromo people. It has won all the elections held in the Oromia region without any real competition and controlled all the levels of its regional government.

In its entire lifespan, the OLF has been exposed to serious leadership splits which have undermined its position among the Oromo people,¹⁸ including the split in the 1970s in the eastern mountains and the split between the Secretary General Gelassa Dilbo and his more conciliatory Deputy Secretary General Leenco Lata in the 1990s.¹⁹ The rebel movement's internal squabbles were usually set off by differences in ideology, military strategy, foreign policy, suspected local favoritism, power struggle and simply personal animosities. The latest split occurred in 2008.²⁰ One faction led Brigadier General Kemal Geltu defected to Eritrea in 2006. This faction supports a more confrontational military strategy and extends the rebel movement's military capability beyond the limits of its current areas of operation.²¹

The other faction is led by the existing leadership, which includes Dawud Ibsa, controls the substantial financial support of the Oromo Diaspora and is based in Asmara. It perceived its authority to be under threat and fiercely disagreed with these two factions. It insists on keeping the original commitment to an independent Oromia and continuing a low-key military strategy and a struggle confined to southwestern Oromia close to Ethiopia's borders with Sudan and Kenya, which are well-suited for infiltration. Finally, all available information suggests that dependence on Eritrea and the Diaspora established most notably in the United States and Germany²² have helped sustain the struggle and visibility of the OLF.²³ This dependence comes with a high price as it also weakens the rebel movement's capacity to correct its flaws as well as establishing a strong popular base and thus bodes ill for its future prospects.

The Ogaden National Liberation Front

The ONLF is the latest manifestation of a long history of the Somali rebellion against successive Ethiopian governments, including the Western Somali Liberation Front. It was established in 1984 in the Arabian Gulf by young Ogaadeni intellectuals and officially launched its military operations in 1986 when, paradoxically, a Proclamation on Petroleum Operations Income Tax was issued²⁴ in Ethiopia. The ONLF claims that Ethiopia is an occupying power and fights for the self-determination of the Somali region, which it calls Ogadenia, even though this objective was later on made unclear—regional autonomy, secession or reunion with a future reunited Somalia. It should be noted that at the root of its ideology remains the objective of a 'Greater Somalia' uniting all Somalis

living in the Horn of Africa, including those Somalis living in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Yet, contrary to its avowed separatist objective, the ONLF joined the Alliance for Freedom and Democracy, an association of Ethiopian rebel movements and opposition groups. It was formed in the Netherlands in May 2006 and included the OLF, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, the Sidama Liberation Front and the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front.

The ONLF headed the Somali regional government from 1991 to 1994, with its candidates winning 80% of the seats of the region's council in 1992. It was forced out of regional office after it unexpectedly requested the holding of a referendum on self-determination in 1994. The federal government initiated the creation of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League in order to counter the influence of the ONLF. The ONLF then split, with one faction returning to armed struggle in 1995 and the other faction deciding to work with the federal government. The armed wing of the ONLF is the Ogaden National Liberation Army.

The current problems in the Somali region come on the back of a long record of mismanagement affecting all Ethiopian Somalis. There is a widespread feeling that the autonomy the region should have enjoyed under the Ethiopian federal system has not been honored. There is a clear absence of genuine local political organizations uncontaminated by clan calculations, regional officials are unaccountable and administrative boundaries between *woredas* and *kebelles* have been constantly and erratically redrawn. Moreover, the highly politicized regional institutions are ineffectual, plagued by a chronic lack of qualified civil servants and weakened by the wholesale embezzlement of public funds.

The ONLF draws its support mainly from the Ogaadeen clan,²⁵ including its Diaspora in the Middle East, Western Europe and North America, which left after the Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977–1978 and is a key source of funding.²⁶ It tries to exploit the sense that the Ogaadeen clan represents the majority in the region, that non-Ogaadeen clans dominate the Somali regional government and that counterinsurgency in the region is construed as a policy of collective punishment against the Ogaadeen clan. It has been established that members of the Ogaadeen clan support the ONLF by distributing its propaganda literature, harboring its fighters and providing them with shelter, information and food.²⁷ They also guide them by showing them the safe and shortest routes in hitting their targets. The ONLF has been receiving support from Eritrea since 1998. Eritrea hosts the leaders of the rebel movement and provides it with training as well as logistical and military support.²⁸

The leadership of the ONLF surprisingly resides outside the Somali region, a reason why its detractors describe it as a rebel-movement-in-exile.²⁹ It is divided and is often accused of ‘lacking a clear vision, refusing to acknowledge realities on the ground, and of being elitist, indecisive and out of touch.’³⁰ The leadership has also been driven by splits as ‘dissatisfaction with the armed struggle extends to some of its leaders’.³¹ Serious splits include the wholesale dismissal of the executive committee in 1993, the split between the hawkish chairman Sheikh Ibrahim Abdalla³² and Bashir Abdi Hassan³³ in 1995 and the split between Mohamed Omar Osman³⁴ and Mohamed Siraad Dolal in 2006. Siraad Dolal, who was a British citizen and an official in the region in the early 1990s, headed the foreign affairs arm of the rebel movement. He was killed in March 2009 in Denan *woreda* of Gode zone. His death apparently led to a split in the ONLF, with one faction allied to Mohamed Omar Osman and the other faction led by Abdiwali Hussein Gas who appointed Salahudin Abdurahman Ma’ow as chairman of the rebel movement.

The number of fighters of the ONLF is highly contested but its military capacities may be between 1000 and 1500 fighters.³⁵ The most common weapons used by the rebel movement include small arms, light machine guns, grenades and landmines but no mortars or artillery. The ammunitions and explosives used by ONLF are often imported and transported into Ethiopia follow contraband routes.

Since its inception, the ONLF has relied on quick surprise attacks and guerrilla-style raids against Ethiopian military convoys, avoiding engaging in direct positional battles. It mainly operates in Fiq, Korahe, Degehabour, Warder and Gode zones of the Somali region.³⁶ In more than half of the region’s zones, travelling can only be done with military escorts. The group escalated its attacks in 2007 in the context of the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia. It attacked a Chinese-run oil field in Abole that killed at least 74 people, including 65 Ethiopians and 9 Chinese nationals in April 2007.³⁷ It undertook a grenade attack in May 2007 during a ceremony held in Jijiga, which wounded the Somali regional President Abdullahi Hassen, killed 6 people and wounded more than 40 others.³⁸ By carrying out these attacks, it intended to attract the attention of the Western media outlets such as the *New York Times* and the BBC, prompt an international outcry and create the impression that the Ethiopian military is unable to cope with its attacks.

Such attacks have indeed forced the Ethiopian military to step up its counterinsurgency operations against the ONLF. The military carried out a counterinsurgency strategy of *draining the swamp* in which villages

were cleared out of populations who were pressured to relocate to urban centers in order to deprive the ONLF of its base of support. The strategy was marred by allegations, denied by the government, of human rights abuses including burning villages, assaults on civilians, mass rape, widespread detentions and denial of access to wells—all of which raised sympathy for the ONLF.³⁹

The strategy was accompanied by the imposition of a trade blockade and delayed implementation of food aid intended for the area throughout 2007. The blockade itself is a counterinsurgency measure⁴⁰ since the ONLF was taxing traders in the areas in which it is operating, and the government sought to cut it off from its sources of food, shelter and recruits. It was also complemented by a divide-and-rule strategy among the different clans including setting up self-defense forces⁴¹ and enticing moderate elements into the region's patronage and spoils system. Furthermore, the government had carried out an information blackout and reduced humanitarian access including expulsion of some aid agencies, resulting in uncertainty among international actors⁴² about the scope and severity of the spiraling violence and the subsequent humanitarian crisis.

COMBATING REBEL MOVEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA

The Model and Legacy of the Tigray People's Liberation Front

The TPLF was established by a handful of radical and militant Tigrean students. Resentful of Tigray's subordination to an Amhara-dominated central government, the students argued that the primary problem of Ethiopia was the national question and aimed at preparing the groundwork for the armed struggle and for the mobilization of the Tigrean people in order to overthrow Emperor Haile Sellassie's government. After the *Derg* wrestled political power from Emperor Haile Sellassie in 1975, the TPLF was officially established at a small village called Dedebeit in western Tigray in order to start an armed struggle.

The TPLF began a useful military cooperation with the EPLF, despite serious ideological as well as political differences and was accorded some support by Sudan,⁴³ though the proportions and types of this support cannot be precisely estimated on the basis of available information which is incomplete. It nonetheless used Sudanese territory as a multi-purpose safe haven to get food, educational and health facilities and materials.⁴⁴ It also gathered exhaustive intelligence on the *Derg*'s leadership, on

the location and strength of military bases, troop movements and lines of communications and supply by using agents trained to clandestinely operate for a long time in enemy territory and senior defectors who provided information out of sympathy or financial gain.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the TPLF raised funds in quite substantial quantity from the Tigrean Diaspora in the Middle East, Western Europe and North America. And, it encouraged commercial activities, ‘seeking alliances with merchants and commercial farmers loyal to the Front.’⁴⁶ More importantly, the party capitalized on the increased military presence and ruthlessness of the *Derg* in Tigray,⁴⁷ which produced widespread disaffection and led to the view that the military regime was yet ‘another Amhara-dominated government, usurping power that rightfully belonged to Tigray’s hereditary rulers.’⁴⁸ It thus rallied the peasants upon whom it relied for food, shelter, recruits and intelligence to its side and among whom it recruited feverishly. Indeed, even if estimates are difficult to ascertain, the party had managed to establish by 1980 ‘572 mass associations of workers, peasants, youth, students, traders, and others inside and outside Tigray with a membership of 171,000; in addition there were 12,670 militia members.’⁴⁹

In the course of its 18-years armed struggle, the TPLF built up its fighting forces and improved their military discipline and organization—establishing three army units (*ganta*) in 1975, organizing battalions in 1978 and brigades and divisions after 1980. There was a well-developed line of command but no fixed system of ranks separating commanders from ordinary fighters, and there were ‘political commissars who attended to the political education and morale of fighters.’⁵⁰ Indeed, military activities were coordinated with political education, which developed the consciousness of fighters and peasants alike on the objectives, the course and the phases of the armed struggle.⁵¹ All things considered, the fighting forces were divided into three main sections: regular fighters who directly engaged the *Derg*’s military forces; mobile guerrilla units operated around enemy-held towns and behind enemy lines and the numerically large people’s militia, which recruited from among the peasants and was tasked to protect liberated areas.

The fighting forces of the TPLF, which at first specialized in small-unit operations of guerilla warfare such as infiltration and setting ambushes,⁵² developed after 1987 into an increasingly well-organized and heavily armed units reinforced by the *Derg*’s defecting officers and captured weapons. According to some estimates, the TPLF fielded in April 1988 about 46,000 fighters. These fighting forces were organized into infantry

brigades, the estimates of which varied from 12 to 15, 1 commando brigade, 4 heavy weapon battalions and a people's militia totaling approximately 30,000. In 1989, it was able to deploy 7 divisions, 10 battalions and a significant number of tanks and artillery pieces.⁵³ These forces launched sustained offensives, which culminated in the battle of Shire of February 1989. In the course and aftermath of this decisive battle, the overextended and therefore vulnerable units of the *Derg*'s military forces suffered their biggest defeat and were effectively pushed out of Tigray, enduring heavy losses—12,000–13,000 men killed or taken as prisoners.⁵⁴

During the armed struggle, the TPLF had a pyramidal administrative structure. At the top, the highest political body was the organizational congress consisting of elected fighters and representatives of mass associations of peasants, women, workers, traders and the youth. The congress convened every four years and elected members of the second highest governing body, the central committee, which in turn elected members of the Polit Bureau charged with implementing the decisions of these two bodies. Under the Polit Bureau, there were four functional committees (the political committee, the military committee, the social and economic committee and the foreign affairs committee), each headed by a Polit Bureau member. The meetings of the central committee and the Polit Bureau were chaired by the general secretary, assisted by a deputy general secretary. The central committee was expanded from 25 members to 30 after the third organizational congress of 1989.⁵⁵ In areas under its control, the TPLF set up elected councils at the district, sub-district and village levels commonly known as *baitos* to assist the day-to-day political, judicial, socio-economic and military activities in Tigray, even if they were not included in the rebel movement's organizational framework. In all these organs, *gimgema* or criticism was introduced to evaluate the performance of both collective bodies and individuals through debates in open forums and to eventually solidify the TPLF's relationship with the Tigrean people.⁵⁶

Institutions Involved in Counterinsurgency: The Military and National Reserve⁵⁷

Understandably, Ethiopia's current military setup dispositions and operations are held in great secrecy with few official or independent figures available, hence the difficulty in evaluating reliable military strength. Estimates of the personnel strength of the Ethiopian military or the Ethiopian National Defense Force, as it is officially called, which is constituted by the Ground

Force and the Air Force, vary from 200,000 to 250,000, even if figures are difficult to ascertain and go down as low as 135,000. It should be noted that, before the Ethiopian-Eritrean war of 1998–2000, the strength of the Ethiopian military was between 60,000 and 90,000 men.

Currently, the Ground Force is organized into four commands that were formed on a territorial basis and placed under the direct supervision of the Chief of Staff; there are differences in terms of the quantity and number of their combat means. Among these commands is the South-East Command, which is commanded by Lieutenant General Abraha Wolde Gabriel and is stationed in Harar with the responsibility of protecting the borders with Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti.⁵⁸ Self-evidently, however, it is also charged to contain the activities of the ONLF and the OLF.

It has been common practice in Ethiopia to have the military highly subservient to the party or group controlling political power. The TPLF has not moved away from this practice. In fact, it sees the military as a political weapon and has constructed the post-1991 power structure entirely upon the shoulders of the military, which is usually sent to the most sensitive spots and has helped overcome numerous political crises. Accordingly, the military is not an institution apart from the TPLF but something deeply embedded in it. There is an inseparable bond between the entire officers' corps and the TPLF. The two entities have developed solidarity through shared experiences, ideals, ethnic and corporate interests, traumas as well as pathological fear of any political opponents. And, after 1991, there was only a half-hearted attempt⁵⁹ to separate the military from the political structure of the TPLF, superseded by the need to guarantee a loyal and pliable military enjoying a high degree of discipline, professionalism and centralization of authority.

It follows that the ethnic and social composition of the military is absolutely not sensitive to the ethnic composition of the Ethiopian population, which it is supposed to serve and protect and does not even try to reflect ethnic balance. General-grade officers mostly happen to belong to a single ethnic group, and there is a widespread perception among large sections of the Ethiopian population that, beyond the military, the current power structure is entirely dominated by that single ethnic group.

The military hierarchy functions in a rigid framework in which professionalism is totally disregarded in favor of personal loyalty and blood ties. Senior officers are selected for assignments to critical command posts on the basis of loyalty and personal preference rather than on the basis of either strict seniority (age or service) or merit. In other words, Tigrean

officers lacking the required experience and knowledge for the positions that they assumed were conferred weighty appointments and accelerated promotions simply because of their loyalty.⁶⁰ Thus, a biased system of recruitment, appointment and promotion was instituted and a network of members of the TPLF was implanted in virtually all levels of the military, maintaining a tight control over the day-to-day direction of its decision-making. Furthermore, officers from non-Tigrean ethnic groups were marginalized from key positions. Moreover, almost all of them do not have operational independence, and they can be appointed, transferred or removed at will. In order to generate ideological homogeneity and procedural conformity as well as to identify and watch over non-conformist elements, all military officers are evaluated on the basis of the highly subjective *gimgema*.⁶¹

Divide-and-rule personal policies were also practiced, with officers constantly being played off against one another. In fact, the internal security established its networks within the military in order to collect information on the latter's activities down to the lowest levels of the platoon and squad. The internal security and the military are essentially intended to be mutually balanced as supporting elements of the TPLF, which simultaneously ensures that it retains power at all times and that these two key institutions remain competitive in the power structure.

Furthermore, a National Reserve was established in 2002. It is organized in all regions, down to the *woreda* level and is directly accountable to the Ministry of National Defence through an autonomous Bureau. The Bureau acts as a liaison between the ministry and the regional governments, which are responsible for recruitment. It has established branch offices in all of the regions, its line authorities going down to the *woreda* level and taking care of administrative and disciplinary matters including training and logistics. It recruits from all ethnic groups, includes women and is administered by military laws and directives. The National Reserve is mostly deployed as reinforcement for other security forces and the regular military, as they have been overextended and not been able to handle all disturbances when called on to do so.

Local Government and Local Security Structures

The post-1991 government makes sure that all local government officials are members of parties contained within or allied to the EPRDF tightly controlled by the TPLF. They become subsequently subject to the

discipline of democratic centralism, which binds all these parties to the decisions of the higher party outfit of the TPLF. Furthermore, local officials regularly attend meetings in which government officials outline priorities and objectives that must be uniformly implemented and are monitored by watchdogs from the TPLF.⁶² In this setting, individuals working in the regional, *woreda* and *kebelle* units of local government are included in the EPRDF's organizational framework and are accordingly perceived by the people as speaking for both the party and the state.⁶³ In the same vein, below the *kebelle* level, the drive to extend party structures and organize the rural populace is realized through local government structures such as the *mengistawi budin*, literally meaning government group and the *got*. In Tigray, which 'suffers primarily from the inadequate emancipation of party and state structures'⁶⁴ for instance, the *mengistawi budin* controls 10–15 households whereas the *got* or *abbo hamushite* in Tigrinya controls a group of 5 households.

In terms of security, the post-1991 government relies on two basic structures, which are the local security structures and the peace committee structures. The local security structures are permanent components of local government in charge of crime prevention and local security. The peace committees are community-based structures, which are composed of women's representatives, religious leaders, elders, renowned personalities and representatives from the local government units. Information collection is basically the task of the local security structures, and they utilize the peace committee structures as a collaborative network. The basic collection structures are the pool of field monitors assigned to specific grassroots localities that, in most of cases, are the *got*. A field monitor can be a school teacher, a local *militia* which is a sort of a voluntary local security force, community police or even business people. Depending on the local context of the *kebelle*, a steering structure can recruit, train and task field monitors from within the local community. The basis for their service contract could be voluntary or the coverage of some of their expenses. The provision of communications and other necessary equipment as well as the preparation for some necessary premises is the task of the *kebelle* with the assistance of the regional government.

The role of the peace committee is to assist field monitors to gather information. Some members of the peace committee could be among the field monitors of the *kebelle*. But this should not be confused to the extent of considering the peace committees as basic information collection structures. Moreover, the response of steering structure is composed

of the *kebelle* chairperson, the head of the *kebelle* security, the *militia* commander and the peace committee chairperson. Depending on the type of the *kebelle* and the level of response required to specific situations, the steering structure could send out *militia*, police or peace committee members to respond to the activities or attacks carried out by rebel movements.⁶⁵ Broadly speaking, the responses have been categorized as *security measures* and *social measures*. In essence, the security measures are supposed to be undertaken by the *kebelle* security structure and its support structures at the *woreda*, zonal and regional levels as well as the federal security apparatus, while the social measures are supposed to be the preserve of the peace committee and include digging water wells, facilitating credit services to women and building schools, clinics and roads.

Distinguishing Features of Ethiopian Counterinsurgency

Threats emanating from rebel movements are accorded the highest priority by the TPLF,⁶⁶ which is intimately familiar with the conduct and prerequisites of successful guerrilla warfare. This is because of its own experience as a victorious rebel movement. It is also because it knows that rebel movements, even if they start small,⁶⁷ ultimately put at risk all the components of the existing power structure, upsetting its very existence and damaging its organizing principles or ideologies in terms of economic development, national integration and influence beyond the state's borders. Accordingly, the current Ethiopian counterinsurgency strategy calls for the use of all existing security forces and local government units, which are constantly kept at high operational readiness. All the security services and local government units are obliged to make combating rebel movements their first-priority mission and dedicate all their energy toward the accomplishment of this mission.⁶⁸

The first and central element of Ethiopian counterinsurgency is intelligence. The security forces and local government units are required to provide sufficiently accurate, timely and relevant information on the assets and intentions as well as the relative strengths and weaknesses of rebel movements. They are also expected to provide detailed assessments of how prepared and committed would the population of a certain locality be to endure the deprivations that could result from sustained and large-scale military activities. The military and internal security run a network of informants who collect information both overtly and clandestinely from human resources, including captured fighters and defectors who provide

information in exchange for financial gain or because of rivalries within their movements. Furthermore, the military signals intelligence section conducts the interception and decoding of the traffic of radio communications emanating from rebel movements, in particular those with external sources of support and supply.⁶⁹ It also conducts direction-finding to locate hostile transmitters both outside and inside Ethiopia through the use of fixed sites and mobile ground assets. Signals intelligence accordingly represents a high-priority means of day-to-day collection of information on rebel movements' positions and their probable courses of action.

The second element of Ethiopian counterinsurgency is built on the general principle that a decisive victory can only be scored on rebel movements by launching immediate attacks and the subsequent establishment of perimeter defense. Most significantly, it is crucial to take the initiative from the very outset by means of surprise. Military operations include infantry attacks, cross-border deployment of military forces either in Sudan, Somalia or Kenya, the imposition of a blockade especially concentrating on the areas where the damage will be more intense and the *quadrillage* of villages, key infrastructure and population centers. One obvious objective is to destroy the bases, the communications equipment and the weapons used by rebel movements, physically eliminate or capture their leaders and provoke a breakdown of authority, inflict incapacitating casualties on their fighters and effectively limit their military options.

The third and final element of Ethiopian counterinsurgency is the regular use of propaganda. Propaganda is applied through the public media, including the publication of many pamphlets by the public press, radio and television news and special program in the form of communiqués and interviews. An examination of this propaganda reveals that it is unoriginal and repetitive. For instance, on October 18, 2009, state television relentlessly exhibited more than four tons of explosives and thousands of bullets, which were discovered by security forces after a military leader of the ONLF surrendered and showed them the location of the arms dump. The clearest example of propaganda is a two-week TV program which repeatedly refuted in 2008 a report by Human Rights Watch and tried to publicize the ONLF's own reprisals against civilians in order to deny both of them the moral high ground. This kind of propaganda is supposed to achieve two particular objectives: One objective is to establish among the population a certain controlled image of rebel movements and criticize their measures, political agenda and views. It is thus designed to manipulate the population's perceptions and attitudes and adjust them to the TPLF's views and

decisions, for instance, by discrediting rebel movements as militarily and ideologically weak, divided and controlled by Eritrea. One major line of propaganda attack usually emphasizes the government's sincerity and commitment to peace and security, while depicting the rebel movements as terrorist groups, anti-peace elements and narrow nationalists. The other objective is to weaken the confidence and commitment of the rebel movements' fighters who are bound to monitor the public media, overcome their psychological resistance and thereby promote splits among them. It is also designed to cultivate a climate of fear and magnify the potency of the military, portrayed as professional, well-trained, motivated and possessing appropriate military skills to execute particularly difficult tasks.

CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to exhaustively look at why rebel movements are still rife in Ethiopia, which organization, strategy and tactics they adopt, what their primary objectives are and how the government fights them. It will, in terms of a conclusion, explain why they will most probably continue to thrive in Ethiopia in the future. A number of interconnected reasons can be put forward. First, the TPLF had persistently underscored that its struggle was not to dominate but to create equality and freedom from domination. Yet, it has not been able to dispel the suspicion that it has laid the ground for another heavy-handed ethnocratic dictatorship, this time under the Tigrean ruling classes from the northwestern part of Ethiopia through an intricate patronage network. There is certainly an apparent tendency on the part of the TPLF to centralize political power through weak ethnic political parties and thereby hamper the effective working of federalism and the development of more assertive regional governments. It has also not been able to dispel the unspoken impression that it has installed institutions, which vary minimally from those of the precedent authoritarian governments, and pursued practices that perpetuate the Ethiopian gun-and-blood culture. It has done so in direct opposition to the many advances that it has achieved over the previous governments and the high expectations that it has unexpectedly unleashed.⁷⁰ It has accordingly inspired other political groups and rebel movements to organize and mobilize along ethnic lines and indirectly helped them gain relative popular support.

Second, the current TPLF-led government is confronted with a new period filled with numerous policy challenges and fresh perplexities, including creating an efficient state apparatus, tackling long-term economic development and ensuring Ethiopia's strategic security in the Horn

of Africa. At the same time, it is still behaving as the triumphant rebel movement conditioned by the revolutionary ethos and style promoted over several years of intense political and military activities. It has absolutely no qualms using draconian laws and responding violently to all forms of protest and challenges to its power by violent non-state actors. Such indiscriminate repression can temporarily calm down agitations but indisputably deal with the symptoms rather than the causes of grievances. However, in the longer term, endemic poverty, the degradation of livelihood sources, the inequitable distribution of revenues, widespread corruption, human rights abuses and the lack of political autonomy and repression will only increase the occurrence of determined rebel movements and lead them to intensify the level of violence against the state.

Third, the mobilization process instigated by the TPLF-led government has actually propelled opposition groups to transform themselves into violent non-state actors who resort to violent tactics against the Ethiopian state. Since organizing is criminalized, activists use informal and decentralized networks to evade the control of the repressive government. Denied access to public spaces, mobilization efforts often turn to rebellion, which is difficult to repress completely as it may represent a committed constituency or may have already attained a strong political meaning. Furthermore, ethnic loyalty could compensate for small numbers and relative military weakness. Thus, political movements tend to mirror the organization and tactics of the repressive government and its institutions, which are deemed illegitimate, becoming or continuing as rebel movements when they understand that non-violent activities are meaningless.

Fourth and finally, the TPLF-led government deliberately exaggerates the menace of rebel movements, routinely outlaws and brands them as terrorist groups (the TPLF used to be called ‘secessionist bandits’ by the *Derg*). It practically means that it will not engage in genuine negotiation with rebel movements and that it is unwilling to adjust itself in order to accommodate meaningful changes as well as numerous other interests. As politics becomes polarized, the political contest is turned into a situation in which a politically conscious citizen must be for or against the regime in power. In this awkward situation, neutrality becomes practically impossible as repression intensifies against any form of opposition. The intensification of repression in turn translates into popular support to whichever rebel movement endures the difficult stages of repression and eventually wins. This actually happened in 1991 and is bound to happen again, and as Ethiopians say, the surest predictor of the future is the past.

NOTES

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3. The land area of Oromia is estimated to be 354,000 square kilometers, about 32% of the total Ethiopian territory. It is divided into 14 zones, 198 *woredas* and around 375 *kebelles*.
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11. Paulos Chanie. 1998. "The Rise of Politicized Ethnicity among the Oromo in Ethiopia." In J. Markakis and Mohamed Salih (eds). *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. P. 101; T. Zitelmann. 1993. "Violence, Pouvoir Symbolique et Mode de Représentation des Oromo." *Politique Africaine*, No. 50. P. 48.
12. The Oromo people account for about 27 million people out of the 73 million of Ethiopia's total population and are concentrated in the central and southern highlands and literally surround the capital, Addis Ababa.
13. The TPLF provided the OLF with training and military guidance from 1984 up to 1986 when tensions arose between them. The two rebel movements

nonetheless concluded an agreement regarding the right of self-determination in September 1990. They both participated in the London Conference of May 1991 and the Transitional Conference of July 1991. Then, they held the Asmara talks in September 1992 after their dramatic fallout following the elections. In 1997, the OLF and the Ethiopian government held meetings organized in Germany, using a former German Ambassador to Ethiopia as an intermediary. After the unsuccessful Norwegian-driven attempt in 2003 to bring the OLF and the Ethiopian government to the negotiating table, Prime Minister Meles publicly stated in September 2005 that he would like to begin an unconditional dialogue. In 2008, a faction of the OLF held talks with a negotiating team drawn from Ethiopian elders.

14. The rebel movement is said to have at least 2,000 fighters at its disposal, though some estimates put the figure at 4,000. Its weapons arsenal primarily consists of small arms, light machine guns, mines and grenades (AK 47, the RPG 7 anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade weapon, the PKM/RP 46 machine gun and the RDP 44 machine gun). It uses short-range, medium-range and long-range radios.
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20. Tesfa-alem Tekle. 2008. "OLF Breakaway Faction, Elders to Resume Talks in Ethiopia." Sudan Tribune.
21. Wikileaks. 2008. "OLF Chairman Survives Coup Attempt." November. P. 2.
22. The Diaspora shares the OLF's vision of an independent Oromo republic and supports the rebel movement in a number of ways, including tens of thousands of dollars, internet, cultural meetings and radio broadcasts. A favored source of information of the Diaspora is the website of the OLF. Eritrea has set up a shadowy office to monitor and manage its relations with Ethiopian rebel movements which it supports, in order to carve up spheres of influence and gain leverage over the larger and more powerful Ethiopia. It has increased since 1998 its support to the OLF with travel documents, media coverage on its own TV channel, advisors, intelligence,

- weapons and training. Finally, an essential lifeline for the OLF's war effort is the northern areas of Kenya, the government of which is unable and maybe unwilling to enforce effective border control.
- 23. T. Lyons. 2004. "Diasporas and Homeland Conflict." Paper presented to the DC Area Workshop on Contentious Politics. P. 5.
 - 24. A major source of instability and an added complication is the oil and natural gas exploration in the region. The ONLF insists that it will not allow the exploration of oil and gas in the region until it gains its independence and has repeatedly threatened foreign companies involved in such exploration.
 - 25. It is very difficult to quantify the level of support that the ONLF receives from the Ogaadeen clan, which is, in truth, intermittent and insufficient in view of the rebel movement's objectives (Hagmann 2014:40–41).
 - 26. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 41.
 - 27. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 40.
 - 28. M. Horton. 2010. "Causing Affront: Ethiopian Insurgent Group Strengthens Position." Jane's Intelligence Review, April. P. 14; International Crisis Group. 2012. "Ethiopia after Meles." Africa Briefing No. 89. P. 10; T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 42.
 - 29. International Crisis Group. 2012. "Ethiopia after Meles." Africa Briefing No. 89. P. 8; T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 38.
 - 30. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 46.
 - 31. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 44.
 - 32. Sheikh Ibrahim is a graduate of Islamic jurisprudence from the University of Riyadh and was the representative of the Western Somali Liberation Front in Abu Dhabi. He was elected as chairman during the rebel movement's first congress which was held in 1992 in the Somali region.
 - 33. A splinter group led by Bashir Abdi Hassan unsuccessfully contested the 1995 elections.
 - 34. A former admiral of Somalia's navy, he is the nominal chairman of the ONLF. He seems to have gradually lost his influence in the rebel movement.
 - 35. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 43.
 - 36. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 42–43.
 - 37. International Crisis Group. 2012. "Ethiopia after Meles." Africa Briefing No. 89. P. 12.

38. Associated Press. 2007. "Rebels throw Grenade during Ceremony." P. 1.
39. Human Rights Watch. 2008. "Collective Punishment: War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in the Ogaden Area of Ethiopia's Somali Regional State."
40. During such blockades, the military imposes a curfew and spends several days collecting intelligence through aggressive house-to-house searches and interrogation.
41. An officer involved in the creation of these self-defense forces told the author that their members were recruited from clans hostile to the Ogaadeen clan. He also claimed that these forces were used for reconnaissance purposes as well as backup for clearing operations and that they provided the benefit of minimizing casualties and defections in the military. The officer also unenthusiastically added that some senior officers, untouchable by virtue of their political back-strength, are distracted non-military pursuits.
42. Even though negotiations between the Ethiopian government and Ogaadeen elders started in 2005, they were not supported by international actors. That same year, the Ethiopian government proposed peace talks with the ONLF. The rebel movement accepted on condition that the talks will be held in a neutral country and with an arbiter from the international community. But, these talks never materialized. After 2012, The Kenyan government facilitated the holding of three face-to-face talks that did not produce much.
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47. B. Hendrie. 1999. "Now the People are Like a Lord: Local Effects of Revolutionary Reform in a Tigray Village, Northern Ethiopia." Ph.D. Dissertation, University College of London. P. 89; R. Dowden. 1988. "Ethiopia is Using Napalm in Tigre." The Independent, November 5; D. Pallistor. 1988. "Napalm Evidence in Raids on Tigre." The Guardian, November 4.
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49. J. Young. 1998. "The Tigray People's Liberation Front." In Christopher Clapham (ed.). *African Guerrillas*. Oxford: James Currey. P. 44.
50. R. Luckham. 2002. "Radical Soldiers, New Model Armies and the Nation-State in Ethiopia and Eritrea." In K. Koonings and D. Kruijt (eds). *Political Armies: The Military and Nation-Building in the Age of Democracy*. London: Zed Books. P. 252.
51. Tewodros Dagne. 1992. "The Oromos: Democrats or Secessionists?" *Ethiopian Review magazine*, August. P. 18.
52. J. Young. 1997. *Peasant Revolution: The Tigray People's Liberation Front 1975–1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 123.
53. Tekeste Melake. n.d. "The History of the Ethiopian Army." Research paper submitted to the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa. P. 95.
54. For the most revealing exposés on this episode, consult Tekeste Melake. 1994. "The Battle of Shire (February 1989): A Turning Point in the Protracted War in Ethiopia." In H. Marcus (ed.). *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Papers of the Twelfth International Conference of Ethiopian*. Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press.
55. Tewodros Dagne. 1992. "The Oromos: Democrats or Secessionists?" *Ethiopian Review magazine*, August. P. 19.
56. J. Young. 1998. "The Tigray People's Liberation Front." In Christopher Clapham (ed.). *African Guerrillas*. Oxford: James Currey. P. 43–44.
57. This section about the Ethiopian military was complemented by confidential interviews and discussions with more than 20 Ethiopian officers between March and April 2015.
58. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 31–32.
59. Lieutenant General Tsadkan GebreTensae, the former Chief of Staff, had written in 1993 that, 'if the national army is to be credible, and to function as a guardian of peace in the eyes of the population, it must be accountable ... to the appropriate elected officials with regard to the overall performance of its tasks and duties' (Tsadkan 1993:189). Subsequently, constitutional provisions established the Prime Minister as the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. Moreover, in order to sustain the principle of civilian management of the military, the constitution requires the Minister of Defense to be a civilian.
60. For instance, the 2001 bitter split in the TPLF led to the removal of Lieutenant General Tsadkan GebreTensae (former Chief of Staff), Major General Abebe TekleHaimanot (former commander of the Air Force) and Brigadier General Tadesse Berhe (former head of the Administration Department). Basically, the TPLF did not consider it necessary to explain exactly why it relieved these key officers of their responsibilities and simply replaced them with officers who were more closely trusted.

61. *Gimgema* can roughly be translated as evaluation. It was originally introduced in the TPLF in order to evaluate the performance of both collective bodies and individuals through debates in open forums and to eventually solidify the party's relationship with the Tigrean people. It was largely practiced during the years of armed struggle between 1975 and 1991. It is currently an evaluation process designed to critically assess every aspect of the effectiveness and the personal conduct of all military officers.
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64. S. Vaughan and K. Tronvoll. 2002. *The Culture of Political Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Life*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. P. 124.
65. Interview with an Ethiopian Military Intelligence Official in April 2015.
66. Woldeselase Woldemichael. 2009. "The Challenge of Insurgency and Radicalism in Ethiopia." Research paper submitted to the IGAD Capacity Building Program against Terrorism. P. 2.
67. They will eventually grow in experience and effectiveness. And, the government may 'quickly fall behind the curve as an insurgency matures and [its] mobilization efforts fail.' J. Herbst. 2004. "African Militaries and Rebellion: The Political Economy of Threat and Combat Effectiveness." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41 (3). P. 367.
68. T. Hagmann. 2014. "Talking Peace in the Ogaden." Rift Valley Institute Nairobi Forum. P. 31–34.
69. Interview with an Ethiopian Military Intelligence Official in April 2015.
70. The fact that the TPLF has been able sustain its control over Ethiopia for the last 18 years is remarkable, when it is considered that the government it leads has comparatively less institutional viability than its predecessors.

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CHAPTER 8

Rebel Victory and the Rwandan Genocide

Jennifer Melvin

INTRODUCTION

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has dominated Rwandan politics since the conclusion of the ‘Genocide Against the Tutsi’.¹ Officially elected in 2003, but a de facto power from July 1994, the violent non-state actor-turned political powerhouse in post-genocide Rwanda is synonymous with both progress and controversy. The group’s evolution since its initial invasion in October 1990 has been fraught with challenges at the national, regional, and international levels. The 1994 genocide left the country devastated by trauma and insecurity. The RPF ended the violence that left approximately 800,000 people dead in 100 days.² This impressive success forged the group’s transition from invading rebel force to liberator of the Rwandan people. The RPF was swift to pursue its political goals by forming the transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) just weeks after the conclusion of the genocide. The GNU was comprised of

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Rwandan political parties that had not participated in the 1994 genocide. The GNU, led largely by the RPF, stabilized the country by ordering the mass arrests of officials and civilians suspected of having participated in the genocide. The GNU's military, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), followed refugees into neighboring Zaire³ to prevent cross-border attacks on Rwanda. The RPF won the 2003 parliamentary election and Paul Kagame was officially elected President that same year. The group's transition to a formally elected political party was complete.

The RPF's international reputation has been mixed since the end of the genocide. Donors have lauded Rwanda's government for its innovative approach to justice and development. However, it has also faced continuous accusations of human rights violations by international NGOs including Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International. Nonetheless, domestic support for the RPF and President Kagame was reaffirmed in the 2010 elections amidst reports of intimidation and harassment of journalists, political opponents, and civil society members.⁴ Although Rwandan troops officially pulled out of DR Congo (DRC) in 2002 following an agreement with President Kabila, accusations of ongoing economic, political, and military intervention in the neighboring country remain. The RPF heralded the success of later cooperative missions in DRC to capture and return members of the Hutu rebel Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR). These successes were marred by allegations of RPF support for proxy groups including the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) led by Laurent Nkunda.⁵ The RPF denounced similar accusations in 2012 when a UN Group of Experts accused the Rwandan government of supporting the M23 rebels who disbanded in 2013.⁶

This chapter traces the transformation of the RPF from a violent non-state actor into the political party it is today. It examines RPF rhetoric about its successes as well as its vehement denials of human rights violations in Rwanda and interference in DRC. RPF action in both countries is informed by the same stated objective: security for the people of Rwanda. As such, this chapter examines the RPF's national and regional strategies for security and analyzes underlying political and military incentives for intervention in DRC. It argues that the RPF protects its national and regional interests through discursive and non-discursive action legitimized by its conceptions of security and insecurity in Rwanda.

ANALYZING SECURITY

The analysis in this chapter is informed in part by the Didier Bigo's (2007, 2012) conception of International Political Sociology. This approach brings sociology and international relations together as it facilitates the analysis of both practices and discourse about security in specific local contexts. Bigo maintains that reflexivity is the key, as we must examine not only what actors do and how they do it, be it through language or institutions, but also their reasons for these actions.⁷ This joint focus on discourse, action, and reasoning is influenced by social constructionism. Individual actors are influenced by the uncertainty and insecurity they experience in their society and work collectively to construct meaning of their social world.⁸ International Political Sociology also draws on rational choice theory as it facilitates the analysis of opportunities and constraints on decision-making and relationships between individuals.

The meaning of security is deeply impacted by the context in which it is invoked. Security may encompass any number of concepts ranging from liberation and reassurance to violence and oppression in times of war and peace. Bigo recognizes that security claims may be made to legitimize practices that either facilitate or constrain the actions of individuals in society. As such, he defines security as a process of '(in)securitization' through which the seemingly contradictory notions of security and insecurity become deeply intertwined.⁹ Security claims are inherently political as they justify constraints on personal freedom, including freedom of speech and assembly.¹⁰ Moreover, the capacity to identify security threats and eliminate insecurity and uncertainty in society bolsters the social and political power of actors who make the claims.¹¹ Bigo contends that cases in which security is invoked ought to be analyzed individually. This case-by-case approach allows for an in-depth study of the actors who make the claims and how they understand their actions. Bill McSweeney's (1999) analysis of security and insecurity touches on a similar theme as he argues that security is invoked to protect particular interests.¹² For Bigo, security is reactive and pragmatic, not the result of a calculated master plan. As such, we must identify the nature of the threat, real or imagined, why it exists, whom it impacts, and whose interests it serves.¹³

THE RPF: INVASION TO CIVIL WAR

The RPF's origins can be traced back to growing anti-Tutsi sentiment in the years leading to independence. The '1959 Social Revolution'¹⁴ was the first instance of targeted violence against Rwandan Tutsi. This anti-Tutsi aggression was informed in part by a growing desire amongst members of the Hutu majority for greater political control. The 'Bahutu Manifesto: notes on the social aspect of the racial native problem in Rwanda' published in 1957 outlined the social, political, and economic inequities that purportedly plagued Rwandan society. The authors of the text sought to redress these injustices by increasing work and educational opportunities for Rwandan Hutu and overturning the monarchical system headed by the Tutsi King or *Mwami*.¹⁵ The authors' goals were realized when Grégoire Kayibanda and his MDR-Parmehutu party seized control of the country in January 1961.¹⁶ Belgian colonists¹⁷ were of little help to Tutsi political elites who sought to retain control in the run-up to independence.¹⁸ Members of the Tutsi elite formed the Union National Rwandaise (UNAR) in 1959 to combat growing desire amongst the Hutu population for social and political change. A small group of militants from the UNAR inadvertently sparked a wave of anti-Tutsi violence in November of that year when they attacked a Hutu who was a sub-chief and member of Kayibanda's Parmehutu.¹⁹ Hundreds of Tutsi civilians were killed while thousands more fled the country during episodes of violence spurred by retaliation and the ethos of the 1959 Social Revolution.²⁰ An important disconnect developed during this period of violence. The 1957 'Bahutu Manifesto' challenged the power of the Tutsi monarchy while the violence of the Social Revolution with which it is associated targeted Tutsi civilians, the vast majority of whom were no wealthier than their Hutu neighbors.^{21,22}

Several key events during this period informed the creation and stated motivations of the RPF made decades later. The first was the sharp change in the political and social atmosphere in Rwanda. A Hutu president, Grégoire Kayibanda and his party were in power, signaling the movement of political control from the Tutsi minority to the Hutu majority. The impact of this shift was amplified by the anti-Tutsi violence that pushed thousands of civilians into neighboring countries, including Uganda, where the RPF was formed. The notion that the Social Revolution had resulted in hard earned political and economic gains for the Hutu population increased the sense of threat posed by the RPF after their invasion in 1990. This message came to feature in anti-Tutsi and anti-RPF propaganda in the run-up to the 1994 genocide.²³

Little changed with regard to the political and economic freedom of the Tutsi people in the early period after independence on 1 July 1962. While violence against Tutsi civilians continued in Rwanda until 1967, it was not one-sided. Tutsi refugees in neighboring countries launched several attacks on Kayibanda's regime during this period. Some of these attacks resulted in harsh retaliation against Tutsi living inside Rwanda.²⁴ Anti-Tutsi sentiment in the Great Lakes Region was intensified by the 1972 genocide in Burundi during which Tutsi soldiers in the national army systematically killed upwards of 200,000 Hutu civilians.^{25,26} Tutsi refugees living in Uganda also faced prejudice and violence.²⁷ Between 50,000 and 70,000 Tutsi had fled to Uganda during periods of violence in Rwanda between 1959 and 1964. Once there, they struggled to escape the social stigma associated with their refugee status. Mamdani explains that the Banyarwanda, another name given to the Rwandan population, constituted a culturally distinct group in Uganda. The Banyarwanda could be divided into three groups: nationals who had been in country since the Western borders had defined in 1910; migrants who had entered the country during the colonial period; and refugees who were primarily Tutsi.²⁸ These refugees lived in seven camps until an eighth was established in 1982.²⁹ Their employment options were limited, but they did have access to The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) benefits, including scholarships, which fuelled resentment from poorer Ugandans.³⁰

The climate of prejudice in Uganda prompted a group of Tutsi refugees to establish the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity or RANU in 1980 to discuss repatriation. These discussions continued amidst growing state-led repression of Rwandan refugees. Mamdani explains that Ugandan authorities attempted to force Tutsi refugees back into the camps they had left years earlier during Idi Amin's rule. This failure prompted a backlash against Rwandans more generally who were forced to flee the country when their homes were looted and occupied.³¹ Forty thousand Rwandans fled back into Rwanda until the border was closed in 1982. An additional 35,000 were left in camps along the border as both Rwanda and Uganda restricted the number of refugees they were willing to receive. This spurred many young people to join guerrilla fighters in the Ugandan National Resistance Army (NRA), as did a further spate of forced evictions in 1983. When the NRA seized power in January 1986, a quarter of its soldiers were Banyarwanda.³²

Six months after coming to power, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni reversed a policy that would greatly impact Rwandan people living in

Uganda. Those who had been living in the country for more than ten years were now entitled to Ugandan citizenship.³³ Moreover, the Rwandan government under Juvénal Habyarimana agreed to receive refugees who could financially support themselves. Neither political change quelled anti-refugee sentiment amongst members of the former Ugandan regime. Banyarwanda were forcibly evicted from their property in Teso in 1986.³⁴ Banyarwanda within the NRA also faced increasing prejudice. RANU was disbanded and replaced by the RPF in 1987, which debated whether Rwandan refugees should be naturalized or repatriated.³⁵ The RPF's decision to return to Rwanda was largely made by growing political demand to exclude Banyarwanda and other nonindigenous Africans from 'citizen entitlement' including ranch land and political positions.^{36,37} RPF members in the NRA deserted their posts and invaded Rwanda on 1 October 1990, Ugandan Independence Day with financial support from Museveni's government.³⁸

This invasion rapidly became a civil war that lasted until the genocide began in April 1994. The RPF faced significant challenges from the early days of the conflict. Colonel Fred Rwigyema was killed on the second day of the invasion. Paul Kagame, who would later become President of Rwanda, was flown in from a command-training course in Kansas, USA to replace him several weeks later.³⁹ Habyarimana's government responded to the invasion by orchestrating a fake shootout against the RPF in the capital, Kigali. This act of military theatre justified the arrests of thousands of political opponents who allegedly supported the rebels.⁴⁰ The RPF and its supposed Tutsi 'accomplices' were seen as a credible threat to power and security even from this early stage in the war. The threat may have appeared greater than it was as Tutsi civilians were presumed to support the RPF and to be represented by them.⁴¹ The notion that both the RPF and the Tutsi population were enemies to Rwanda was repeated in such publications as *Kangura*, which printed the Hutu 'Ten Commandments' in December 1990.⁴² Private radio stations, including Radio Télévision Libres des Milles Collines (RTLM), also repeated similar messages of anti-Tutsi propaganda.⁴³

This period was fraught with political and social insecurity, yet major donors continued to pressure Habyarimana to implement a multiparty democracy.⁴⁴ Habyarimana agreed to pursue the necessary reforms including setting up a commission to create a new constitution.⁴⁵ Crucially, he signed power-sharing agreements with the RPF in October 1992 and January 1993.⁴⁶ These actions represented significant concessions to an invading rebel group who were actively fighting the Rwandan army or Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR). According to Cunningham et al. (2013), the RPF was a

formidable military force in Rwanda. The rebels were very well trained, due in part to their experience fighting as soldiers in Uganda's NRA as well as guerrilla fighters supporting Yoweri Museveni's successful move to depose Milton Obote in 1985. Cunningham et al. contend that the RPF also benefited from a clear and organized command structure. These capabilities meant that the rebel group, who had a similar number of fighters as the FAR, was a considerable match for their military opponents.^{47,48}

Alan J. Kuperman (2004) claims that the invasion that triggered the civil war could have been avoided. Habyarimana's regime was actively negotiating the safe return of Rwandan refugees, a process that could have been successfully implemented by November 1990. The stated commitment to repatriation was simply a veil to cover the RPF's true intentions however. Several RPF officials reported to Kuperman privately that the invasion would only have been called off if Habyarimana had offered the RPF a significant amount of political control.⁴⁹ This admission points to a more insidious trend amongst RPF movement during the civil war that continued well into the genocide. The RPF was willing to tolerate retaliatory attacks against the Tutsi population in order to secure political control of the country. Retaliation against the Tutsi population continued throughout the civil war with one attack leaving 300 civilians dead in January 1993.⁵⁰

THE GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI

The 1994 genocide began on 7 April, one day after the plane on which Presidents Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda and his Burundian counterpart, President Cyprien Ntaryamira were traveling was shot down by surface-to-air missiles in Kigali. Hutu extremists within Habyarimana's party immediately accused the RPF of assassinating the President. French Judge Jean-Louis Bruguière confirmed this version of events in his 2006 investigation of the assassinations. He issued international arrest warrants for nine members of the RPF allegedly responsible for the attack. He also requested that President Paul Kagame be tried at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).⁵¹ The RPF vehemently denied any involvement in the attack. A report produced in 2010 by a second French Judge called Marc Trévidic appeared to corroborate the RPF's denial of involvement in the incident. Trévidic's report, produced with full cooperation of the RPF, included statements from experts in the fields of missile weaponry and air accident investigation. It does not state who shot down the plane, but does conclude that the missiles were fired from an area controlled by the FAR, not the RPF.⁵²

The assassination of President Habyarimana rapidly destabilized the country as Tutsi and ‘moderate Hutu’⁵³ were systematically targeted for destruction. As genocide swept across Rwanda, the RPF fought both the FAR and civilian militias including the *Interahamwe*.⁵⁴ Several key features defined the violence of the genocide. The first was the systematic and targeted nature of the attacks. Tutsi and moderate Hutu were identified according to lists carried by militia groups including the Interahamwe. Identity cards, which had been introduced in Rwanda in 1933 by the then Belgian colonial state, were also checked at roadblocks erected⁵⁵ shortly after Habyarimana was killed.⁵⁶ The second distinguishing feature was the brutal and intimate nature of the violence. Genocide perpetrators commonly used machetes and clubs to kill at close range. Attacks were leveled against neighbors and family members as well as new born children and fetuses presumed to be Tutsi.^{57,58} Third, the absence of effective and timely international intervention allowed the genocide to continue unchecked for several months. A letter dated 16 December 1999 from former Secretary General Kofi Annan to the President of the Security Council summarizes the findings of an independent inquiry into the failure of the UN to intervene in the genocide. The inquiry determined the failure resulted from inadequate resources, and a ‘lack of will to take the commitment which would have been necessary to prevent or to stop the genocide’.⁵⁹ The Clinton administration’s refusal to call the events in Rwanda ‘genocide’ throughout the first months of violence is the most commonly cited barrier to timely and appropriate UN intervention in 1994. The administration allegedly blamed US military action in Macedonia and Bosnia for its reluctance to intervene in Rwanda.⁶⁰ The impact of the UN Security Council’s failure to send necessary troops and material is made all of the more apparent by The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) Force Commander Roméo Dallaire’s statement that the genocide could have been stopped if 5000 expert soldiers had been deployed to Rwanda.⁶¹ The RPF officially ended the 1994 genocide by seizing control of the capital. The violence left approximately 800,000 people dead and the country in ruins.

THE POST-GENOCIDE PERIOD

Two key pressures shaped the early post-genocide period: insecurity created by the genocide and the RPF’s efforts to stabilize the country. Rwanda’s social and economic future was uncertain. Over 80% of the Tutsi

population had been murdered and the country's economy and infrastructure had been decimated by the years of violence.⁶² A power vacuum needed to be filled as much of Habyarimana's government had been killed or had fled the country. The transitional Government of National Unity was established on 19 July 1994. Members of Habyarimana's National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) party and the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR), an extremist Hutu party whose members had been actively involved in the genocide, were not included in the coalition.⁶³ This transitional government was guided by the power-sharing agreement set out in the 1993 Arusha Accords. Faustin Twagiramungu's position as Rwanda's first Prime Minister in the post-genocide period appeared to signify a formal commitment to power sharing.⁶⁴ However, this particular division of power did not last long. The RPF changed the coalition's structure significantly by establishing an executive presidency and providing six seats in Parliament to members of the army.⁶⁵ This act ensured that both President and Vice President were members of the RPF and that the RPF and allied parties retained a majority in the Assembly. These changes consolidated RPF power within the GNU allowing the group to exercise political control without appearing to have a monopoly of power.⁶⁶ These changes were not well received by all members of the coalition. Several high-ranking officials resigned and fled the country in August 1995 including Prime Minister Twagiramungu, Seth Sendashonga, the Interior Minister, and Alphonse Nkubito, the Justice Minister at the time. They accused the RPF of committing human rights violations and actively discriminating against both Hutu and Tutsi civilians. Numerous army officers, journalists, athletes, and diplomats also fled during this period of political transition.⁶⁷

The insecurity in Rwanda spread through the porous borders of the Great Lakes Region as millions of civilians fled Rwanda in the months after the conclusion of the genocide.⁶⁸ Members of the FAR and Interahamwe hid amongst civilians in refugee camps in Eastern DRC.⁶⁹ The death and displacement of millions of people was deeply destabilizing and heightened the risk of attack from neighboring countries. For some militants, the genocide was not over. Amnesty International estimated in 1995 that 25,000–30,000 FAR and Interahamwe members were rearming and preparing to launch attacks on civilians across the border in Rwanda.⁷⁰ The Rwandan Patriotic Army entered Eastern DRC in 1996. The stated goal of the intervention was to neutralize the risk of attacks on Rwanda and to protect Congolese Tutsi civilians who were being threatened with violence by local and national authorities.⁷¹

Over one million refugees returned to Rwanda from Tanzania and DRC by December 1996. This mass exodus and subsequent repatriation of refugees did little to calm the social and economic havoc in Rwanda. It also did not quell the perceived risk of further attacks on Rwandese civilians. The GNU cited the risk of attack from former FAR and Interahamwe members inside Rwanda as reason enough to close all camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The GNU was adamant that these camps had become safe havens for genocide perpetrators and hotbeds of anti-Tutsi ideology. The GNU closed the Kibeho IDP camp on 17 April 1995. The 80,000 IDPs sheltering inside were trapped for five days at which time the RPA allegedly opened fire on those who attempted to flee. Estimated death tolls of this event range from several hundred to several thousand.⁷² The GNU did not deny its role in closing the camp; rather it justified it as a calculated attempt to capture former genocide perpetrators who were sheltering inside.⁷³

The risk of future attack was a salient concept during this period. The threat of violence, and ultimately a return to genocide, appeared to come from both Rwanda and DRC. The RPF did not exclusively seek to protect Tutsi genocide survivors. They were also concerned about attacks on Tutsi living in DRC. They received word of one such attack by Rwandan Hutu combatants in October 1996. The RPA collaborated with DRC rebels from the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL) to close the refugee camps purportedly housing Rwandan Hutu militants.⁷⁴ This intervention had mixed results. Five hundred thousand Hutu refugees were repatriated, but thousands of unarmed civilians were killed in the process.⁷⁵ This mission was not guided by military goals alone. The AFDL opposed President Sese Seko Mobutu in Zaire, as did the RPF. Together, Rwandan soldiers and DRC rebels seized Kinshasa and deposed Mobutu. AFDL leader, Laurent Désiré Kabila became the president of the newly renamed DRC on 17 May 1997.

These interventions clearly demonstrated the RPF's political and military power at home and in the DRC. The RPF had worked to reorient the political landscapes in both countries in a manner that best suited its interests. Its collaboration with the AFDL and conflict with Ugandan forces among others added to the instability of the era, particularly during the First Congo War.⁷⁶ The Second Congo War began when Kabila sought to remove foreign troops from the country. The regimes in Kigali and Kampala were incensed and fought to protect their political and economic interests in the country.⁷⁷ Rwanda's illegal trade in Congolese coltan allegedly funded the RPA's entire operation in the Second Congo

War.⁷⁸ Fighters from a number of African countries, including Zimbabwe, Burundi, Angola, and Namibia eventually joined the conflict. This insidious cycle of plunder and violence had a devastating impact on civilians. Mass displacement, food shortages, and failing health infrastructure led to the deaths of millions of Congolese adults and children.⁷⁹ The war also increased the risk of violence against the people the RPA was purportedly trying to protect. According to Lemarchand, violence, political exclusion, and the RPA's influence in DRC only added to the anti-Tutsi sentiment that was putting Congolese Tutsi at risk.⁸⁰ The RPF officially agreed to pull its troops out of DRC as stated in peace agreements with Uganda and Rwanda. These agreements were signed in 2002,⁸¹ but the RPF allegedly maintained its military presence in the country for another year.⁸²

SECURING UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT AFTER GENOCIDE

The RPF seized control of the GNU and began what would become a series of profitable interventions in DRC in the early post-genocide period. Inside Rwanda, things were not yet stable. According to the RPF,

... The genocide left a considerable level of insecurity in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. Within the country, some Rwandans had committed atrocities and would try to eliminate any potential witnesses. There were also some genocide survivors who would try to seek revenge upon those that killed their own. In addition, because many Rwandans had already committed murder and looted during the genocide, they were left more predisposed to killing and plundering. There is a significant number of Rwandans who fled the country after committing genocide atrocities, still maintain the ideology, and even have people who support their cause. Furthermore some Rwandans still do not recognize the evil of genocide is [sic] still ready to help its perpetrators. All these things cause insecurity and pose threats to Rwanda's sovereignty.⁸³

The RPF's efforts to stamp out genocide ideology, understood as the desire to restart the 'Genocide Against the Tutsi', continue to guide the government's (in)securitization process.⁸⁴ The GNU sought to combat the insecurity created by the spread of genocide ideology in the early post-genocide period by ordering the arrest of as many suspected genocide perpetrators as possible, an act that put incredible strain on Rwanda's justice system.⁸⁵ Security Council resolution 995 established the ICTR on 8 November 1994. The GNU requested support from the UN to prosecute individuals

who participated in and planned the genocide, but Rwanda was the only country to vote against the ICTR's formation.⁸⁶ The GNU opposed the court's focus on crimes committed only in 1994, its location in Arusha, the Appeals Chamber and Prosecutor being shared with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the nomination of judges by countries that had allegedly supported Habyarimana's regime during the genocide, and the absence of capital punishment.⁸⁷

These misgivings about the ICTR did not dissuade the pursuit of justice at the domestic level. The GNU published the Organic Law, which outlines how genocide and crimes against humanity would be prosecuted at the Gacaca genocide courts on 30 August 1996.⁸⁸ Gacaca was a reinvented traditional form of community-level mediation process used to solve disputes related to property and relationships in pre-colonial Rwanda.⁸⁹ The newly reformed Gacaca courts were guided by the stated mandate to reveal the truth about the events of the genocide, expedite the trial process, rid the country of impunity, promote unity and reconciliation, and prove that Rwandans can solve their own problems.⁹⁰ Gacaca was very popular with international donors, the vast majority of which were providing some level of support to the courts by 2002.⁹¹ The courts officially closed in 2012, but are reported to have processed two million cases during their time of operation.^{92,93}

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), established by the GNU in 1999 to guide the government's official reconciliation efforts, published the following statement about what the courts would achieve.

When every Rwandan, wherever he/she is at any time, will have understood his/her role to play in this process, there is no doubt unity and reconciliation will be achieved. Conflict between Rwandan people, suspicion, divisions, hatred and woes that befell and destroyed this country will have been defeated and Rwandan people will live in prosperity forever.⁹⁴

National unity also features heavily in discourse about development. The GNU launched its ambitious rapid development plan, Vision 2020 in 2000. The plan is guided by the stated goal of transforming Rwanda into a middle-income country in 20 years, an aspiration which is purportedly shared by all Rwandans.⁹⁵ The document opens with questions about the future that Rwandans envisage for themselves. 'What kind of society do they want to become? How can they construct a united and inclusive

Rwandan identity? What are the transformations needed to emerge from this deeply unsatisfactory social and economic situation?⁹⁶ The RPF's development program, like Gacaca, is also imbued with rhetoric about ownership. According to President Kagame, development requires Rwanda and its people to distance themselves from their past, so they can choose their own futures.⁹⁷ Vision 2020 was established three years before the RPF was formally elected to power, but similar rhetoric about the value of building a united and rapidly developing country still features heavily in RPF government programs and discourse.

President Kagame described unity and security as the foundations of development and progress during a visit to the Western Province on 30 June 2015.⁹⁸ The processes of developing the country, protecting the physical security of Rwandan people, and promoting national unity are deeply intertwined. According to official discourse, physical security is protected in part by combatting genocide ideology, divisionism, and genocide denial processes that will lead the country back into genocide. Limiting divisionism in society is integral to uniting the Banyarwanda⁹⁹ as a single people. According to the NURC, divisionism and genocide denial pose very real threats to unity, reconciliation, and development.¹⁰⁰ The RPF has taken strict action against these forms of insecurity. Any of these acts is punishable by such laws as the 2008 Law Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology, which was amended in 2013¹⁰¹ and the 2001 Law on Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Discrimination and Sectarianism. These laws carry harsh punishments including prison sentences of three months to two years and/or fines of between 50,000 and 300,000 Rwandan francs¹⁰² if found guilty of sectarianism or divisionism. Sentences are even harsher for members of political parties and domestic NGOs as well as government officials, both past and present.^{103,104} These laws have been criticized by human rights NGOs for limiting freedom of speech and political participation and inciting fear in the population.¹⁰⁵

High-profile accusations of genocide denial have been made against individuals and organizations perceived as threatening to national security. Victoire Ingabire, the leader of FDU-Inkingi who was barred from running in the 2010 Presidential elections, was charged with genocide ideology, minimizing the genocide, and working with the FDLR to launch her own rebel group.¹⁰⁶ Rwanda's Supreme Court raised Ingabire's sentence to 15 years in December 2013.¹⁰⁷ High-profile accusations of genocide denial, divisionism, and inciting hatred were also launched against

the BBC. The BBC Kinyarwanda service was suspended indefinitely after the Rwandan Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) determined that it had violated Rwandan laws pertaining to these crimes. These accusations stem from the broadcast of the BBC's documentary, 'Rwanda: the Untold Story' in October 2014.^{108,109}

Clamping down on 'negative ideology' and those who spread it is justified by the government as a means of protecting the security and stability of the country. This approach to security reflects broader trends in the RPF's style of governance. It bolsters support for the party and its programs, such as Gacaca and Vision 2020, by emphasizing the benefits for all Rwandans, such as uniting the country and promoting development, while discrediting criticism from inside and outside of the country. A similar trend can be identified in the RPF's more recent action in DRC. The party attempted to discredit the UN when a UN Group of Experts accused the government of providing weapons and military support to Congolese rebel group M23 in 2012.¹¹⁰ Rwandan Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo called the leaked draft of the report 'anti-Rwanda rhetoric' that will put Tutsi at risk of attack from Congolese people all over the world.¹¹¹ The M23 rebel group was comprised of 600 former members of the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple. These former CNDP members defected from the Congolese Armed Forces, which they had joined as part of a peace agreement in 2009, citing poor pay and conditions.¹¹² The RPF had previously been accused of using the CNDP as a proxy rebel group in its fight against the FDLR after the RPA officially pulled out of DRC in 2002. These instances of political and military interference are coupled with accusations of continued plundering of Congolese minerals. The DRC government sought a trade embargo on Rwandan minerals that were allegedly stolen from DRC and used to fund the M23 rebellion.¹¹³ The rebellion ended in November 2013 and the RPF maintains that it did not support the rebellion or its rebels.¹¹⁴

The external risk of attack on Rwanda has not been entirely neutralized. A spate of grenade attacks allegedly launched by the FDLR and their supporters between 2009 and 2012 killed 20 Rwandans and injured hundreds more.¹¹⁵ President Kagame made it clear to 10,000 students and residents at the University of Rwanda that members of the FDLR failed to destabilize the country in 1994 and they will fail to destabilize it now.^{116,117} This sense of certainty may stem from the successful repatriation of hundreds of FDLR members from DRC to Rwanda in 2015 as well as the RPF's image as Rwanda's liberator, leader, and protector.¹¹⁸ The RPF's

successful fight against genocide in 1994 firmly cemented the group's role as the country's new government while its battle to rid the country of divisionism and negative ideologies has silenced criticism from political opponents, journalists, and NGOs amongst others. The RPF's attempts to protect Congolese Tutsi have been used to justify years of political and military intervention that impacted the possibility of a lasting peace in DRC. Ultimately, these evolving definitions of security and insecurity have paved the way for the RPF's transformation from an invading rebel group to a political party renowned for the progress and controversy it creates.

CONCLUSION

The RPF's transition from an invading violent non-state actor to a ruling party has been fraught with challenges. The RPF has successfully secured its authority in Rwanda and relative autonomy in the international community through the use of powerful rhetoric about unity as well as decisive military and political action at home and abroad. The RPF's first action in Rwanda was highly destabilizing, as its invasion led to a civil war propelled by anti-Tutsi ideology. The 1994 genocide decimated Rwanda's economy and social fabric. The RPF's victory at the end of the genocide and its efforts to stabilize the country in the early post-genocide years firmly cemented its role as the country's victor and liberator. Rwanda's 'Liberation Day' commemoration on 4 July each year ensures neither this identity nor its associated status has faded since 1994.¹¹⁹

Security has featured heavily in official RPF discourse about intervention, justice, unity, and development since the mid-1990s. These security claims serve a dual purpose: they legitimize RPF action at home and abroad and restrict criticism of the regime. Genocide ideology, denial, and divisionism are described by the RPF as sources of deep insecurity in post-genocide Rwanda. The mass arrest of suspected genocide perpetrators and the launch of the Gacaca courts were guided by stated commitments to punish those responsible for the 1994 genocide and to limit the negative ideologies that drove the violence. Rwanda's rapid development program, Vision 2020, is designed to unite the population, the Banyarwanda, as a single people free from any division. Genocide ideology purportedly puts this social and economic development at risk.

Attacks on Rwandan civilians and Congolese Tutsi provoked RPF military action in DRC. This intervention changed DRC's political landscape and entangled Rwandan forces in years of warfare. The RPF has used

security discourse to legitimize intervention and concurrently delegitimize accusations of plunder and human rights abuses in DRC by warning that these accusations will fuel the anti-Tutsi rhetoric that led to the 1994 genocide. This approach frames not only the accusation but also the accuser as a source of insecurity. The RPF's approach to security and insecurity has contained genuine threats to the physical safety of civilians, but these successes come with very real costs. The ability to hold the RPF to account for alleged human rights abuses in DRC and politically motivated accusations of genocide ideology in Rwanda is silenced by the very laws that were put in place to protect civilians from a return to division and genocide. Ultimately, the RPF's (in)securitization process functions to protect the party's social, political, and economic interests at home and in DRC.

NOTES

1. The name of the genocide was officially changed to 'Genocide Against the Tutsi' by the RPF in April 2009. It will hereafter be referred to as the 1994 genocide.
2. Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (London and New York: HRW, 1999): 15.
3. Zaire was renamed the DRC by former President Laurent Désiré Kabila in 1997. The country shall be referred to as DRC throughout this chapter.
4. HRW, 'Rwanda: Silencing Dissent ahead of Elections' (New York: HRW, 2010), accessed 1 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/02/rwanda-silencing-dissent-ahead-elections>.
5. Rachel Hayman, 'From Rome to Accra via Kigali: "aid effectiveness" in Rwanda', *Development Policy Review* 27, 5 (2009): 592.
6. UNSC, 'Letter dated 26 June 2012 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council', 2012, accessed 19 March 2015, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/348/Add.1.
7. Ibid.
8. Elias & Etoré-Lortholary, 1991, cited by Didier Bigo, 'International Political Sociology', *Security Studies: an Introduction*, 2nd edition, ed. Paul D. Williams (New York and London: Routledge, 2012): 123.
9. Ibid., 120.
10. Ibid., 124–125.
11. Ibid., 125.
12. Bill McSweeney, 'The Social Constructionist Approach', *Security, Identity, and Interests: a Sociology of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999): 101.

13. Bigo, 'International Political Sociology', 127.
14. The 1959 Social Revolution was a period of anti-Tutsi violence sparked in part by anti-monarchist sentiment and the 'Bahutu Manifesto', which outlines the desire of its authors for greater opportunities for Hutu in Rwandan society.
15. René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970): 149.
16. Grégoire Kayibanda and his party, MDR-Parmehutu, seized power in the 'Coup of Gitarama' on 28 January 1961. Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004): 45.
17. Rwanda was originally colonized by Germany in 1884. German colonists ruled Rwanda and Burundi as a single territory, Ruanda-Urundi, until 1916. Catherine Newbury, 'Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Rural Political Protest: Rwanda and Zanzibar in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Politics*, 15, 3 (1983): 257.
18. Ibid., 153.
19. Ibid., 162.
20. Peter Uvin, 'Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence', *Comparative Politics*, 31, 3 (2000): 256.
21. Linden and Linden, 1977, cited by Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for the Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004): 226.
22. The vast majority of political and economic power resided with a small minority of Tutsi elite during the colonial period. Linden and Linden explain that regular 'non-elite' Tutsi benefited little from the monarchic system. In fact, as independence approached, 90–97% of Tutsi earned the same incomes as Hutu. Linden and Linden, 1977, cited by Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 226.
23. Ibid. 45.
24. Mahmood Mamdani, 'From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda', *New Left Review*, I, 216 (1996): 15.
25. Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension of Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: NYU Press, 1998): 9.
26. Klinghoffer explains that those targeted were primarily government officials, civil servants, and students. Ibid.
27. Mamdani, 'From Conquest to Consent', 25.
28. Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002): 162.
29. Ibid., 165.
30. Ibid., 166.
31. Ibid., 168.
32. Ibid., 169–170.
33. Lemarchand, 1988, cited by Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 174.

34. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 174.
35. Ibid., 175.
36. Ibid., 183–184.
37. Please see Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, for more information about the 1990 ‘Squatter Uprising’ that led to important debate about citizenship and entitlement of nonindigenous African people from neighboring countries.
38. Ibid., 1983; Regine Andersen, ‘How Multilateral Development Assistance Triggered the Conflict in Rwanda’, *Third World Quarterly*, 21, 3 (2000): 47.
39. Alan J. Kuperman, ‘Provoking Genocide: a Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, 1 (2004): 71.
40. Jordane Bertrand, 2000, cited in Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (New York: Cornell UP, 2011): 50.
41. Alison Des Forges reported that officials in Habyarimana’s government referred to both Hutu and Tutsi opponents as ‘accomplices of the enemy’. Des Forges, 1999, as quoted by Jennifer Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda: Unity, Nationality and State Control* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Press, 2015): 54.
42. The Hutu ‘Ten Commandments’ outlines a set of highly prejudicial rules that guide the behavior of Rwandan Hutu men and women. For instance, Hutu men who marry a Tutsi woman or who hire Tutsi women as secretaries are traitors to the Hutu population. Chrétien et al., 1995, cited by Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 46–47.
43. See The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) website for transcripts of radio broadcasts which aired before and during the Genocide Against the Tutsi in French, English, and Kinyarwanda.
44. Andersen, ‘How Multilateral Assistance’, 447.
45. Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension*, 19.
46. Ibid.
47. David E. Cunningham, et al., ‘Non-State Actors in Civil Wars: a New Dataset’, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 0,0 (2013): 7.
48. Cunningham, et al.’s (2013) study examines the attributes of rebel groups in a number of countries including Rwanda. This information is presented as the Non-State Actors in Armed Conflict Dataset.
49. Kuperman, ‘Provoking Genocide’, 69.
50. Ibid., 74.
51. Jean-Louis Bruguière, ‘Issuance of International Arrest Warrants (no. P106–0046(E)). Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris’ (2006): 39, accessed 4 March 2015, www.taylor-report.com/Documents/Brugiere_Report-English.pdf.

52. BBC News, ‘Rwanda genocide: Kagame “cleared of Habyarimana crash”’, 10 January 2012, accessed 17 March 2015, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16472013.
53. The term ‘moderate Hutu’ refers to Hutu civilians and government officials who opposed Habyarimana’s government and/or the 1994 genocide.
54. The Interahamwe militia was affiliated with Habyarimana’s MRND party. It was comprised primarily of Hutu men, many of whom had been recruited during the civil war. Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension*, 21.
55. Please see Alexander Laban Hinton, *Annihilating Difference: the Anthropology of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) for discussion of the various groups who erected and manned roadblocks during the 1994 genocide.
56. ICTR, ‘The Prosecutor v. Théoneste Bagosora et al., Case No. ICTR-98-41-T’ (2008), accessed 17 March 2015, www.haguejusticeportal.net/Docs/Court%20Documents/ICTR/Bagosora_Judgement_Summary_EN.pdf.
57. ICTR, ‘The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu, case no. ICTR-96-4-T’ (1998): 35–7, accessed 17 March 2015, www.unictr.org/sites/unictr.org/files/case-documents/ictr-96-4/trialjudgements/en/980902.pdf.
58. Please see Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009) for a detailed analysis of why civilians joined the genocide and perpetrated acts of violence against neighbors and family members.
59. UN Secretary General, 1999, quoted by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 60.
60. Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension*, 99.
61. Alison DesForges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*.
62. Kuperman, ‘Provoking Genocide’, 79.
63. See Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, for more information about the actions of the CDR and its youth militia, the *Impuzamugambi*, during the genocide.
64. Twagiramungu belonged to the Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR), which had participated in the Arusha Accords in 1993.
65. Filip Reyntjens, 2004, cited by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 64.
66. Filip Reyntjens, ‘Constitution-Making in Situations of Extreme Crisis: the Case of Rwanda and Burundi’, *Journal of African Law*, 40, 2 (1996): 237–239.
67. Reyntjens, 2004, as cited by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 64.
68. Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: 1959–1994: History of a Genocide* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishing, 1995): 312.
69. Ibid., 314.
70. AI, 1995, cited in Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 63.

71. HRW, '2002 HRW Report' (2002), accessed 22 January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/drc/Congo0602-03.htm>.
72. AI, 'Rwanda and Burundi: the Return Home: Rumours and Realities' (1996): 18, accessed 18 March 2015, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR02/001/1996/en>. Please also see, Gérard Prunier's, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008) for further discussion about the events at the Kibeho camp and the estimated death toll.
73. Ibid.
74. Paul Kagame, as quoted by John Pomfret, 'Rwandans Led Revolt in Congo', *Washington Post Foreign Service*, A01, 9 July 1997, accessed 18 March 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/congo/stories/070997.htm>
75. Ibid.; Filip Reyntjens, 'Waging (Civil) War Abroad: Rwanda and the DRC', in eds. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011): 135.
76. Please see Gérard Prunier's *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, for more detail about the devastation of the First and Second Congo Wars.
77. Jason Stearns and Frederico Borello, 'Bad Karma: Accountability for Rwandan crimes in the Congo', in eds. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011): 157.
78. David Renton, et al., *The Congo: Plunder and Resistance* (New York and London: Zed Book, 2007): 193.
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80. René Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 34.
81. Please see Christian D. Gray, *International Law and the Use of Force* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), for discussion about UN Security Council condemnation of fighting between Ugandan and Rwandan forces in Kinsangani, DRC.
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83. RPF, 'Sovereignty and Security' (n.d.), accessed 22 January 2016, http://rpfinkotanyi.org/wp/?page_id=126.
84. Please see David J. Simon, 'The Challenge of Social Reconciliation in Rwanda: Identity, Justice, and Transformation', in ed. Adam Jones *New Directions in Genocide Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) and Lars

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 86. Maya Sosnov, ‘The Adjudication of Genocide: Gacaca and the Road to Reconciliation in Rwanda’, *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy*, 36 (2008): 129; Olivier Dubois, ‘Rwanda’s National Criminal Courts and the International Tribunal’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 321 (2007), accessed 20 May 2015, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jnza.htm>.
 87. Ibid., 2.
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 93. A nationwide data collection program began in 2002 during which testimonies were given and cases were compiled. Gacaca courts officially began hearing cases in 2005.
 94. NURC, ‘Report on the Evaluation of National Unity and Reconciliation’ (2001): 23, accessed 19 March 2015, <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/5515/2805.pdf?sequence=1>.
 95. Minecofin, ‘Vision 2020’ (2000): 2, accessed 22 January 2016. http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/documents/NDPR/Vision_2020_.pdf.
 96. Ibid., 1.
 97. Paul Kagame, ‘President Kagame’s address at Rwanda Day 2015’, 3 October 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/speeches/summits-meetings-conferences/1592-president-kagame-s-address-at-rwanda-day-2015>.
 98. Paul Kagame, President Kagame concludes visit to Western Province’, 30 June 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1547-president-kagame-concludes-visit-to-western-province>.

99. Banyarwanda is used in this context by the RPF to describe the national identity of all Rwandese people. This identity supersedes the ethnic identities of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa that divided the nation before and during the Genocide Against the Tutsi. Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 168.
100. Rwanda Focus, ‘Genocide Denial and Revisionism, Threat to Unity and Reconciliation—NURC’ 9 July 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://www.focus.rw/wp/2015/07/09/genocide-denial-and-revisionism-threat-to-unity-and-reconciliation-nurc/>.
101. The amended law includes a more formal definition of genocide ideology and requires evidence of the intention of the accused to promote this ‘negative ideology’. The maximum sentence was also shortened in 2013, from 25 years to nine years in prison Human Rights Watch (HRW) warned that the amended version of the law may still limit the freedom of speech. HRW, ‘Rwanda: Justice after Genocide—20 Years on’ (2014), accessed 19 March 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/28/rwanda-justice-after-genocide-20-years#_ftnref25.
102. 300,000 RwF is roughly equivalent to £278 in January 2016. XE Currency Converter, accessed 23 January 2016.
103. Parliament, 2001, Art. 5, s cited by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 72.
104. Punishment for divisionism by these individuals includes sentences of one to five years in jail and fines between 500,000 and two million RwF. Parliament (2001), Art. 5, cited by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*.
105. Please see AI, ‘Rwanda: Safer to stay silent: The Chilling Effect of Rwanda’s Laws on ‘Genocide Ideology’ and ‘Sectarianism’’ (2010), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR47/005/2010/en/> and HRW, ‘World Report 2015: Rwanda’ (2014), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014>, for more information.
106. Amnesty International, ‘Rwanda: Opposition Leader must Receive Fair Trial’, 2010, accessed 31 March 2015, www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/rwandaopposition-leader-must-receive-fair-trial; HRW, ‘Rwanda: Silencing Dissent Ahead of Elections’.
107. BBC News, ‘Victoire Ingabire: Rwanda Leader’s Jail Term Raised’, 13 December 2013, accessed 19 March 2015, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25371874.
108. HRW, ‘Rwanda Submission for Universal Periodic Review March 2015’ (2015), accessed 22 January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/15/rwanda-submission-universal-periodic-review-march-2015>.
109. This is not the first time BBC service has been suspended in Rwanda following accusations of denying the genocide. The Kinyarwanda radio service was suspended in April 2009 for two months after the radio program

- “Imvo n’Imvano” (Heart of the Problem) aired statements from interviewees that purportedly incited hatred amongst Rwandans.
110. UNSC, ‘Letter dated 26 June 2012’, 2.
 111. New Times, 28 June 2012, as cited by Melvin, *Reconciling Rwanda*, 157.
 112. BBC News, ‘Rwanda Supporting DRC Mutineers’, 28 May 2012, accessed 22 January 2016, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18231128.
 113. Reuters, ‘Congo Calls for Embargo on Rwandan Minerals’, 18 September 2012, accessed 14 May 2015, www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/18/congo-democratic-rwanda-mineralsidUSL5E8KIM6920120918.
 114. HRW, ‘World Report 2014’, 5.
 115. New Times, ‘Supreme Court Winds up FDLR Appeal’, 15 December 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-12-15/195299/>.
 116. Paul Kagame, ‘There is No Shortcut to Transformation; it is up to Each and Every One of You’, 12 April 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://paulkagame.com/index.php/news/1512-there-is-no-shortcut-to-transformation-it-is-up-to-each-and-every-one-of-you>.
 117. The FDLR was formed in DRC in 2000, but an undisclosed number of its members committed acts of genocide in Rwandan in 1994. HRW, ‘“You Will be Punished”: Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo’, 13 December 2009, 10, 30, accessed 1 May 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/12/13/you-will-be-punished/attacks-civilians-eastern-congo>. HRW contend that many of the FDLR’s members are too young to have participated in the Genocide Against the Tutsi. HRW, ‘Rwanda: Justice After Genocide—20 Years On’, 28 March 2014, accessed 1 May 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/28/rwanda-justice-after-genocide-20-years>.
 118. VOA News, ‘UN: Over 700 Rwandan FDLR Rebels Surrendered in 2015’, 30 December 2015, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://www.voanews.com/content/un-says-over-700-rwanda-fdlr-rebels-surrendered-in-2015/3124532.html>.
 119. References to the RPF as heroes and liberators of Rwandan represent powerful discursive tricks that project a singular image of the group to both domestic and international audiences. These references appear in several Presidential speeches, including President Kagame’s speech at the 8th Annual Unity Club event in Kigali on 6 November 2015 and his Liberation Day Speech on 4 July 2009.

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PART III

Warlords

CHAPTER 9

Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army

Jo-Ansie van Wyk

INTRODUCTION

Born in the early 1960s, Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), emerged on the political stage in northern Uganda in the 1980s. At the apogee of his political power, warlord and fearlord Joseph Kony's LRA consisted of approximately 100,000 fighters, and operated in Uganda, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR).¹ Decades later, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted Kony and some LRA commanders for a variety of human rights abuses, describing the LRA under Kony's command in pursuing its objectives as engaged in a 'cycle of violence' and the 'brutalization of civilians'.²

As a violent non-state actor, the LRA deserves particular attention as references to Kony as an cult leader, a religious fundamentalist, or simply as a criminal psychopath are parsimonious and neglect the complexity of Kony as the leader of a violent non-state actor. Kony's leadership (or rule) of the LRA offers some insight into the adaptability, durability, and evolution of violent non-state actors in post-colonial Africa.

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This chapter focuses on both Kony and the LRA. The focus on Kony is deliberate as he has been the only leader of the organization since its inception. The chapter is structured as follows. First, it defines Kony and the LRA as a warlord and a warlord organization, respectively. Second, the roots and rise of Kony and the LRA are presented followed by an outline of the rationale for the LRA, the leadership, members and structure of the LRA. The chapter then proceeds to review the rule and rituals of Kony and the LRA, as well as national, regional and international responses to Kony and LRA's violent activities, especially against innocent civilians in northern Uganda.

KONY AND WARLORD POLITICS

This chapter follows Laura Freeman in using the concept warlord here to refer to both Kony as an individual and the LRA as the group (thus warlord organization).³ Furthermore, Anthony Vinci's definition of warlord is applied to Kony and the LRA, that is, an autonomous non-state actor independent from the state through the use of violence and a military-style hierarchical organization (a warlord organization), thus possessing empirical independence, centralized power and territorial control.⁴ Besides these, the monopoly over and the use of perpetual violence and fear characterize Kony and the LRA as a warlord.

Distinguished from fear, violence refers to various types of violence namely structural, territorial, ageist, gender violence, and includes the inducement of fear as a form of violence. Structural violence refers to violence due to or aimed against the structures of society or the state. It also refers to the violence within the LRA as a structure to maintain social cohesion, and loyalty. Whereas Kony's territorial violence refers to violence against people in a particular geographical space, ageist violence refers to the violence against children. Finally, gender-based violence refers to violence against girls through conjugal slavery and forced marriages with LRA commanders and fighters. Violence thus manifests itself in physical and non-physical forms, and is not only the physical exertion of power and threats. Violence in all its forms serves to articulate, accumulate, allocate, perpetuate, and emulate (see Table 9.1). Among these functions, the perpetuation of violence distinguishes Kony's leadership and the behavior of the LRA. Through continuous violence or the threat of the use of violence (thus instilling fear), Kony has been able to articulate his objectives, accumulate power, allocate rewards, and emulate Acholi—Kony's ethnic affiliation—social practices.

Table 9.1 Functions of violence

<i>Function</i>	<i>Social goods</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Articulate	Identity, interests, enemy	Spirit mediums
Accumulate	Power, resources	Territorial control, arms, smuggled goods
Allocate	Patronage, rewards	Wives, material goods
Perpetuate	Authority, legitimacy, social cohesion	Rituals, myth making, forced recruitment
Emulate	Authority, family, role modeling	Governance

Source: Author's own compilation

Like other warlords, Kony is a personalist leader who maintains control over ideology, members of his organization, strategy, instruments of violence, and material (food) and immaterial (rewards) resources.⁵ Moreover, Kony seems to be unconstrained; unaccountable; autocratic; and independent from any other authority, filling the socio-political void of state's weakness to deliver public goods.⁶

ROOTS AND RISE OF KONY AND THE LRA

Kony's rise and leadership should be considered in the wider Acholi context. Born in Omoro County, Gulu District in northern Uganda, Kony was influenced from an early age by Acholi cosmology, the group's political position and status and the vortex of conflict in Uganda, including northern Uganda. Since the 1980s, several violent non-state actors such as militias, paramilitary groups, and rebel groups have operated in Uganda. Some of these actors included the Former Uganda National Army (1980–1986) led by some of Idi Amin's former military personnel, the Uganda National Rescue Front (1980–1998) led by Brigadier Moses Ali, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (late 1980s to early 1990s) led by Amon Bazura and Jafari Salimu, Alice Lawkena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) (1986–1987), the Uganda People's Army (1986–1992) led by Peter Otai and Hiter Eregu, Herbert Itongwa's Uganda National Democratic Army (1994–1995), the West Nile Bank Front (1995–1997) under the leadership of Juma Oris, the Allied Democratic Forces (1996–2001) led by Taban Amin and Jamil Mukulu, and the Uganda National Rescue Front II (1998–2002) under the leadership of Colonel Ali Bamuze and Brigadier Nasur Ezaga.⁷ Apart from these violent non-state actors, several violent

state-related actors and citizen militias also operated in Uganda, including the Kalangala Action Plan and the Labeca, state-sponsored paramilitary groups, so-called state-sponsored thugs such as the Black Mambas and the Stick Brigade and citizen militias (often including under-age youths) established by the state to protect internally displaced people (IDP) camps. Others include the Rhino (Amuka) Brigade in the Langa sub-region, the Arrow Boys in the Teso and Acholi sub-regions, the Elephant Brigade in the Gulu District, the Pader Mig Stream in the Pader District, and the Frontier Guard in Kitgum.⁸ The ongoing presence of the plethora of these violent non-state actors contributed to the militarization of Ugandan society and politics.

The conflict in the country as well as reports of unfair elections in 1980 which brought Milton Obote to power for a third time saw, *inter alia*, the rise of the Ugandan National Resistance Army (NRA) under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni, a southerner. The latter engineered the coup against Obote, who was supported by the Acholi, in 1985. Museveni based his campaign on the premise that, irrespective of ethnic and regional ties, all Ugandans are equal, hence his Movement politics. The Acholi perceived Museveni's intentions differently and as an effort to punish and remove the northerners such as the Acholi who supported Obote.⁹

It is within this context that another of Kony's most important influences emerges as a political actor. Alice Auma, a cousin of Kony, claimed to communicate through the medium Lakwena (Messiah or Savior) with the Holy Spirit. Auma and her father, Severino Lukoya established an Acholi HSM on 15 May 1985, coinciding with the removal of Obote. Subsequent to this, Auma changed her name to Alice Lakwena and established the HSM's militia arm, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF). In response to the NRA's invasion of Acholiland in 1986, Alice, as most literature refers to her, raised a force of 7,000 fighters and joined the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA) to fight Museveni's NRA seizure of power. In January 1986, Museveni took power in Uganda—an event opposed by the Acholi and Langi people of Uganda. Lakwena's forces were defeated by the NRA, resulting in Lakwena fleeing to Kenya in 1988 and the disbanding of her movement.¹⁰

Claiming to be the spiritual successor of Lakwena after her defeat, Kony, then in his 20s, presented himself as possessed by spirits, including an American, Chinese, Sudanese, and a former Minister of Ugandan President Idi Amin. Kony established his own militia by absorbing remnants of the HSM and the UPDA, led by Odong Latek, which emerged

from the former Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) and anti-National Resistance Movement (NRM) forces. In order to reflect the integration of these groups into his militia, Kony named the new entity the United Holy Salvation Army (UHSA).¹¹ In 1988, Odong Latek, leader of the UPDA, and some remnants of the UPDA, including Tabuley and Vincent Otti joined Kony, resulting in the restructuring of the Liberation Army (LA) and the escalation of its guerrilla tactics in combination with its spiritual tactics.¹² Subsequent to this, the LA further morphed into the Uganda People's Democratic Christian Army (UPDCA) (1988–1992) and finally the LRA in 1992.

OBJECTIVES

For some, Kony aims to gain state power and control, whereas others claim he does not have a clear economic and political agenda, except the infliction of violence as a warlord.¹³ However, the objectives of what became eventually known as the LRA in 1992 lie beyond these positions and mere grievance against the *status quo*.

Given the context of Kony's emergence, he initially seemed to achieve specific religious, political, and nationalist objectives. Rooted in his claims to be Lakwena's spiritual successor and spirit possessor, Kony emerged as a radical Acholi messianic and liberation fighter determined to establish a theocracy through holy war based on the Biblical Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. With this, Kony aimed to cleanse the Acholi and claimed that he was 'sent to destroy evil forces in the world'.¹⁴ His religious approach resonated with the cosmology of the Acholi and the absorbed supporters of the HSM and the UPDA, the newly established UHSA and its subsequent mutations, all contributed to increasing Kony's legitimacy as a leader.

Apart from these religious objectives, Kony also aimed to achieve political, particularly nationalist objectives. For some time, the LRA had a civilian wing, the Lord's Resistance Movement (LRM), which promoted the ethno-political demands of the LRA. However, the LRM failed to succeed in this.¹⁵ Kony was particularly keen to root out 'invaders' such as Museveni from Acholiland and form a 'new Acholi' nation in the prevailing political vacuum.¹⁶ Despite a peace accord between Museveni's government and the UPDA in 1988, and with Museveni's recruitment of Acholi, most notably Betty Bigombe, to serve in government, Kony escalated his activities against his fellow Acholi, resulting in greater distrust, conflict and violence.

Once the Uganda military's pressure on the LRA increased, some of Kony and the LRA's objectives underwent adaptations to include basic survival in a hostile environment. However, some scholars maintain that the LRA's political objective and ideological orientation remain unclear. Nonetheless, it is evident that its objectives are not only survival but also political in nature.¹⁷

IDEOLOGY AND PROPAGANDA

Like the objectives set out earlier, Kony's ideological orientation should be considered in the wider context of Acholi cosmology and Ugandan politics. Displaying a messianic complex, Kony claims to receive his instructions from various traditional spirits. He draws moral, political, and spiritual inspiration from Catholic traditions, Acholi African traditions, traditional magic, heavenly visions of God, and a belief that he is God's new chosen 'apocalyptic messiah' (or Lakwena) sent to redeem the Acholi and the rest of Ugandans from Museveni and his NRM government and from Bantu troops from Central and Southern Uganda.¹⁸

Kony's ideological orientation has oscillated between ethnic nationalism, totalitarianism, and religious fundamentalism with a particular eschatology and with some of the underpinnings of theocratic rule.¹⁹ Some secularization occurred in 1988 when the UPDA under Odong Ladek joined Kony and Kony adopted more guerilla tactics, while continuing to follow a version of Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Tactics, a combination of Western military techniques and traditional Acholi ritual practices.²⁰ Subsequent to Ladek's death, Kony changed the name of the UPDCA to the LRA, an event that coincided with a stronger reinforcement and institutionalization of religious ideas through 'complex initiation and cleansing rituals'.²¹ Kony also issued rules of behavior, the so-called Holy Spirit Safety Precautions, and claiming to fight witchcraft and bad spirit mediums (so-called *ajwakas*). He organized the group into three religious-like divisions, namely the Father (*won*), the Son (*wod*), and the Holy Spirit (*tipu maleng*). Besides using these religious symbols and institutions, Kony also established practicing mystical acts such as making his fighters 'invincible by ritually arming them with *malaika* (Swahili for angel)' for protection against attackers and bullets.²²

Apart from religious fundamentalism, Kony turned to ethnic cleansing against the Acholi when it seemed they were no longer supporting him and the LRA, and vowed to replace the Acholi with an ethnically pure generation

of Acholi people, the so-called ‘new Acholi’ nation.²³ It is here that Kony’s totalitarianism emerged, especially in the indiscriminate violence against his own ethnic group, civilians, and even LRA members. Further evidence shows that despite traditional Acholi cultural and social norms that protect children, there continues to be a large-scale practice of abduction and coercion of children to fight for the LRA.²⁴ The 1990s ushered in a new phase for Kony and the LRA, especially when the government of Sudan began to support the LRA with arms and bases in Sudan. This was done in an effort to counter a number of growing threats, including the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in the southern areas of Sudan, the emergence of self-defense militias such as the Arrow Boys to counter LRA activities, failed peace efforts in 1994, as well as the Acholi’s alienation of Kony. By 1995, the LRA’s activities escalated significantly with a number of brutal acts and massacres against the Acholi. Increased loss of popular support is considered to be one of the contributing factors for Kony’s forced recruitment of child soldiers through abductions during this period.²⁵ Furthermore, failed peace efforts and amnesty programs for LRA fighters in 2000 led to more child abductions, this time lowering the age of abductees to nine or ten (even younger), rather than targeting merely teenagers.

TYPE OF LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

Kony, as warlord, looms large over the LRA. Psychologically complex, Kony’s leadership and style have been influenced by his social background, religious fervor, behavior, and personality traits.²⁶ A man of many contradictions and described as a self-interested and excessively violent individual, he is also a provider of limited ‘public goods’ to members of the LRA.²⁷ This notwithstanding, Kony has been described as particularly charismatic, a major contributor to his authority and legitimacy.²⁸ Charismatic leaders are more prevalent in cultures with long-standing traditions of hero-prophets, prophets, messiahs, worship culture, and eschatological beliefs.²⁹ This adds to Kony’s charisma, which is regarded not as ‘personal attribute but [as] a personal claim to power by virtue of supernatural ordination’.³⁰ Kony further legitimizes his authority through violence, religion, spirit mediums, and rituals based on self-ascribed spiritual duty. Besides this, Kony also provides socio-economic security (the ‘systemization of dependable forms of socio-economic procurement’) and social legitimization (such as rituals, mythmaking, and indoctrination).³¹

The charismatic bond between Kony and his followers is reinforced by mutual recognition, affection, and reinforcement.³² Kony's authority and leadership are strengthened through violence and the use of force (see Table 9.1), particularly through a policy of 'perpetual violence' against his fighters, and the identified enemy.³³

Kony's claim as the spiritual successor of Lakwena and his possession of unique spirits are examples of this charismatic bond between the leader and his followers, as Kony is recognized as the interlocutor between spirits and his people, since these spirits communicated through him only. Kony has claimed to be possessed by 'completely new spirits' (compared to Lakwena's spirits) such as the spirit of Juma Oris who became the chairman and commander of the LRA's forces.³⁴ The LRA's operation commander was a spirit from Sudan (Silli Silindi; Saint Cecilia) that led the Mary Campaign to unify the movement's female soldiers. Ing Chu was from China and Korea, and protected the movement's soldiers and hit only its sinful soldiers. El Wel Best was also Chinese or Korean and planned the movement's military operations.³⁵ King Bruce was a spirit from the USA who led the support unit and exploded grenades. Another spirit from the USA was Major Bianca who either worked for intelligence or looked after the *yard* (see below). Jim Brickey was another spirit from the USA and led the intelligence service. Like the spirit Wrong Elephant, Jim Brickey has trickster-like characteristics to change sides when soldiers did not abide by the Holy Spirit Safety Precautions. Besides these spirits, Kony has also claimed to possess three other spirits, namely Dr. Salam or Saline (the medical officer), and Ali and Jacob (who served unspecified functions).³⁶

Compared to some other warlords and warlord organizations, the LRA is a unique religious and 'praetorian governance structure'.³⁷ One of the features of the LRA is that it is structurally divided into a spirit realm (see above) and a military hierarchy. Kony is thus not only the spiritual leader of the LRA but also serves as its military leader. As chairman and commander of the LRA, Kony oversees a hierarchical military structure (see Fig. 9.1) with a clear division between officers and fighters and a strict disciplinary code.

Despite the hierarchical structure of the LRA with Kony at its apex, the leader does not function in his own capacity—instead he acts as *loar*, or messenger, of the spirits possessing him, that communicate operational orders to Kony to pass to his military commanders.³⁸ However, Kony maintains personal military control over operations. Decision-making in the LRA is highly centralized with the Control Altar (see Table 9.2), consisting of Kony and the LRA's core leadership, responsible for all decision-

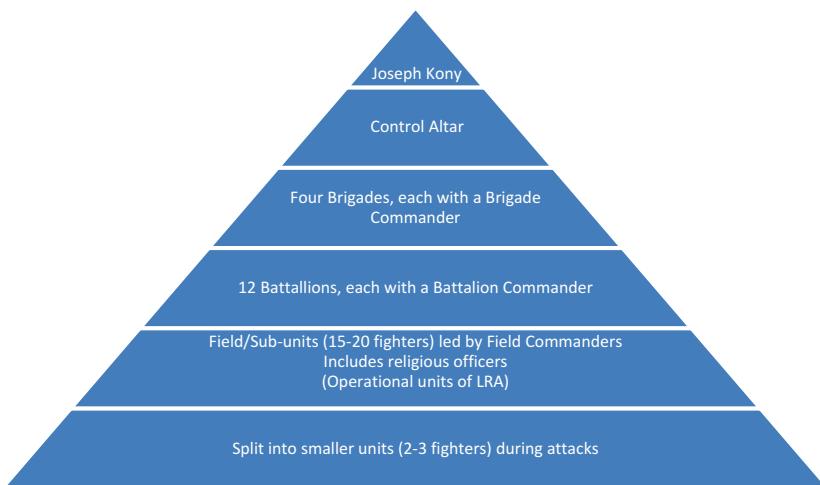


Fig. 9.1 LRA force structure

Source: Anthony Vinci. 2005. The Strategic use of fear by the Lord's Resistance Army. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 16(3): 368.

Table 9.2 Lord's Resistance Army command structure: the Control Altar

Control Altar	Joseph Kony Chairman and Commander-in-Chief Vincent Otti Vice Chairman and Second in Command Brigade General Brigade Commanders Stockree Brigade	Deputy Army Commander Division Commander Trinkle Brigade	Gilva Brigade
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Source: ICC, 2005. *Warrant of arrest for Joseph Kony issued on 8 July 2005 as amended on 27 September 2005*. No: ICC-02/04-01/05, 3–4, 27 September. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc97185.PDF>, accessed 3 February 2016

making in the LRA, devising and implementing strategy and issuing orders to attack.³⁹

There is limited military training of fighters with most ‘training’ occurring in the field, that is, during attacks and campaigns.⁴⁰ This is where Kony’s affection and reinforcement seems to be evident. Bravery in the field is rewarded and strength is reinforced through religious practices and symbols.

MEMBERS OF THE LRA

The evolution of Kony's initial militia into the LRA contributed to changes in the recruitment, composition, experience, and practices of its members. The number of LRA members remains unclear, ranging from a 'few hundred to possible thousands'.⁴¹ As Fig. 9.2 indicates, the LRA emerged through six phases from a volunteer-based organization to enforced recruitment through coercion in less than ten years.

Whereas members by 1988 were recruited or joined voluntarily, were older, and had some military experience during the foundation, absorption, and integration phases (see Fig. 9.2), this situation changed considerably during the escalation and consolidation phases, and subsequently, with the large-scale violent abduction of children to serve as fighters. By 1992, the membership of the LRA thus consisted of voluntary, recruited, and subjugated members across all age groups with varying degrees of military experience. With the abduction and integration of children into the LRA, it became a self-perpetuating organization as these children predominantly remained members once they grew up.

Kony's massive recruitment and coercion of children distinguish him from other African warlords. Another distinctive feature is Kony's forced recruitment specifically of Acholi children. Here, the transformation of Kony as a warlord is evident. Whereas he entered the political arena to defend and protect the Acholi from the expansionist practices of, for example, Museveni's NRA; by 1992, Kony no longer only focused on territorial gains but also on control over populations such as the Acholi. Directly opposing traditional Acholi norms in respect of the protection of their children, Kony not only recruited by coercion but also specifically targeted Acholi children.

Since the escalation phase, the LRA has displaced more than two million people and, by 1994, coercively recruited more than 100,000 boys and girls (between 11 and 15, later younger), typically attacking villages and boarding schools at night, forcing boys to kill their parents, and abducting boys and girls who were subsequently forced to rely on Kony for their survival. Boys were typically indoctrinated to become fighters and girls subjugated to conjugal slavery as 'bush brides' of commanders or allocated as rewards to fighters.⁴² In contrast to its position against sexual immorality, the LRA stands out for its institutionalized practice of forced marriages of young women and abducted girls and LRA commanders to create LRA military families that could ensure group cohesion, loyalty,

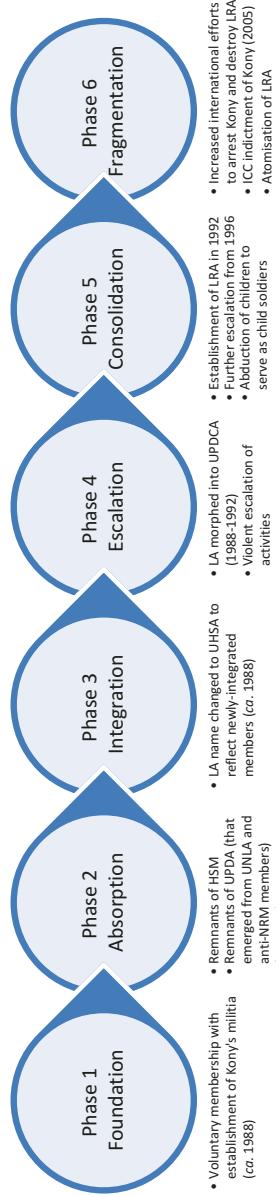


Fig. 9.2 Voluntary, coercive, and fragmented: evolution of LRA membership
Source: Author's own compilation

inter-group social dependence, rewarding fighters, and to create the ‘new Acholi’ nation.⁴³

THE LRA’S OPERATIONS

Earlier reference was made to Kony and the LRA’s strategic use of violence in its operations (see Table 9.1). Three levels of analysis are employed inductively to review the LRA’s operations, namely intra-organizational (internal level), its operations in Uganda (national level), and its operations in Uganda’s neighborhood (extra-territorial or regional level)—Fig. 9.3. Each of these levels displays unique, but sometimes overlapping operational features, where violence serves to articulate, accumulate, allocate, perpetuate, and emulate.

Internal Operations

Internally, the LRA has undergone structural changes, such as self-defense militias in some villages and greater pressure from Ugandan government forces in the environment it operated. Figure 9.1 and Table 9.2 outline the structure of the LRA. Kony’s spiritual, strategic, and military influence as LRA Commander have a significant impact on operations. Within the LRA, practical and religious matters affect the daily operations of the organization. Practically, the LRA operates as an ‘insurgent government’ as it provides government and administrative-like services to maintain order, social cohesion, and regulate social relations in the organization.⁴⁴ Moreover, the LRA adopted a type of governance system that determined the practices (ad hoc or routinized) and daily operation of the group.⁴⁵ An additional determinant is the fact that the LRA does not prefer to control or stay in a specific territory. This results in the high mobility of the organization and its physical and social structures.⁴⁶

The second dimension of internal operations relates to spiritual or religious practices. Kony, as the spiritual leader and preacher, instituted practices such as child abductions and rituals such as collective sacrifice, collective violence, and cleansing rituals in the organization.⁴⁷ Child abductions and the training and indoctrination of these children have become one of Kony’s lasting legacies. Between 1987 and 2006, some 20,000 children were abducted by raiding villages, schools, and homes, two million people were internally displaced with approximately 1.5 million people restricted to about 200 IDP camps, and at least 100,000 people have been killed.⁴⁸ Through fear, brutality, and psychological manipulation,

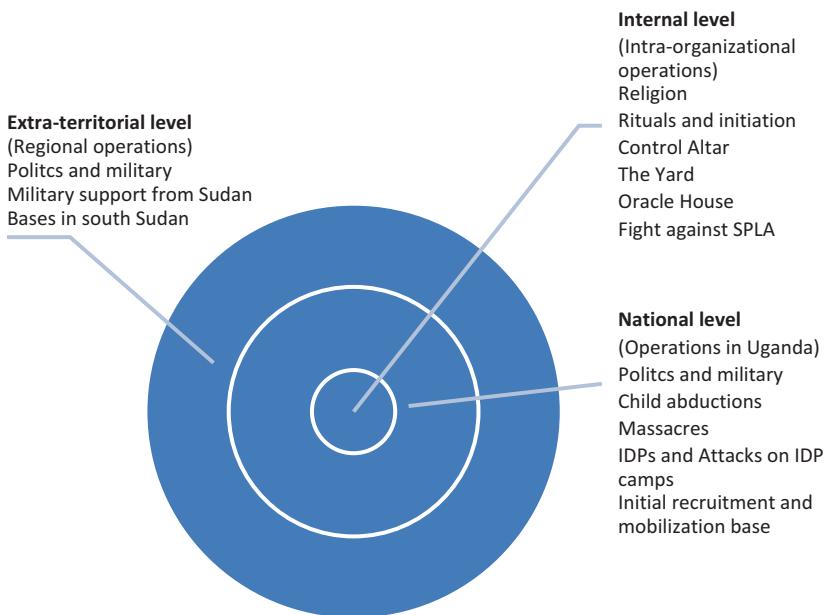


Fig. 9.3 Level of analysis of LRA operations

Source: Author's own compilation

children have been exposed to ritualized killings of family, friends, and new abductees.⁴⁹ Children's disconnect from their previous lives has been exploited by Kony through the skillful employment of affection by creating family-like structures within the LRA.

Initiation rituals for new recruits (often forced abductees) are also particularly violent. Kony institutionalized the practice of magic as an existential function in order to explain fighters' misfortune or to offer redress for a particular situation. These religious practices have a spatial dimension as is evident in the establishment of religious institutions such as Oracle House and The Yard. The former is regarded as the most important religious structure of the LRA and consists of the Chief Catechist, the Chief Technician, and the Chief Controllers—the latter two educated and trained by Kony. By 1987, the LRA had approximately 120 Technicians and Controllers, whose function was to use water and shea butter to anoint soldiers in preparation for fights, raids, abductions, and so on.

The Yard is another important religious location in the LRA religious construction. Regarded as a sacred place and also referred to as the 'tent

of the Lord's presence'. The Yard was demarcated by ash or rocks on the ground and required ritual cleansing before entering. New fighters are brought to The Yard where Controllers and Technicians perform rituals such as anointing new members and praying for fighters.⁵⁰ Captured children are also forced to participate in rites such as drinking the blood of victims and are forcibly inducted into the teachings of Kony.⁵¹

Apart from political and spiritual operations, basic survival remains a major part of the LRA's daily operations. Kony plays an important role in daily survival and income generation as he controls the accumulation and allocation of resources required to sustain survival. In addition to predatory activities such as killing and looting, the LRA also survives through elephant poaching and wildlife trafficking in central Africa, narcotics smuggling, and illegal trading in ivory, gold, and diamonds.⁵² Elephant poaching occurs in Kafia Kingi, an LRA safe-haven that had been used as a transit route for ivory poached in the DRC and the CAR en route to Asia.⁵³ Incidents of similar activities in the Garamba National Park bordering on South Sudan have also been reported.⁵⁴

National Operations

The second level of analysis (national level) of the LRA's operations refers to the organization's activities in Uganda. With no clearly defined headquarters or base, Kony has operated predominantly in Kitgum, Gulu, and Pader districts and the Teso sub-region of Acholiland. By the 1990s, Kony moved his operations to the Garamba National Park.⁵⁵

Increased attacks on the LRA by the Ugandan army resulted in the formation of smaller, more mobile, and more efficient groups of 10–30 fighters. This 'atomization of [the LRA] group' changed its modus operandi in response to the increased pressure by the government forces.⁵⁶ Between 2002 and 2004, the LRA's military strategy has undergone significant changes and has escalated to launching large-scale attacks on civilians. LRA numbers also rose significantly with an increase in child abductions, thus enabling the LRA to accelerate its operations.⁵⁷

The LRA remains well equipped with mortar bombs, machine guns (AK47s), G-2 machine guns, G-3 rifles, mortars, Katyusha rockets, B-10, hand grenades, landmines, and shoulder-fired rocket launchers.⁵⁸ The weapons as well as an increase in the numbers of fighters contributed to the violent nature of the LRA's operations: child abductions, nocturnal raids, violence against the population of rural areas and villages (especially since 2002), killings, massacres (such as the Mucwini Massacre on

24 July 2002 and the Barlonyo Massacre on 21 February 2004), torture, rape, mutilation, arson, internal displacement of people, and attacks on IDP camps are frequent occurrences. Whereas fear is often a side effect of the behavior of a warlord and warlord organization, it seems that in the absence of clearly defined political goals, Kony and the LRA specifically employ fear as a strategy, and not only as a tactic, and that fear itself is regarded as a victory.⁵⁹ Because of this, popular support for the LRA by the local population remains lacking.⁶⁰ In fact, Kony's own ethnic group refers to him and his fighters as *adhui* (enemy in Swahili).⁶¹ Therefore, in terms of the theory of competitive control, the lack of local support contributes to Kony's rule by coercion.⁶² Moreover, the socio-economic conditions and levels of human security have significantly deteriorated in areas where the LRA operates.⁶³

Extra-Territorial Operations

The third level (extra-territorial level) of the LRA's operations refers to its operations outside Uganda. Driven out by international and Ugandan operations, the LRA has relocated to Sudan, and later to the borderlands of the DRC, the CAR, and Uganda. The LRA's transnational diffusion occurred as a new tactic despite Kony's 'conscious avoidance of sustained and complex interactions with the outside world'.⁶⁴ Although its operations were limited to northern Uganda, the LRA has also established regional alliances and geopolitical interests in geographically contiguous areas in Sudan, the DRC, and the CAR.

This level is also significant as it relates to the LRA acquiring a foreign patron, namely President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan in 1991. In exchange for arms and bases in Sudan, the LRA has become involved as a proxy in the civil war between al-Bashir's government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). Bases in Sudan provided the LRA with housing for fighters and their wives, as well as a place from which to attack the SPLA and make incursions into Uganda. However, in 2002, the Sudanese government withdrew its formal support from the LRA.

As international efforts to contain the LRA yielded results, the size of the LRA seems to have dwindled. The LRA has moved to the CAR and the DRC. A further development in respect of the LRA's audiences and targets is that it has established non-aggression agreements and alliances, as well as 'opportunistic cooperation' with other violent non-state armed groups such as the Séléka operating in the same area (see Chap. 5 in this volume).⁶⁵

By 2016, Kony was operating in the remote border areas between the CAR, Sudan, South Sudan, and the DRC.⁶⁶ Since 2005, the LRA's operations in Uganda have declined: from thousands of fighters, the LRA's numbers have dwindled to approximately 150–300 fighters thanks to the government's military and political response.⁶⁷ The LRA remains agile and mobile, with no fixed location and operates in small mobile units. More recently, the LRA is said to have established a safe-haven in Sudanese-controlled Kafia Kingi, a disputed border area between Sudan and South Sudan.⁶⁸

RESPONSE TO KONY AND THE LRA

Warlords' operations have horizontal and vertical audiences and targets. Unlike other warlords, Kony has distinguished himself in targeting—and thus eliciting responses from—members of his organization, the government of Uganda (vertical targets), as well as the Ugandan population and other warlords (horizontal targets), and particularly in his own group, the Acholi in northern Uganda and southern Sudan.⁶⁹ The ICC has also indicted Kony for 33 war crimes and crimes against humanity, including abduction, sexual enslavement, rape, attacks against civilians, enlisting children, mutilation, cruel treatment, pillaging, murder, and inhumane acts against civilians in villages and IDP camps in and outside Uganda.⁷⁰

Kony's treatment of members of his own organization, the Acholi, and the politics of the Museveni government have elicited several responses such as mutiny, splits, surrendering, and the establishment of self-defense units. Although Kony is able to control members of the LRA through violence, some members did rise against him. By 2005, for example, various senior high-ranking LRA officials surrendered to either the ICC, the Ugandan army, or to their lawyers. These individuals included Kenneth Banya (LRA Planner), Sam Kolo (also known as Mr. Otto) (LRA Spokesperson), and Onen Kamdulu (LRA Chief of Operations and Chief Negotiator).⁷¹ In addition, members of the LRA Diaspora have established the Popular Patriotic Front (PPF) to counter the LRA. In the absence of state provision of security, affected local communities have in time mobilized in various ways. In South Sudan, for example, the Arrow Boys (AB), a self-defense militia, emerged to counter LRA attacks against communities along the borders of the DRC and CAR.⁷² Another response is the creation of so-called 'night commuters', that is, families and civilians fleeing their homes fearing night

attacks by the LRA. By August 2004, the UN estimated that 44,000 night commuters flee in fear from the LRA.⁷³

State responses to Kony and the LRA occurred on many levels. The government of Uganda was the first government to attempt to curb Kony and the LRA—although the Museveni government is Kony and the LRA's *raison d'être*. The Museveni government has launched numerous military operations against the LRA. In March 1991, the government launched Operation North to destroy the LRA. However, the operation was a failure and in fact strengthened Kony who renamed his forces the UDCA and later changed it to the LRA. By 1994, Museveni's attempts to reach a peace agreement with Kony failed despite a peace plan that fellow Acholi and a member of Museveni's Cabinet, Betty Bigombe, drafted. Museveni ignored the peace plan and issued a seven-day ultimatum to Kony, a development that resulted in the collapse of peace talks between Kony and the Ugandan government.⁷⁴

The collapse of these peace talks coincided with the transnational diffusion of the LRA's activities. Sudan's support of Kony became a contributing factor to tensions between Uganda and Sudan as Kony's activities into Uganda continued while he was based in Sudan. Cross-border activities of government troops and the LRA resulted in the termination of diplomatic relations between Kampala and Khartoum, a situation that was restored only by 1999 when Uganda and Sudan signed the Nairobi Agreement.⁷⁵

Museveni's increased actions against Kony in 1997 produced unintended consequences such as the movement of populations to IDP camps and so-called protected villages, a situation made worse by Kony's attacks on these exact camps and villages. By 1999, Museveni attempted again to issue an olive branch to Kony by offering him and the LRA amnesty in return for an end to the violence in northern Uganda. This caused divisions in the LRA resulting in a split in 2000 into two factions, consisting of those in favor of negotiations and those opposing it. However, fighting continued, and by 2002 the governments of Uganda and Sudan signed a cooperation agreement to destroy the LRA as it continued to operate in the borderlands between these countries.

Between 2002 and 2006, Kony and the LRA committed some of the worst atrocities forcing Museveni to re-open peace talks with Kony in December 2004. Again, the talks were not sustainable as factors such as the ICC indictment of Kony, the failure to implement the LRA-Ugandan agreement signed on 26 August 2006, and Kony's subsequent unwillingness to sign further agreements which followed in 2007 and 2008 resulted

in Operation Lightning Thunder, a joint Uganda–DRC military operation to oust Kony in December 2008. This too proved unsuccessful, except for the capturing of LRA leaders such as Thomas Kwoyelo, Okkelo Yap, and George Labongo (an LRA Brigade Commander) prompting the African Union to appoint a Special Envoy on the LRA (Francisco Madeira) and establish a Regional Task Force (RTF) in September 2012.

Endorsed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) subsequent to its appointment of former Mozambican President, Joaquim Chissano as its Special Envoy, the Regional Cooperation Initiative for Elimination of the LRA began its operations in 2012. Comprising 7,500 soldiers from Uganda, South Sudan, the DRC, and the CAR, the RTF's mandate was to eliminate the remaining LRA forces and capture Kony.⁷⁶ Besides AU and UN initiatives, the US has also become involved in hunting down Kony, by sending Special Forces and offering a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. One hundred US Special Forces members currently operate in the areas where Kony and the LRA are located.⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

Kony and the LRA remain exceptional and offer some insights into the nature, adaptability, durability, and the evolution of warlords as violent non-state actors in Africa. Kony has been defined as a warlord, but I conclude that Kony should rather be referred to as a fearlord: an excessively violent non-state actor who technically does not wage war, but rather instills fear, by skillfully using various types of violence against members of his organization, his own ethnic group and fellow citizens to achieve specific purposes (see Table 9.1).

Emerging from a traditional society that experienced political alienation during the emergence and rule of Museveni, Kony's LRA evolved over time. However, two aspects remain unchanged, namely Kony's syncretic religious fundamentalism and the stated objective to remove Museveni. Under Kony, the LRA as an organization has evolved very little and has maintained its quasi-religious and military hierarchy. Moreover, Kony has remained its Commander, Prophet, charismatic and religious leader through centralized decision-making and his spiritual endowments. In contrast, its operations and activities have undergone various changes such as the escalation of violence, child abductions, transnational diffusion, operations, and tactics.

In 2017, Kony remains at large and although the LRA has lost some of its potency due to international efforts to destroy it; the rebel movement

continues to operate in the borderlands between the CAR, the DRC, Sudan, and Uganda. The Ugandan army has managed to isolate the warlord and limit its reach, although a lack of political will, military capability as well as challenges of regional cooperation continues to hinder the fight against the LRA.

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The Revolutionary United Front, Liberian Warlords and Civil War in Sierra Leone

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INTRODUCTION

When the Cold War ended in 1990, the world was judged, briefly, to have become a ‘safer place’.¹ However, such optimism was short lived. Old threats that had receded emerged in new forms. They were compounded by new problems, which often seemed more complex and intractable than those created by the classic conflicts of inter-state power and rival ideology. The wars that were fought in the 1990s emerged with their own characteristics, including the prevalence of violent non-state actors targeting civilians rather than conventional military combatants. They sourced their supply of arms and sustenance from a campaign of criminal activity including but not limited to resource extraction, drug trafficking and mass looting of private and public property.² Countries caught up in such intra-state wars during this period were often rich in natural resources such as diamonds, gold, timber and agricultural land ripe for growing

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drug-generating plants. It is against this backdrop that we can identify a pathway for understanding the role of the Liberian warlords and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the Sierra Leone Civil War.

The war in Sierra Leone presents a complex and multidimensional twist of problems, primarily because of the character of the warring parties that emerged, their allies, and the roles played by the regional and international community in the search for enduring peace. The mass media, perhaps drawing lessons from the 1994 Rwandan genocide, avoided presenting the Sierra Leonean war as ethnic confrontation, but rather portrayed the conflict as purely a civil war, despite the fact that both internal and external actors were active participants. Factors that contributed to the war in Sierra Leone include the centralization of power, deliberate and undisciplined use of state violence, the systemic effort to destroy all forms of civic opposition, the concentration of power in the capital and the political and economic neglect of rural areas.³ Sierra Leone's generous endowment in natural resources was a crucial enabling element, earning its label of 'resource curse'. This situation was not particular to Sierra Leone of course; many resource-rich African countries have at one time or another faced similar challenges leading to their reputations for being weak, failed, failing, collapsed, rentier or patrimonial states.⁴

On 23 March 1991, members of the RUF invaded the Kailahun District in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone along the border with neighboring Liberia. The Sierra Leonean government at that time did not take the threat seriously: they assessed the movement was the work of Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor, a prominent Liberian warlord, who later became the 22nd President of Liberia, serving from 2 August 1997 until his resignation on 11 August 2003. The government described the invasion as a spillover from the Liberian civil war. Of course, this perception was to change when the group stormed into Freetown, the seat of government just 12 months later.⁵ The group of rebel fighters was led by Foday Sankoh, a Temne and former corporal in the Sierra Leonean army who had received training in Libya's secret-service camp.⁶ The RUF, with the support of the governments of Libya and Burkina Faso⁷ and Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), captured Sierra Leone's most productive source of mineral wealth, the diamond mines, in the Eastern Kono district.

Joining the war to defend Freetown was the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) with about 13,000 soldiers and two UN operations—United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL)—with an authorized

strength of more than 20,000 men.⁸ Staffed principally with Nigerian soldiers, ECOMOG played a crucial role in bringing the war to an end. By this time, the RUF had completely lost legitimacy, targeting civilians and cities and looting the country of its diamonds to buy weapons and sustain their war effort.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to present an analysis of the evolution, structure, mode of operations and activities of the RUF. It examines the connections between the Liberian warlords and the RUF within the specific context of the war in Sierra Leone and highlights the role played by neighboring states and foreign governments in the peace process. The chapter also analyzes the historical background of the civil war in Sierra Leone and the emergence and development of the RUF into a violent guerilla movement that threatened the sovereignty and stability of the states in the Mano River region.

CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND CIVIL WAR

For the purpose of this chapter, Daloz and Chabal's perspective on 'disorder as instrument'⁹ provides us with the theoretical insights to better understand the situation in Sierra Leone involving the Liberian warlords and the RUF. Chabal and Daloz's major point in *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* is that neo-patrimonialism is central to African politics.¹⁰ They further argued that the political culture of Africa is inherently different to that of western states, and as such what the West sees as a system likely to fail, which is corrupt and mismanaged, is in fact working for African states and the elites. The position of Chabal and Daloz is that Africa does work through what they describe as the 'instrumentalization of disorder'. Chabal and Daloz point to five characteristics, which they contend are the key to any neo-patrimonial society, and which can be seen in Sierra Leone, as is the case in many other Africa countries. The first of these is the 'notion of the individual' which stresses the importance of the communal over the individual. The idea of being an individual citizen is primarily a western thought; but in the case of Africa, Chabal and Daloz argue that decisions and political actions taken by those in power have to be considered as part of a communal psyche, due to the intrinsic linkages between the individual and their local community. Second, the 'salience of reciprocity' builds on the previous point that relationships between individuals must also pay respect to the communal background of actors. Each party, and therefore communal network they represent, must expect something

from the other, and in any political deed it is understood that reciprocity determines its ‘symbolic and instrumental value...political acts are played out on the market place of the various patrimonial networks concerned’.¹¹ In this context, therefore, political support is viewed as an exchange, votes or backing for goods or support for the communal realm.

The third characteristic is the ‘importance of vertical links’,¹² which ties in with the previous points: if individuals are influenced strongly by communal ties, and reciprocity is central to African politics, then it follows that vertical links down through one’s clan are key. In the case of Africa, Chabal and Daloz take this to mean the distribution of state resources to one’s own people, which they call the ‘economy of affection’.¹³ While this may be seen as corruption from a western perspective, Chabal and Daloz suggest that there is an acceptance of such practices in Africa as long as such activity is seen to serve more legitimate ‘moral’ purposes. Fourth, the conception of success, which Chabal and Daloz claim is shown through consumption rather than production,¹⁴ meaning that instantaneous material gains are the favored form of success. This has a negative effect on the long-term development of the state as resources are siphoned off to give the impression of an affluent leader—which is seen to reflect well on the population—and to be distributed among those who gave their support to get the leader in power. State institutions are in this case merely a façade to be used as a patrimonial resource, rather than to conduct meaningful social and economic development. Western-style economic development is seen to be too arduous compared to the rapid gains to be had from reciprocity. Finally, the fifth characteristic is the ‘imperative of the short term view and micro-perspective’, which Chabal and Daloz argue is due to the African political system’s incompatibility with the ‘hypothetical tomorrow’.¹⁵ The system instead only looks at the present, and long-term aims without immediate success are not seen as legitimate as they do not deliver to elites and through vertical links and networks of patronage to the communal.

While some of these characteristics do in part fit into aspects of the case of Sierra Leone, not all of them can be applied at once, if at all in some instances. Chabal and Daloz tend to present the situation in African countries as purely an intra-African condition, without external interference and/or influence. The historical contacts, especially through colonial rule, between African peoples and the West have impacted in no small way on the political, economic and socio-cultural lives of people in African countries such as Sierra Leone. Long before the arrival of the Portuguese and western powers to the continent, African ethnic groups such as the Bulom, Mende, Temne, Fulani peoples and many others had inhabited the

area that later became known as Sierra Leone, meaning ‘lion mountains’. Freetown, on the coast, was ceded to English settlers in 1787 as a home for blacks discharged from the British armed forces and the freed slaves. In 1808, the coastal area became a British colony, and in 1896 a British protectorate was proclaimed over the hinterland. Sierra Leone became an independent nation on 27 April 1961. A military coup overthrew the civilian government in 1967, which was in turn replaced by civilian rule a year later. The country declared itself a republic on 19 April 1971.

A coup attempt early in 1971 prompted then Prime Minister Siaka Stevens to call in troops from neighboring Guinea’s army, which remained in the country for two years. Stevens turned the government into a one-party state under the aegis of the All People’s Congress Party in April 1978. In 1992 rebel soldiers overthrew Stevens’ successor, Joseph Momoh, calling for a return to a multiparty system. In 1996, another military coup ousted the country’s military leader and president. Each successive coup brought an equally corrupt and authoritarian regime to power, which did meet many of the features of neo-patrimonialism espoused by Chabal and Daloz. Nevertheless, following a long destructive civil war in the country involving the RUF backed by Liberian warlords, a multiparty presidential election proceeded in 1996, and the People’s Party candidate Ahmad Tejan Kabbah won with a majority of the vote, becoming Sierra Leone’s elected president. Arguably, it was the lack of what Chabal and Daloz recognize as ‘western type’ development in Africa that led to the civil war in Sierra Leone. Led by a former army corporal Foday Sankoh, the RUF waged an anti-state war that left Sierra Leone a weak, failed and collapsed state. In order to better appreciate the analysis above, the next section of this chapter examines the historical background to the civil war in Sierra Leone.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CIVIL WAR

In order to understand the intricacies of the relationship between the Liberian warlords and the RUF in Sierra Leone, it is necessary to review the historical context in which this took place, going back to the resettlement of returnee slaves in the early nineteenth century. Freetown became a British Colony in 1808 and was used as a major source of slave labor from the Trans-Atlantic trade until it was outlawed by the British Parliament in 1833.¹⁶ In 1896, the British also took over the interior region, occupied by ethnic groups as its protectorate. Given Sierra Leone’s exceptionally rich deposits of diamond minerals, the British colonial regime had by

1914 built railways that connected coastal ports with the hinterland. The colonial administration also granted control over local affairs, such as land tenure and resettlement, to the local chiefs who had the authority to pacify the local population. The chiefs became the main collaborators of the British colonial regime and the diamond traders and continued to exercise these powers after independence, often clashing with the state authorities.

The resettlement of slaves in Sierra Leone had important effects on the mindset of the population. The British campaign to use land purchased from Koya Temne chiefs to relocate former slaves known as ‘Creoles’ changed the ethnic composition of society. This hinterland had no historical relationship with the freed slaves but the new arrangement would eventually become part of the identity of the country. The land issue was controversial of course: the Koya Temne had a different understanding of the terms of the agreement, believing the land to have been leased, not sold, as land belongs to the community and is protected by the chiefs. This understanding is in line with the point made by Chabal and Daloz, that compared to the West, the African life is communal in nature. This subsequently led to an increase in hostility between the Temne and the settlers. According to Ogunmola, ‘the Creole, with their vantage position and background in education, became politically and historically dominant in Sierra Leone’s life’.¹⁷

Trade became the trademarks of the Creoles’ power base as they flooded the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone with their business ventures. What was supposed to be a solution to a resettlement problem for returnee slaves soon became a perennial problem that post-independence Sierra Leone had to face. Competition over land pitted farmers against British miners.¹⁸ By 1920s and 1930s, iron ore, gold and diamonds, and the presence of bauxite, rutile (titanium dioxide), platinum and chromite made Sierra Leone a prize catch for the British empire, which increasingly exploited the mineral wealth of its West African colony.¹⁹ The introduction of new export crops such as coffee and cocoa, which made traditional rulers more influential as they collected money for land use and rents from the mining areas, further complicated the social and economic make-up of the country.

Sierra Leone became independent in 1961 and along with it came high expectations for growth and prosperity. Initially, the post-independence fever prompted limited investments in infrastructure, education and health facilities. The 1967 elections however ruined any promises for progress. After the failed elections, heralded by authoritarian actions against the opposition All People’s Congress (APC) and attempts to establish a

one-party state, which was fiercely rejected by the opposition, a military regime took over the governance of the country. The post-colonial Sierra Leonean state experienced intermittent democratic rule interrupted by a series of military juntas who seized power through coups. Despite the attempts of the first Prime Minister, Milton Margai, to establish a liberal democratic regime, he ‘failed to promote the process of changing the nature, mission, character, practices and values of the Sierra Leonean State’.²⁰ The ruling Sierra Leonean People’s Party (SLPP) chose Albert Margai, the half brother of Milton Margai, to succeed as the new party leader and Prime Minister in 1964. Instead of pushing for a multiparty liberal democracy, Margai instituted authoritarian rule and suppressed opponents and dissidents. He used the state as a tool for personal gain and self-aggrandizement. The military cooperated by suppressing multiparty elections and stifling any opposition that threatened to end his rule. In the years following the death of the first Prime Minister, politics became increasingly characterized by corruption, mismanagement and electoral violence that led to a weak civil society, the collapse of the education system, and, by 1991, an entire generation of dissatisfied youth, many of whom were attracted to the rebellious message and promises of the RUF.

The SLPP’s widespread corruption made it unpopular among the population.²¹ Even though the party was defeated by the All People’s Congress led by Siaka Stevens, in the 1967 elections, the SLPP tried to hold on to power: Margai’s supporter, General David Lansana, staged a military coup, but was shortly overthrown in a counter-coup led by Colonel Andrew Juxon-Smith. In 1968, Juxon-Smith was toppled by another coup that brought in Stevens and the APC to power. Stevens ruled for 17 years and then appointed his successor, General Joseph Momoh to become the president in 1985. Seven years later, Momoh was overthrown by another military coup led by a young Captain, Valentine Strasser. In 1996, Strasser was himself ousted by General Julius Bio. An election in 1996 brought in Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and the return of the SLPP to the presidency, but a coup led by Major Johnny Koroma and anti-government rebels briefly ousted the Kabbah regime. Although the Kabbah regime was restored in 1998, civil war continued until 2002.²² This series of coups and counter-coups came to characterize Sierra Leone’s post-independence period, exacerbating the fragility of the state and weakening the armed forces to the point that they could not and would not be able to defeat the RUF.

In addition, the end of the Cold War led to dramatic changes around the world that would affect the political and economic stability of Sierra

Leone. The turbulence of economic liberalization accompanied by significant cuts in international aid and a drop in prices of raw materials, including diamonds, significantly damaged the national economy. Mounting external debt, high inflation, the continuous depreciation of the currency, budget deficits, widespread corruption and ailing foreign trade resulted in energy and food crises. Serious unemployment drove the youth to Freetown's dilapidated shantytowns and diamond mines in the countryside.²³ From the early 1990s onwards, the Sierra Leone government faced continuous insurgencies inside its territory as a result of the severe fiscal crisis, intense resource competition and rampant corruption that all contributed to the militarization of its frustrated population.

THE EMERGENCE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RUF AND 'SOBEL' GROUPS

In an attempt to rescue the dwindling economy, the Sierra Leone government turned to the USA and negotiated an aid agreement in exchange for a military base in the West African country in the early 1990s.²⁴ The presence of the USA in Sierra Leone made Muammar Gaddafi, the leader of Libya and an enemy of the United States, very uncomfortable. As a result, Gaddafi provided support to the rebel groups, who launched their first attacks against villages in Kailahun District in the diamond-rich Eastern Province of Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991.²⁵ The Sierra Leone government at that time was oblivious of the deep influence that Gaddafi's *Green Book* had on the youth and civil society in the country. According to Abdullah (2004), the Libyans had been building networks, especially in civil society in Sierra Leone as early as the 1970s.²⁶ Revolutionary knowledge from the *Green Book* had infiltrated the leadership of students in Fourah Bay College through its network of readers.

Gaddafi's *Green Book* became the biblical guide for radical students. Some radical students, mostly student union leaders, were later expelled over the allegation that they were agitating against the Sierra Leonean government at the instigation of Libya. Some expelled students underwent military training at the *Mathabb al-Alamiya* World Revolutionary Headquarters in Libya, where they were brainwashed with the rhetoric of the *Green Book*.²⁷ Students who became members of the RUF later served as the rebel group's intellectual and revolutionary ideologues. While preparing for his insurgency in Liberia, Charles Taylor recruited Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone and also some of the expelled students such

as Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray. They later received military training in Libya and joined Taylor in the Burkinabe military camp in Po, where insurgents for the NPFL were trained. The RUF was created by these Sierra Leoneans with the aim of putting an end to the APC's rule.

At the beginning, the RUF had no clear leader to direct its affairs, but Foday Sankoh, Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray provided rudimentary leadership, depending on their immediate objectives while looking for new recruits and opportunities to launch an insurgency. Some of the younger leaders underrated Sankoh because of the level of his education had misjudged his ability 'to think and act politically' and to lead a revolutionary movement.²⁸ He was a former army corporal with only a primary level education, who was incarcerated in 1971 for his failure to inform the authorities of Bangura's coup attempt.²⁹ Misjudging him would be fatal for his comrades as Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray were executed in 1992 in Kailahun by firing squad on trumped up charges, on the orders of Foday Sankoh, but most likely because of their opposition to the indiscriminate killings, torture and sexual abuse exercised by the RUF fighters. Sankoh's relations with Libya and his association with Liberia's warlord Charles Taylor were probably the most important factors that led to his emergence as the leader of the RUF.³⁰ Under the leadership of Foday Sankoh and with the support of Taylor in Liberia, the RUF received most of its arsenal from Libya and arms traders in Burkina Faso.³¹ According to Berman and Melissa (2006), the government of Sierra Leone intercepted copies of letters dated 26 June 1996 and 4 December 1996, that it claims to be from Sankoh to the Libyan Embassy in Ghana acknowledging receipt of US\$500,000 and requesting an additional US\$1.5 million for supplemental arms purchases.³² The government of Sierra Leone recovered a couple of hundred weapons from the RUF over the years but has not been able to document the exact quantity. An attempt was made to introduce a registry of RUF weapons in 1994 at the Ministry of Defense, but without success. As a rule, any weapons captured from the rebels were distributed to local units of the SLA or the pro-government militia. The weapons were not sent back to Freetown for investigation.³³

At first, the RUF was popular with Sierra Leoneans, many of whom resented the Freetown elite who they saw as corrupt and looked forward to the promises of free education, healthcare and equitable sharing of diamond revenues. However, the RUF quickly developed a reputation both domestically and internationally for its terrible atrocities towards the civilian population during its decade-long struggle, especially its practices of rape,

hacking off limbs to spread terror among the population, and its widespread use of child soldiers. From its formation in the 1980s up to 1991 when it began armed operations against governmental forces, the RUF put forward the slogan, ‘No More Slaves, No More Masters. Power and Wealth to the People’.³⁴ While its goal was clearly to change the government of Sierra Leone, the RUF gave little indication of what sort of government it would be. The group did not advocate Marxism or any similar leftist ideology, nor did it support extreme nationalism or fascism. It also did not claim to be a force fighting for a certain ethnic group or region. At one point, during ongoing peace negotiations in 1995, RUF published a pamphlet entitled ‘Footpaths to Democracy: Toward a New Sierra Leone’, which contained some rhetorical references to social justice and pan-Africanism.

To complicate matters, the Sierra Leonean armed forces became entangled in the conflict, dropping their protective roles to plunder the state. The Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF) originally served as the government’s troops for the one-party Sierra Leonean state, headed by the SLPP. However, when the insurgency started, some RSLMF troops found themselves caught in a bitter guerrilla war in the insurgent-infested Gola Forest. The state’s inability to pay the salaries of its army, due to its fiscal failures, prompted the RSLMF troops to disperse and seek alternative sources of revenue. With the guns and ammunitions provided by the state, these military-turned-rebel groups started to operate as diamond dealers using mixed tactics of forging patron-client bonds with villagers through coercion and terror. There were reports of looting, human rights violations, mutilation and torture by these former soldiers to coerce local villagers to work for their diamond mines. According to Richards (1996), these opportunistic soldiers began to operate as ‘sobels’—soldier-rebels, or ‘soldier by day, rebel by night’.³⁵ By utilizing the underground smuggling networks of the diamond trade, the different factions of the sobel groups managed to make lucrative profits out of unexploited mineral resources in the impenetrable Gola Forest.

Within this context of brutal violence against the state and society, schools had to close down and the formal education system rapidly deteriorated. Many Sierra Leonean youths who roamed the streets and had nothing to do soon became easy targets for recruitment to work at the mines and for the rebels. While some joined the RUF and sobel groups voluntarily, others were forced at gunpoint.³⁶ Caught in this perpetual civil war, some of the youth organized themselves into smaller guerrilla groups to establish, defend and expand their own territories of diamond

mining, as a counter-strategy against the oppressive RUF and sobel militia. Most insurgent-infested areas in Sierra Leone and Liberia were alluvial diamond areas, where small-scale distributors and non-industrial methods of mining could exploit the resources beyond the control of the government.³⁷ In line with the argument advanced by Chabal and Daloz, the RUF's instrumentalization of disorder paved the way for access to critical resources, particularly diamonds, to wage the war. With the initial income generated from the first diamond extraction, these young guerrillas bought an abundant supply of Kalashnikovs (AK47), assault rifles smuggled from neighboring Liberia and Guinea, and turned themselves into the next generation of militias, thereby creating a vicious cycle of violence that destroyed not only the Sierra Leonean state but also society and the economy.

THE LIBERIAN WARLORDS AND THE RUF

The rebellion started by Taylor's NPFL on 24 December 1989 heralded a long period of anarchy not just in Liberia, but also civil wars in the neighboring countries of Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. The relationship between the Liberian warlords and the RUF in Sierra Leone was key to giving the rebels endless access to weapons in order to wage their vicious war.³⁸ Many scholars have argued that in the case of Sierra Leone, the availability of 'blood diamonds' made the extension of the Liberian war to Sierra Leone by proxy not only feasible but irresistible. This inevitably sustained and prolonged the civil war.³⁹ Charles Taylor was the dominant figure in this relationship, having himself overthrown the regime of Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe in Liberia. Liberian dissidents, including civilians and military officers opposed to Samuel Doe's dictatorial rule, had teamed up with Charles Taylor to oust the government. Another Liberian warlord, Prince Yomi Johnson was among the notable dissidents opposed to the regime of Samuel Doe, who fled the country. According to Ellis (1999), it was this dissident group of Liberian military officers who helped Captain Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso to seize power in a bloody military coup in which President Thomas Sankara was assassinated in 1987.⁴⁰ In gratitude for the support he received from the Liberian warlords, Blaise Compaoré introduced Taylor to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, whom he convinced of Taylor's revolutionary credentials. Gaddafi took a special 'interest in these West African intrigues in pursuit of his own vast personal ambitions, which extended to the whole of Africa'.⁴¹

Charles Taylor was able to strengthen his guerrilla movement with the support of the governments of Libya, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, who provided financial and logistical assistance.⁴² Taylor's personal hostility towards Sierra Leone is less clear. Taylor had attempted to use the Pujehun District in Sierra Leonean territory to launch his rebellion against Samuel Doe's government. To his chagrin, the Sierra Leonean government disapproved of such a move. With reports of involvement of some Sierra Leoneans in the NPFL insurgency, Taylor's presence in Sierra Leone indicated trouble. He was subsequently arrested and briefly detained in Freetown in 1989. The interference of Momoh's government in the first Liberian civil war (1989–1996), by allowing ECOMOG to establish a base in Sierra Leone to attack the NPFL's positions, also drove Taylor's revenge towards the Sierra Leonean authorities.⁴³ Taylor vowed that 'he would teach Sierra Leoneans the bitterness of war'.⁴⁴

Some of the Sierra Leoneans who had participated in the Liberian civil war became the leaders of the insurgency in Sierra Leone. After Taylor and Sankoh met in Libya in 1988, they struck a deal promising that the two men would assist each other to overthrow the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone.⁴⁵ The RUF subsequently launched their campaign in Sierra Leone, assisted by the experienced Special Forces dispatched by Taylor and Burkina Faso President, Blaise Compaoré. The Special Forces had little regard for Sankoh's command and no accountability to the RUF hierarchy. The lack of control and oversight of the Liberian forces resulted in widespread looting and civilian casualties. While about 30,000 of Sierra Leone's four million people died in that country's civil war, 360,000 people sought refuge in other states in 1996. An additional 1.7 million were internally displaced.⁴⁶ The Special Forces were responsible for some of the worst atrocities against civilians, such as hacking off of the heads of village merchants.⁴⁷

CLASH OF INTERESTS, FRACTIONALIZATION AND THE RUF'S 'GUERRILLA' WAR

In their pursuit of personal enrichment, the Special Forces from Liberia and Burkinafabe, who outnumbered and hugely outgunned the Sierra Leonean RUF, committed most of the abuses in the first two years of the war.⁴⁸ The Liberian fighters' ruthlessness and impunity were resented by some of the RUF recruits. Throughout 1992, the RUF clashed with NPFL fighters, until they finally drove them out of the country for violating command,

harassing other fighters and abusing civilians.⁴⁹ As a result, the relationship with Taylor soured, costing the RUF its main supply line for food, arms and ammunition, and its only avenue of coordination between the East and South. The internal consequences were dire. The activities of the RUF fighters soon became worse than the NPFL fighters. RUF commanders became even more violent than the NPFL fighters and resorted to public punishment to repress any behaviors seen as challenging their power.

The collapse of the alliance between the Liberian warlords and the RUF, the withdrawal of the former's support, and increasing military losses sustained by the rebels led to a competition for power among RUF leaders. In 1993, Sankoh tortured and executed dozens of fighters accused of being traitors, one of which was his militarily skilled second-in-command, Rashid Mansaray. At this point, the RUF went from being a conventional insurgency fighting movement that control territory to a violent and insecure guerrilla group on the run. RUF fighters began to attack various parts of the country, striking major towns from their jungle bases and resupplying through guerilla hit-and-run attacks. Instead of administering civilian governance through towns and villages, the RUF incorporated thousands of civilian members and camp followers directly into its bases and command structure.

In 1995, Foday Sankoh left Sierra Leone for Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to negotiate a ceasefire and organize elections with the military junta in power since 1992. He returned briefly in 1996 to sell the peace accord to his rebel faction in the jungle. His initiative failed, however, due to his arrest in Nigeria on allegations of arms trafficking. He did not effectively lead the RUF again until 2000. In his place, Sam Bockarie, also known as 'Mosquito', became the interim leader. Bockarie, who was ruthless, widely feared and respected by fighters, did not hesitate to consolidate power through violence. Simultaneously, soldiers from the army styling themselves as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC—restyled AFRC/SLA) staged a coup against the government of Tejan Kabbah in May 1997. Upon seizing power, they invited the RUF to form a joint government in Freetown. The RUF reluctantly left their Eastern Province stronghold and joined their former enemies to 'govern' the capital. During this brief period, the RUF-sanctioned looting of public and private properties led to the death of many civilians. Images and reports of widespread looting, murder and rape soon revealed the horrors of the situation to the world. The period of joint AFRC-RUF rule was characterized by a complete breakdown of law and order, and by a collapse of the formal

economy. Schools, banks, commercial services and government offices ceased to function, while rape and looting became the order of the day. Nine months after the coup, ECOMOG forces under Nigerian leadership drove the joint junta out of Freetown and back into the provinces. Thousands of AFRC/SLA joined the RUF under the nominal banner the ‘People’s Army’, but no real effort was made to unify or restructure the rebel and army troops. Like in the RUF–NPFL alliance, mistrust and disregard for the command chain characterized the partnership.

This realignment and fractionalization of the fighting forces exacerbated the level of violence in the country. It increased the personalization of power in the RUF and AFRC. With Sankoh absent, commanders became more influential over and possessive of the fighters. This reintroduced the culture of impunity seen during the RUF–NPFL alliance, and weakened internal governance structures designed to limit violence. Civilians were targeted as a proxy for anti-government resentment. Amputations, public and gang rape, and summary executions all increased. Reports of violations in 1998 followed the path of the RUF–AFRC’s retreat out of the capital into the North and Eastern provinces. The disastrous 6 January siege of Freetown the following year saw a return and spike in the violence: in just two weeks, the RUF–AFRC forces committed over 1,000 reported human rights violations, a gruesome practice of amputations in the Western Area, more than double seen in any other district in the entire year. The RUF–AFRC forces embarked on a vicious practice of deliberate mutilation, whereby parts of the body such as arms, lips, noses, hands, breasts and legs were amputated and eyes gouged out. According to Human Rights Watch, this was deliberately done to Sierra Leoneans ‘so that they could not vote’. When the rebel and former army forces were again pushed back into the provinces, they remained in territorial control of almost 80 percent of the country.

THE RUF’S RECRUITMENT AND FRACTIONALIZATION

The insurgency was characterized by infighting and a lack of command and control from the beginning, a problem the RUF would face throughout the conflict. Thus, factional groups of the RUF rebels kept appearing during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Most of the RUF members belonged to the diaspora of Sierra Leoneans in Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire who ran away from Siaka Stevens’ repression of the population along the border areas.⁵⁰ The rebellious leaders started their own recruitment drive among the ‘thoroughly marginalized diggers working the border-zone (who

were) intimate with the process through which the magic money sustaining national politics is made and angered by social marginalization'.⁵¹ Another group of RUF rebels were the contingent of youth 'volunteers' from 'the most isolated parts of the populous Kailahun district and in border villages in Pujehun', whose mobilization was motivated by the fact that the districts were ravaged by political violence since the 1970s.⁵² Some of the 'volunteers' turned rebels were youth who had served in an unofficial capacity as anti-smuggling force during the 1980s. The RUF was able to gain control of a number of larger Kailahun villages through their knowledge of factional communal tensions and these settlements today remain divided into pro- and anti-RUF factions.⁵³ In addition, an estimated 10,000 child soldiers were forcibly recruited by the RUF. Many of the rebel factions were composed of 'children who could hardly carry an AK47 rifle', the main weapon used during the conflict.⁵⁴

Women also played an important role in the civil war, both as participants and victims of the conflict. The pattern of recruitment of the RUF—which was mainly carried out along the Sierra Leonean and Liberian borders—included the enlistment and training of young girls. The insurgents even established a 'combat wives units' for women who were armed with 'sista Beretta' (mainly Beretta submachine guns).⁵⁵ They were charged with the responsibility of policing gatherings of captured populations and occasionally acted as bodyguards. They were also involved in special missions, which entailed infiltrating enemy territory and survival missions, entering civilian settlements to purchase essential commodities and medicine.⁵⁶ The units were located in RUF camps in isolated and readily defendable forest enclaves in strategic parts of the country. These include Malal hills, overlooking the Freetown Makeri highway; Kangari hills, Genma, close to the Liberian border in Kailahun, and at Peyeima in the forested country behind Panguma with access to the Tongo diamond field. The Sendumei-Jui group was located in the forest ridge south of the Kambui forest reserves; the Sulima group was in the southeast of the country where it could control supplies in and out of Liberia and the coast. In addition, the RUF maintained a headquarters camp, where Sankoh and many of the war council appear to have been based, at Zogoda, in a flat-forested area east of the Moa and north of Zimmi.⁵⁷ In a survey of 50 female ex-combatants, 'almost all stated abduction as their means of entry; one third stated that they had fighting experience; nearly half indicated that they received weapons training; one fifth described themselves as spies' and in addition they were expected to perform the duties of 'wives'.⁵⁸ Indeed,

the Sierra Leone war provides a clear case where sexual violence was used as a ‘weapon of war’.⁵⁹ Women who were forcibly recruited into the rebel factions reported being raped by both Liberian and RUF fighters who acted with complete impunity. To reduce the level of sexual violence and rapes in camps, the RUF commanders resorted to arrangements of ‘bush-marriages’. This contradicted the RUF’s rhetoric of people’s liberation and of formal gender equality, under which women and men trained and fought side by side. The evidence that numerous women were forced into marriages during the war was documented in the Special Court for Sierra Leone war crimes trials. During the trials and in the conviction of the top leaders of all major armed groups in 2010, judgments were passed for the first time stating that forced marriage was a war crime and crime against humanity.⁶⁰

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

The invasion of Sierra Leone by the RUF, backed by the governments of Libya and Burkina Faso and Taylor’s NPFL, was a clear case of violation of sovereignty.⁶¹ While the response of the international community was stunted, there were several attempts between the outbreak of war in 1991 and its effective end in 2002 to forge a peace deal. This initiative was led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, the UK, and later the USA. Prominent among these failed peace processes were the Abidjan (1996), Conakry (1997) and Lomé Peace Accord (1999). The Lomé Accord was wide ranging and controversial as it allotted the rebels four cabinet positions, a series of public sector directorships and several ambassadorial posts. Sankoh was appointed the Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Recourses, National Reconstruction, and Development (CMRRD). Koroma was appointed the Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP). The accord also included provisions for monitoring of the ceasefire, the transformation of the RUF into a political party and the review of the constitution.⁶² These efforts were dependent on the ability to bring the RUF and the Sierra Leone government to the table to reach an acceptable and sustainable peace settlement.

The road to peace and reconciliation in the Sierra Leone Civil War proved to be thorny. The RUF, under the leadership of Sankoh, kept derailing the process to pursue their own interests and capture power to monopolize access to blood diamonds. Blood diamonds, also known as conflict

diamonds or war diamonds, is a term used for diamonds mined in a war zone and sold to finance an insurgency, an invading army's war efforts, or a warlord's activity. The reality of Sankoh's and RUF greed became clearer when, under his leadership as Chairman of the CMRRD, he did nothing to stop the flow of diamonds to Liberia.⁶³ The Abidjan Peace Accord of 30 November 1996 made the RUF an ally of the government and tasked them with restoring peace and promoting development. Among others, the accord provided for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, the withdrawal of all mercenaries, amnesty for all rebels and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Sierra Leoneans welcomed the signing of this accord, which seemed as the last hope for ending the war. When Foday Sankoh and the government of Sierra Leone signed a peace agreement at the end of November 1996, President Kabbah agreed to the expulsion of Executive Outcomes (EOs), the infamous South African private military company he had hired, within five weeks of signing the agreement. However, Sankoh and the RUF refused to honor the accord and sanction a 720-member UN Peacekeeping Force to Sierra Leone to monitor the peace process. This was further complicated after the 1997 military coup that ousted Kabbah from power.

After ECOMOG forced the AFRC/RUF out of Freetown in 1998, President Kabbah returned to the country, abandoned the feckless military and threw his support behind local militias. Once a motley assortment of semi-traditionally derived community outfits, the local Kamajors, Tamaboro, Kapra and Gbethis were expanded, re-equipped and reorganized into the state-sponsored, centrally commanded Civil Defense Force (CDF). The Kamajors are a traditional hunting community whom the president organized into a people's militia movement to provide security in the countryside. A total of 47 individuals were convicted of treason and other charges associated with the AFRC/RUF administration and sentenced to death. Foday Sankoh, who had been arrested in Nigeria and returned to Sierra Leone, was also tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. During this period, the AFRC/RUF forces conducted a violent rampage throughout the country under 'Operation No Living Thing', chased from one place to another by ECOMOG forces. While Foday Sankoh and other AFRC/RUF defendants appealed their convictions, the RUF again attacked Freetown in January 1999, catching both the government and ECOMOG off-guard. The arrival of UN peacekeepers in late October 1999 supported by the Kamajors who served with ECOMOG to

push back the rebels changed the playing field once more. The UN aerial bombardments of RUF sanctuaries contributed in demoralizing the rebels and made a negotiated peace inevitable. Eventually, combat fatigue, the deaths of top commanders and the release of Foday Sankoh from prison to take part in peace talks paved the way for eventual disarmament and demobilization. After claiming about 50,000–70,000 lives and displacing more than two million people, the war in Sierra Leone officially came to an end in January 2002.⁶⁴ By the time the rebels were beaten back, large parts of the Freetown had been burned and 3,000 children abducted. The RUF had been engaged in an armed struggle against the corrupt government of Sierra Leone for nine years.

CONCLUSION

The war in Sierra Leone provides a clear example of the emergence and ability of violent non-state actor, backed by external support, training and funding, to destabilize a country and entire region. The role of the Liberian warlords and the RUF in the Sierra Leonean war reveals that all that is required for such an insurgency to be sustained is control over three elements: a resource base, one or more routes over which resources can be moved out of the source area and exchange points where resources can be traded for weapons and other needed goods or services. Furthermore, Charles Taylor, the leader of the insurgency in Liberia, ran his own non-state entity beyond Liberia to Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. Neither the Liberian warlords, especially Charles Taylor and his NPFL nor the RUF rebels received any official international recognition, but they maintained many of the characteristics of violent non-state actors that unleash atrocities against weak or collapsing African states and innocent civilians.

The Sierra Leonean leaders and the warlords sought to maintain their positions in power due to the varied benefits it conferred on them. No doubt, this is along the lines of the arguments of Chabal and Daloz. Ethnicity and patronage, as well as limited employment opportunities and economic hardship, were features of Sierra Leonean life, before, during and even after the civil war, and these have been linked to neo-patrimonial factors, thus causing patronage to become a feature of the relationship between the rulers and ruled. In addition, multiparty politics in the 1980s up to the 1990s in Sierra Leone did not broaden the political space for popular participation by the citizens. Admittedly, major factors in the collapse of Sierra Leone were allegations of corruption, lack of development

and contestations for power, which fit within the description of Chabal and Daloz's neo-patrimonial state.

The civil war in Sierra Leone was driven neither by emancipatory ideology nor by ethnic or religious identity. Rather, it was a conflict driven, among other things, by the availability of easily plundered blood diamonds, an endless supply of weapons through smuggling routes and the assistance of foreign states (especially Libya and Burkina Faso) and other violent non-state actors (such as NPFL) who sought to benefit financially and politically from the chaos. The resulting gross human rights violations eventually pushed the international community into taking military action. The war also mobilized a huge amount of interest globally. Civil society groups actively lobbied to raise awareness on human rights issues, leading to the creation of the Kimberley Process to combat the trade in 'blood' diamonds. Lastly, the cooperation between ECOWAS, the UN, the UK and the US were key to cementing a lasting peace agreement—as evidenced by the current state of stability in the country. This can certainly serve as a lesson for future resolution of intractable conflicts and peace-building in Africa.

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CHAPTER 11

Al-Shabaab: State Collapse, Warlords and Islamist Insurgency in Somalia

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INTRODUCTION

Somalia represents a classic case of ‘state collapse’ in the post–Cold War global dispensation. At the center of Somalia’s disintegration and eventual collapse is the failure of the state to sustain the basic structures of authority, thus giving room for the efflorescence of clan warlords, armed militias and other violent non-state actors (VNSAs). Al-Shabaab represents a latent specimen of VNSA and *cas fortuit* behind the disintegration, anarchy and collapse of state legitimacy in Somalia. In post–Cold War Africa, a new set of conflicts has emerged in which VNSAs—including a plethora of ultra-nationalist and extremist religious ideologues—exploit socio-economic discontents and other fault lines in the state to engage in terrorist tactics and unleash wanton destruction against innocent civilians. The rising terrorist threats in parts of Africa have triggered an appalling humanitarian crisis as a result of violence against unarmed civilians.

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The resurgence of these VNSAs has undermined the modern Westphalian nation-state model as the only legitimate custodian and employer of force in international politics. Newly emerging VNSAs are using ideological discourses related to national resistance to challenge the nation-state and thus destroy the prevailing political norms and values establishing nation-states.¹ In the absence of strong states in Africa and elsewhere, insurgents, warlords, pirates and other terrorist groups may provide political and socio-economic goods through arrangements characterized by what Idler and Forrest (2015) described as ‘complimentary governance’.² We set out to demonstrate in this chapter that the rise of VNSAs in Africa has raised tremendous concerns among scholars and development practitioners about the existence and sustainability of the state and its capacity to provide law, order and security within its sphere of jurisdiction. Sovereign states have been exposed to pressures from internal forces challenging the legitimacy of the state in the continent. The questions underpinning this chapter are what accounts for the growing threats posed by VNSAs to the security of states in Africa? To what extent does Al-Shabaab constitute the key actor in the crisis of legitimacy in Somalia? What are the forces behind the rise of Al-Shabaab as an example of a VNSA in post–Cold War Africa? What are the antecedents, nature, structure and modus operandi of Al-Shabaab? What are the prospects of rescuing the Somali state from the shackles of the Al-Shabaab insurgency? What are the prospects of managing VNSAs and consolidating national security in Somalia and regional security in the Horn of Africa? What are the regional and continental efforts to address threats caused by Al-Shabaab? This chapter will seek to provide answers to some of these pertinent questions.

Al-Shabaab represents a brand of extremist, fundamentalist and insurgent VNSA and resurgent Islamist militants that have mushroomed across parts of Africa in the post–Cold War and post-9/11 era. The proliferation of violent Islamism in sub-Saharan Africa has led to what *The Economist* labeled as the emergence of ‘Jihafica’ in the continent.³ Violent jihadism has become the key threat to Africa’s peace and prosperity; this is in addition to other forms of internal and external threats such as—in the case of Somalia—domestic struggle over scarce resources and power. Many African countries are confronted with terrorism, perhaps more than any other continent of the world. The Global Terrorism Index figures for 2015 support this grim picture. First, 12 (60%) of the 20 countries worst hit by terrorism are based in Africa. This includes Somalia (8th) and Kenya (18th), two countries affected by Al-Shabaab terrorism.⁴ Secondly, the database revealed that over 80% of the most violent terrorist attacks in 2014–2015

happened in Africa.⁵ Finally, over 90% of terror attacks in Africa are rooted in extreme religious ideology—the domain of the Al-Shabaab movement in Somalia. Groups like Al-Shabaab have deeply rooted influence in the psyche and domiciles of the local population and draw their funding from the local informal economy. Indeed, they thrive on popular support. They tap into well-known local grievances by wooing support from Muslim populations who are fed up with decades of neglect, marginalization and social exclusion from African kleptocratic governments.⁶

The primary aim of this chapter is to explore the evolving threats of terrorism in the Horn of Africa by focusing on the rise of Al-Shabaab as a lethal VNSA in the region. Al-Shabaab represents a broader spectrum of rebellion initiated and implemented by the Somali's diverse groups in light of the state's collapse that followed the demise of Somalia's former dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre. The disintegration of Barre's authoritarian regime led to bloody clan warfare, the rise of warlords, the emergence of a volatile war economy and, eventually, the failure of the US-UN humanitarian intervention in the conflict. Al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups in Somalia have emerged as means of usurping the authority of those that have been formally recognized by the international community and also to target Western interests in the region.⁷ In April 2015, Al-Shabaab's violent attack against Garissa University marked the bloodiest terrorist attack in Kenyan territory since the 1998 bombings of the US Embassy in Nairobi. Al-Shabaab's aim was to gain support within ethnic-Somali regions of Kenya and Somalia, expel foreign influence in this volatile patch of Africa and, by extension, attract global attention.⁸ The chapter highlights the root of state disintegration in Somalia, the accentuation of violent clan politics and the ensuing rise of warlords and militias, of which Al-Shabaab is a part. The chapter also explores the evolution, structure and modus operandi of Al-Shabaab. In the next section, we define the concept of VNSAs and explore how Al-Shabaab fits into the parameters of the analytical trajectories offered by scholars to the understanding of VNSAs in world politics.

VIOLENT NON-STATE ACTORS (VNSA) AND STATE FAILURE

The emergence of VNSAs is a by-product of a weak and dysfunctional state. Inadequate governance, on the one hand, and globalization on the other provide the enabling environment for the emergence of VNSAs. Although the patterns of causation differ globally, there is correlation between

weakness of the state and the emergence of VNSAs. A growing body of literature has illustrated how violent insurgency groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia become one of the numerous examples where a non-state entity may take advantage of ‘governance void’ or ‘ungoverned spaces’ in lawless areas in weak or failing states.⁹ Operating within the façade of weak states, violent non-state groups tend to provide public goods, control the monopoly of violence and are socially recognized by the local population, which enable them to create ‘complimentary governance’.¹⁰

States with legitimacy crisis, for example, are unable to create or maintain the loyalty and allegiance of their population. In this situation, individuals and groups often tend to revert to seeking alternative mechanisms of security, livelihood and governance. This entails that ethno-religious or clan identities often become the main reference points for political action in opposition to the state.¹¹ In some regions of the world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, lack of politics of inclusion and a deeply rooted culture of exclusion in governance provide conditions that facilitate the emergence of VNSAs. When the state fails as the legitimate governing authority to provide basic services or allocate resources effectively, identity cleavages tend to emerge and absorb group loyalties. This governance failure also serves as a platform to mobilize identity groups and transform them into full-fledged VNSAs. In the next section, we explore the political and historical trajectory of Al-Shabaab focusing on the leadership squabbles in politically fragmented Somalia, leading to its emergence as one of the most notorious ‘jihadist movement’ in the world in the aftermath of the overthrow of Siad Barre’s regime in 1991.

SOMALIA: STATE COLLAPSE AND THE RISE OF WARLORDISM

Somalia, one of the poorest countries in the world, has descended into total anarchy since the early 1990s after the fall of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre. Divided by decades of anarchy and violent armed conflict, Somalia crumbled into a failed state in the Horn of Africa where ‘jihadist’ insurgency, warlords, militias and pirates have captured Somalia’s stateless society and filled the vacuum of its unoccupied political space.¹² When the authoritarian regime of Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991 following a popular uprising by Somali dissidents, several observers of contentious politics in Africa thought that there would be a transition to democratic rule and consolidation of political stability. However, this was not to be the case. Several clan-based warlords drummed support among

their clans, secured heavy weapons and began to unleash violence against what was left of the state. The nature of clan formation in Somalia and the social and economic relations revolving around clan ancestry and alliances played an important role in unleashing violence and terror in Somalia.¹³ Ismail Ahmed and Reginald Habold Green (1999) explain the dynamics in the following terms:

the Somali social and political structure consists, loosely, of clan families and clans which subdivide into sub-clans, primary lineages, and 'dia-paying' groups. The dia-paying group (Jilib/Bah) is the most stable unit with a membership of groups of families ranging from a few hundred to more than a thousand. The members of each dia-paying group have an informal contractual agreement to support one another and to share payments. The term 'dia-paying' implies that families within the group have a collective responsibility for settling acts committed by, or against, their members. Membership in a clan does not automatically give one certain rights and obligations, rather they are negotiated and agreed in unwritten contracts. The groups rarely have single 'traditional leaders', opting instead for a council of elders who have collective responsibilities. Throughout the colonial administration, elders were appointed and paid to act as the legitimate representatives of their respective groups.¹⁴

Somalia's complex social formation provided a veritable ground for a system of a 'strong clan' and a 'weak state', in which competing warlords carved out 'ungoverned spaces' and amassed a war infrastructure capable of outwitting one another and thus eventually leading to the collapse of the state. The adoption of state socialism under the regime of Mohammed Siad Barre, though initially welcome by the masses especially in 1970s and 1980s, eventually failed to provide a strong basis for state-building. External influences and proxy politics, particularly during the Cold War, contributed to creating a volatile environment in which warlords could prosper and challenge the formal state. The collapse of the Somali state and the emergence of warlord politics were underpinned by a multitude of factors.¹⁵ First was the deep-rooted post-colonial fragmentation of Somaliland based on divergent colonial entities, which has fueled regional discontent between the southern region and Somaliland to the north. Second was a structural factor culminated by the military coup of 1969 and the subsequent adoption of socialist policy by Barre's regime.

Under Siad Barre, Somalia gradually descended into an authoritarian state that resulted in the politics of social exclusion, political polarization and massive impoverishment of the wealthy clansmen. Clans such

as Majerteen, who were opposed to Barre's regime's elaborate system of patronage and state socialism as a formula for downplaying the clan system, became targets of state repression and exclusion. In April 1978, officers loyal to General Barre foiled an attempted coup staged by senior officers of Majerteen descent. Thereafter, these senior officers escaped to Ethiopia and formed a rebel movement known as the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). With the support of Ethiopia, SSDF carried out insurgency operations against the regime in Mogadishu. In response, the Barre regime carried out reprisal attacks on the Majerteen clansmen within Somalia. These reprisals were aimed at stemming the ethnic support base of the rebels and deterring other clans from staging similar rebellion. This deterrence proved abortive. In 1981, a group of former army officers, traders, religious leaders, intelligentsia, youths and elders from the Isaaq clan formed their own rebel movement known as the Somali National Movement. In 1987, during the Hawiye-dominated rebel movement, the United Somali Congress, based in Italy, was formed. Further, in 1989, the Ogadeni-led Somali Patriotic Movement was formed following the arrest of General Gabyo, the then Minister of Defense and the highest-ranking Ogadeni officer in the regime of General Barre. Facing a raft of rebel movements exerting enormous pressure on the capacity and prestige of the state, Barre's government became hollow and gradually lost legitimacy. By 1991, the Somali state had formally ceased to exist.¹⁶

The third factor relates to an environmental crisis, more particularly the protracted famine and drought of the 1970s, compounded by cost-cutting state policies. The devastating drought in 1974–1975 killed 20,000 people and displaced a significant fraction of the nomadic population who were forced to register in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. The famine was further exacerbated by the regime's unrepentant socialist drive, which resulted in economic disruption, food insecurity and the collapse of vital infrastructure. The closure of trading relations with neighboring countries, introduction of food rationing system and price regulations all aggravated the situation. The final factor is external influence. Somalia's weak status and its geo-strategic location in the region had rendered it a battle ground for proxy war, especially during the Cold War. This enabled the two main powers, the United States and Soviet Union, to engage in a strategic power play. The Ogaden War (July 1977–March 1978) between Somalia and Ethiopia provided a classic example of how superpowers switched and manipulated allies to achieve their geo-strategic goals. The defeat of Ethiopia by Somalia unleashed a new wave of crisis within Somali

society, leading to the eventual collapse of the Barre regime in 1991.¹⁷ The foregoing factors had implications for the future emergence of the jihadist movement as epitomized in the current Al-Shabaab insurgency as we shall see in the next section.

AL-SHABAAB: AN ANATOMY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The collapse of institutions of governance and political fragmentation facilitated the incubation of the radical Islamists group known as Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Al-Shabaab, loosely meaning '*the Youth*' in Arabic, is an Al-Qaeda-linked militant group largely comprised of far-right *Salafist* and *Wahhabist* youth fighting for the creation of a theocratic state, or Caliphate, in Somalia. The rise of Al-Shabaab in Somalia has exacerbated the problems of lawlessness and total anarchy in the region.¹⁸ The group, also known as *Harakat Al-Shabaab al Mujahideen* (loosely) translated as 'Movement of Striving Youth', held sway over Mogadishu and some parts of its southern region. The exact circumstances of Al-Shabaab's origins are still widely debated among researchers.¹⁹ A number of radical elements who later became prominent figures in the group had already functioned as a small Salafi jihadi cell in Somaliland with links to *Masjid Jaama*, the main Hargeysa Mosque. Others had created spheres of influence in the southern towns of Ras Kambani, and many had been with either Salafi jihadi groups in its Gedo, Bay, Bakol, Galgaduud and Puntland strongholds while others remain among the Somali diaspora. These radicalized figures gathered in early 2003 in Mogadishu at a time when the resurgent business community displayed increased support for the rapid growth of the clan and *Sharia* (Islamic law) Islamic courts as an alternative to the warlords and militia campaigns that had devastated the city since the early 1990s. Al-Shabaab was later formed at a workshop known as 'Nasruddin garage' under the protection of the Sharia court.²⁰

Sheik Hassan Dahir Awey, who fought Ethiopia under the Siad Barre regime in the 1970s, founded the group and commanded the military wing of the *Al-Itti had Al-Islami* and later took over the leadership of the Islamic Court Union (ICU). Later in 2006, Awey handed over the military command of Al-Shabaab to Aden Hashi Ayro, a young Somali militant who was subsequently killed by a US missile strike in 2008. Ahmed Abdi Godane took over as Al-Shabaab's top commander after the death of Ayro. In September 2014, the US military confirmed it had killed Godane in a coordinated and targeted airstrike in Somalia, and the group's

leadership was handed over to Ahmed Umar.²¹ Though the African Union (AU) military campaign has weakened the group, it still constitutes a major threat to the already war-torn and politically volatile country. Al-Shabaab's terrorist activities focused on targets within Somalia, and it recently has expanded its operations across borders, including suicide bombings in Uganda in 2010, a coordinated attack on Nairobi Westgate Mall in 2013 as well as the attack on Garissa University on 2 April 2015, killing 148 and injuring 79.²² It is worthy to note that Al-Shabaab attacks Kenya largely in retaliation to Kenya's robust counter-insurgency drive in the Horn of Africa and its prominent role in AU peacekeeping initiative in the region.

Hansen (2013) in his book *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamic Group* divides Al-Shabaab's history into distinct transformative phases.²³ The first phase is from 2003 to 2006 when Al-Shabaab emerged as a small network. Although it was not then a formalized organization, the name Al-Shabaab was already circulating in Mogadishu at that time. A number of Al-Qaeda figures were instrumental to Al-Shabaab's early history, including Abu Talha al Sudani, Fazul Abdullahi Mohammed and Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan. Al-Shabaab's interpretation of jihad is twofold: on the one hand, there is the offensive jihad, which aims to change the world and on the other is the defensive jihad, which focuses on the protection of the *Ummah* (Muslim community). Defensive or reformist jihadists, wanting to eliminate all divisive barriers in the Ummah and create the Caliphate, have initially flirted with the idea of supporting Al-Shabaab—especially at the early stage of the movement—but this has since proved to be a desperate and counter-productive stance.²⁴ The extreme ideology, rebellious nature and scorched earth policy of Al-Shabaab have since decimated any hope among moderate reformists of deploying Al-Shabaab as a force for gradual change.

The second phase in the emergence of Al-Shabaab relates to the role of Somalia's ICU. Al-Shabaab is an offshoot of *Al-Itti had Al-Islami* ('Unity of Islam'), which was a militant Salafi group that emerged following the demise of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. The group sought to establish an Islamist state in Somalia and was partly funded by Al-Qaeda. Subsequently, in 2003, a rift ensued between *Al-Itti had Al-Islami*'s moderate old guard and its hardliner younger members who sought to create a 'Greater Somalia' under a strict Islamic rule. The hardliners later joined forces with an alliance of Sharia courts, referred to as the ICU, to form Al-Shabaab. The political fragmentation in the country created a vacuum for warlordism leaving the civilian populace to the whims of warlords. The capacity of the

state to implement social order and justice totally disintegrated, and so the extremists' implementation of Sharia law was widely embraced as a good alternative to the warlords' form of justice.²⁵ However, the ICU collapsed following the Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia. In December 2006, Ethiopia invaded Somalia and ousted the ICU at the request of Somalia's transitional government. This invasion serves as a turning point in the radicalization of Al-Shabaab. Galvanized by the invasion of Somalia by both Ethiopia and Kenya, the group transformed itself into a most lethal terrorist group in the Horn of Africa. They began organizing guerilla warfare including bombings, assassinations and suicide attacks on Ethiopian forces and gained control over large swathes of territory in central and southern parts of Somalia, which gained Al-Shabaab much coverage in the international press (such as *Aljazeera* based in Qatar).

The rising wave of attacks in Somalia and part of the Horn of Africa is largely associated with Al-Shabaab. By the end of 2007, Al-Shabaab's terrorist activity grew in terms of frequency of attack partly due to deep-rooted corruption in the Somali security sector, especially the disgruntled police force that suffered from dismal conditions of service, poor equipment and low morale. In addition, allegations of jihadist and militia infiltration of the Somali Police and the Army have created internal tensions, suspicion and collapse of regimentation among officers and men. Furthermore, the withdrawal of the Ethiopian military in 2009 prompted a massive territorial expansion of Al-Shabaab, because there was no alternative state authority that could contain them. As Al-Shabaab captured more territory in Somalia, it claimed allegiance to the Al-Qaeda franchise and began to impose a coercive quasi governance structure that included tax collection in Kismayo and establishing Sharia courts.

Since 2013, Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya have escalated compared to other countries in the Horn of Africa. In September 2013, the group attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi and subsequently Garissa University on 2 April 2015, leaving more than 147 students dead. Its attack on the Kenyan university suggests that the Somali militant group may have internationalized its cause and joined the global jihadi expansionist ambition according to some observers.²⁶ Such attacks highlight the need for a strategic global response to counterterrorism in the region. However, it is worthy to note that the local content and intrinsic ambitions of Al-Shabaab as a local, nationalized terror organization remain fairly solid and steady: around the same time as the Garissa attack, the group was holding lectures in small towns in northeastern Kenya, discussing how it would provide better governance than the Kenyan government.

MOTIVES, IDEOLOGY AND SOURCE OF FUNDING

Al-Shabaab's motives vary and are clustered around a wide range of grievances. The group is driven largely by local grievances and self-defense aimed at keeping westerners out of Somalia and helping to stoke rebellion in troubled spots such as Yemen.²⁷ Hansen argues that Al-Shabaab had a local agenda but has also enjoyed wide acceptance outside of Somalia.²⁸ Initially, Al-Shabaab's primary goals were confined to overthrowing an unpopular, Western-backed Somali government and expelling AU peace-keepers out of Somalia. But its recent sporadic attacks beyond the shores of Somalia may indicate that the militant group is alternating between populist and terrorist tendencies committed to violence. Al-Shabaab has struggled throughout its existence to manage two competing impulses: the desire to govern Somalia and the desire to draw the attention and support of Al-Qaeda and other international terrorist groups. The aspiration to govern is essentially aimed at maintaining territorial control and coexisting with Somalia's clans in order to achieve a significant degree of political legitimacy.²⁹ The ideology of Al-Shabaab is largely *Salafist* and *Wahhabist* that strike a chord with the global jihadi movement and *Al-Qaeda* fraternity. Al-Shabaab's ideology trades the pattern of global terror network in terms of their insistence on puritan Islamic belief (as opposed to *Sufi* orders and *Shi'ism*); strict adherence to *Qur'an* and *Sunna* (the saying, action and tacit approval of Prophet Muhammad) along with the traditions of the pious predecessors of the Prophet—*Salaf-al-Salih*. In addition, Al-Shabaab's opposition to Western modernity and abhorrence of 'obscene materialism' seems to tally with those of Al-Qaeda and allied terror cells. However, it appears flight from modernity and luxury is a rhetorical façade: in reality, the leadership of Al-Shabaab lives in relative luxury and patronizes modern technology—especially information and communication technology—to transmit its message to the wider world.

In recent years, Al-Shabaab has developed multiple sources of funds both domestically and internationally to finance its terrorist attacks: extortion of local businesses is a big source of revenue. And some of the attacks in Mogadishu have been the enforcement of this protection racket. Businesses that don't pay up get hit by an attack. Finances from state sponsors including countries such as Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Syria and Qatar help fund Al-Shabaab.³⁰ At home, the group has over the years built a substantial racketeering operation in the seaport of Kismayo and controls the economy. This southern port city is strategic to Al-Shabaab's illicit

charcoal trading. Illegal export of charcoal is accompanied by the group's massive importation of sugar, which is subsequently smuggled into Kenya. Tens of thousands of tons of contraband sugar worth hundreds of thousands of dollars may be smuggled into Kenya daily according to a UN report.³¹ There are allegations that Al-Shabaab has been cooperating with rogue elements in the Kenyan Army and border agencies to export charcoal. However, Kenya's recent crackdown on Al-Shabaab seems to have changed Al-Shabaab's fortunes. According to Kambere reports that followed Al-Shabaab's conquest of Kismayo in 2008, the group collected over one million US dollars quarterly.³²

Besides the considerable income Al-Shabaab receives through heavy taxes on imports and exports, militants also systematically collect taxes from farmers on Kismayo's outskirts. In March 2010, the [Somalian] government's Minister of Agriculture, Muhammad Ibrahim Habsade, claimed that Al-Shabaab was extorting \$150 per hectare from farmers in the fertile Lower Shabelle Valley and blamed the group's predations for a decrease in agricultural production.³³

THE DRIVERS OF AL-SHABAAB JIHADISM IN SOMALIA

A careful review of existing literature and a diagnosis of the Somali crisis reveal that several factors emerge as drivers of Al-Shabaab's terrorism in Somalia and neighboring countries. These include the following:

Political Dynamics Descent into total anarchy and the subsequent emergence of Somalia as a fragile state since 1991 have created the enabling political space for Al-Shabaab. The dominant actors have gradually been transformed into full-fledged terrorist groups over time. The success of the ICU's offensive against Somali warlords cleared the path for the emergence of Al-Shabaab. Over the years, Al-Shabaab has developed the ability and flexibility to adapt militarily and politically in its renewed terror attacks on ethnic Somalis in neighboring countries who are perceived to be opposed to the group's mission. A recent example is the group's social media rebranding, when it purportedly launched its terrorism campaign on Twitter in December 2011. Al-Shabaab's Twitter feed was targeted at countering the much-publicized Twitter feed maintained by the Kenyan military that has used the micro-blogging service to warn Somalia civilians about air raids.³⁴

Economic Motivation The social fragmentation of Somalia into a weak state has enabled several illegitimate economic activities to thrive and provide the platform for illicit enterprise under the protection of Al-Shabaab. Local businesses, men and farmers often pay a tax or protection levy in areas under the control of Al-Shabaab. For instance, prior to the withdrawal of Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu, ‘taxes’ extorted from traders at Bakara and Suq Ba’ad markets provided an important source of revenue for the violent extremist group. Kambere reports that in 2011 ‘Al-Shabaab collects an estimated USD \$35–50 million annually in custom tolls and taxes on businesses in Kismayo and two secondary ports higher up the coast’.³⁵

Religious Motivation Islam remains the single unifying factor among all Somalis who have traditionally been divided along clan lines. Al-Shabaab took advantage of the discourse of Islam and sought to use it to mobilize support among Somalia’s disaffected population and diaspora. The group exploits the advantage of decades of *Salafi-Wahhabi* proselytization (*Daa’wa*) in Somalia, which preaches a radicalized version of Islam. This allows an entrenched social conservatism and ideological support for the group.³⁶ Despite the religious inclinations of some of these VNSAs like Al-Shabaab, the nature and dynamics of their terrorism campaign is not a conflict driven by religion but is rooted in decades of marginalization and poverty orchestrated by its post-independence leaders. Uneducated and unemployed youth are more susceptible to the militia’s recruiting methods, especially when they offer a simple worldview ostensibly based around material theology as in Al-Shabaab or, for example, Boko Haram in Nigeria. Too often, these groups make reference to the obscene lifestyles of corrupt public officials and contrast them with the modest lifestyle of the Prophet Muhammad and his Caliphs. The conflict, often politically motivated, may later take on a social dimension where unskilled, illiterate young men who have limited economic opportunities are attracted to the violent non-state groups as an alternative to rural and urban poverty and unemployment and provide grounds for self-esteem in a region where people feel socially excluded by the ruling elites.³⁷

THE GEOPOLITICS OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA

The implications of the geopolitics of intervention by both global and regional actors such as the United States paved the way for the origin of violent extremist groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The genesis of the

conflict and emergence of VNSAs in Somalia go back to colonialism and the intrigues that prevailed all over Africa's border demarcations. The Anglo-Italian Boundary Commission agreed to the treaty of London of 25 July 1924 to demarcate the boundary between the Protectorate of Kenya and Italian Somaliland. At the dawn of Kenya's independence, the Somalis living in Kenya were unanimous in that they wanted to be part of a greater Somalia. The British government failed to honor the wishes of the Somalis as the independence negotiations got underway. The succeeding post-independence Kenyan governments have made little effort to develop the region retaining its brand as 'bandit-prone'. Ethiopia, on the other hand, had its Ogaden region claimed by Somalia. As early as 1954, Somalia and Ethiopia were already hostile neighbors engaged in territorial skirmishes. To Mogadishu, the Anglo-Ethiopia Treaty of 1954 was not binding, and they saw it as nothing more than trickery, denying Somalis in Ethiopia their right to self-determination. A full-fledged Ethiopia–Somalia border conflict, the 1977–1978 Ogaden War, ensued with an estimated death toll of over 40,000 people.³⁸

The then Somali leader General Mohammed Siad Barre had sensed weaknesses within the Ethiopian government, at the time under Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, and decided to exploit the opportunity by invading the Ogaden Region in the quest for 'greater Somalia'. It is during this war that the intensity of geopolitics played out. Between 1962 and 1977, the Soviets had advanced to Somalia military aid worth \$87 million.³⁹ During the initial stages of the conflict, the Soviets supported both sides. Ultimately though, Mengistu's Marxist policies won over the Soviets and the Americans abandoned Barre. The United States had been Ethiopia's main ally, seeking to have access to the Indian Ocean and to checkmate events in the volatile Middle East. Somalia lost the Ogaden War with Ethiopia (July 1977–March 1978), much as it lost in the 'Shifta War' (1963–1967) with Kenya—a secessionist war of ethnic Somalis in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya that attempted to break away from Kenya and join Somalia with the support of the latter. These two losses greatly undermined the 'Greater Somalia' agenda and opened the country to international manipulation. However, some commentators argue that it was the other way around: that both Ethiopian and Somali leaders manipulated the major powers in pursuing their national and regional agendas. The major powers, on the other hand, used these countries in the Horn to pursue their own geo-strategic agendas in the region. Thus, Somalia's failed expansionist campaigns and its twist of fortune in superpower politics negatively affected the country and culminated in the collapse of the Siad Barre regime and, later, the whole post-colonial Somali state.⁴⁰

Somalia's strong expansionist tendencies, as revealed by the Ogaden War, exposed the intricate global and continental African geopolitical interests at play. Subsequently, the long history of the Kenya-Ethiopia Defense Pact remains as relevant today as it was at its first signing in 1964. The countries viewed Somalia as a threat to the region. The quest for 'Greater Somalia' by Mogadishu had on several occasions laid claim to parts of northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia mainly inhibited by members of the Somali community is what led to the defense treaty.⁴¹

IMPLICATIONS OF US-BACKED WARLORDS

It is pertinent to note that the geopolitics of intervention in Somalia and the Horn does not end with Ethiopia and Kenya. International manipulations and US-backed warlords also played a role in the emergence of Al-Shabaab as a VNSA that threaten the Horn of Africa. Siad Barre ruled Somalia with strong-arm tactics for 22 years (1969–1991). He was overthrown in 1991 by a cluster of clan leaders whose support, though unconfirmed, has largely been viewed as emanating from Kenya and Ethiopia. Barre went into exile in Nigeria and died in 1995. Somalia's political power structure spiraled into a vacuum and paved the way for a fratricidal war between diverse clans and warlords. Somalia's centralized state system collapsed. The disintegration of the legitimate authority and state structure helped foster what would become the world's most violent and extremist country as warlords, pirates and radical Islamists found a haven in Somalia. Seeking to turn the tide, the United States, which had declared its 'War on Terror' after the 9/11 attacks, was keen to keep Islamic radicalism at bay and sought to take advantage of the situation by funding warlords in Somalia through its Nairobi base. As Wax and de Young report (2006),

more than a decade after US troops withdrew from Somalia following a disastrous military intervention, officials of Somalia's interim government and some US analysts of Africa policy say the United States has returned to the African country, secretly supporting secular warlords who have been waging fierce battles against Islamic groups for control of the capital, Mogadishu (our emphasis).⁴²

Paradoxically, against the protest of Somali officials, the United States clandestinely backed Somali warlords, who have styled themselves as a 'counterterrorism coalition' in an open bid for American support. In response, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States

would ‘work with responsible individuals...in fighting terror. It’s a real concern of ours—terror taking root in the Horn of Africa’.⁴³ McCormack further stresses: ‘We don’t want to see another safe haven for terrorists created. Our interest is purely in seeing Somalia achieve a better day’.⁴⁴ Such a strategic error on the part of the United States significantly contributed to laying the foundations for an institutionalization of violence and created an impetus for the emergence of terrorism in Somalia. The 1998 bombing of the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya highlighted the active Al-Qaeda presence in fragmented Somalia. In 2004, the international community came up with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) after diplomatic negotiations in Addis Ababa, Djibouti and Nairobi. By 2005, a new grouping to counter the TFG was formed. The ICU emerged and was short-lived as its agenda of an Islamic ‘Caliphate’ threatened not only the regional governments but also the United States and the EU.

Global geopolitics, with the influence of the United States, branded the ICU as a radical group. This paved the way for the Ethiopian military invasion in 2006. Even though the United States had backed the Ethiopian invasion, Ethiopia was also invading Somalia for its own political ambitions. One of these aims was routing out the ICU perceived to be Eritrea’s proxy and sympathetic to the rebel groups operating from Somalia with the ‘Greater Somalia’ agenda. Ethiopia’s incursion into Somalia laid the foundation for a full-fledged African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007. AMISOM was building on the 2005 regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission to Somalia. In late 2011, the United Nations Security Council condemned Eritrea for funding and arming terrorist groups in the region. Both Ethiopia and Kenya had for some time accused Eritrea of financing Al-Shabaab. The Ethiopian occupation of Somalia brought down the ICU, which later split into two: moderate elements of the ICU abandoned radicalism and joined the TFG while the extremists founded Al-Shabaab. In less than a decade, Al-Shabaab has transformed itself from a local terrorist organization into a lethal regional VNSA that continues to undermine regional security in the Horn and eastern Africa.⁴⁵

REGIONAL INITIATIVES AND COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN SOMALIA

Somalia has become a centerpiece of counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa, and the military policy posture has largely undermined much of the hope and sustainable regional cooperation in the region that

the United States had once envisaged. The United States led a humanitarian intervention in 1992 that ended in a disaster when 18 soldiers were killed. Since then, both US and UN operations declined in Somalia. For the next 13 years, the United States basically withdrew from active involvement in Somali politics, focusing only on proxy engagement, providing intelligence for UN-backed AU forces.⁴⁶ Since July 2015, two decades after Black Hawk Down, US special operation forces are back in Somalia. The US presence in the strategic port city of Kismayo in war-torn southern Somalia is to provide intelligence support for the AU forces as they battle Al-Shabaab. The secretive outpost in Kismayo is one of several locations for US special operations forces bases. The Somali government and AMISOM officials confirmed the existence of a clandestine American cell in Baledogle, the site of an abandoned Cold War era Air Force base in Somalia.⁴⁷ However, the US military and intelligence presence in Somalia is not always secretive: there are also quite a few US military operatives hanging out almost openly in Mogadishu. The sight of a US flag is not uncommon in certain strategic locations in the city.

In the short term, the military action by the AU under the mandate of the AU Mission in Somalia has tremendously reversed Al-Shabaab's gains, yet the group has remained resilient in its brazen attacks within Somalia and the Horn generally. AMISOM began an offensive operation on 5 March 2014 by driving Al-Shabaab out of dozens of major south-central towns in which eight of those towns were taken by the 4,000 strong Ethiopian troops. The current military surge and offensive by the AMISOM will have achieved its immediate objectives of thwarting Al-Shabaab's gains. The AMISOM offensive has now ceased but since then, Al-Shabaab has retaken much of the territory it previously lost. There is an important point here: though AMISOM has the mandate and tactics to push Al-Shabaab back, it lacks the staying power to consolidate control over territory. AMISOM and the Somali troops do not have the capacity. Therefore, despite the military offensive against Somalia's Islamist militants and Al-Qaeda affiliates, a total defeat of Al-Shabaab appears elusive. Indeed, Al-Shabaab's recent attacks in the Horn of Africa indicate that its armed unit often retreats to remote rural enclaves, exploiting entrenched and ever-changing clan-based competition and co-opting other groups of radicalized extremist elements to carry out its terrorist attacks in urban Somalia and in neighboring Kenya.⁴⁸

This underscores the need to push for a socio-political strategy to tackle Al-Shabaab's terrorist violence, which has spread across the region. Military strategy alone can only achieve short-term goals on the ground.

This is what the United States and its regional allies on counterterrorism should know. Fighting the kind of radicalization epitomized by Al-Shabaab means tackling the basic problems affecting Somalia today: lack of a legitimate governance structure and providing citizens with opportunities to prosper. While military solutions may be effective in the short term as a strategy against terrorism, it also has its downsides, especially in situations where it triggers collateral damage with heavy civilian casualties. In such situations, the use of military force may exacerbate radicalization and cyclical violence as the case of Somalia indicates. Thus, an effective global response to terrorism needs to focus on tackling the structural causes of terrorism, which include marginalization and exclusion of certain communities from economic opportunities and participatory decision-making, corruption and bad governance. Such structural weakness of the post-colonial state in Africa provides radical Islamists with the raw material to perpetuate their propaganda of violent extremism and anti-modernity. During a press briefing at the Pentagon in early July 2015, US President Barrack Obama affirmed this perspective by stating that fighting global terrorism is not simply a military effort; instead, it requires tackling the political and the economic grievances often exploited by terrorists.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

This chapter traced the history and the dynamics of state disintegration and anarchy in Somalia that provided the enabling environment for the emergence of VNSAs, namely Al-Shabaab. It argued that the fragmentation and ultimate collapse of the state fostered and nurtured the emergence of the current violent jihadist movement in the country. In spite of numerous military initiatives to counter the spread of Al-Shabaab, the group continues to unleash terrorist violence against innocent civilians within Somalia and the neighboring countries, especially Kenya. The UN-backed regional coalition against Al-Shabaab has made some progress.

The rise of Al-Shabaab as a VNSA was dotted by its association with progressive forces in Somalia. The group was formed in 2004 and, in 2006, became a member of the ICU, a coalition of moderate forces seeking to provide a platform for inclusive governance in Somalia. The ICU failed as a result of internal contradictions. Subsequently, Al-Shabaab played a key role in the uprising against the military invasion by Ethiopia to overthrow the ICU in 2007, which led to Ethiopia's withdrawal from Somalia. Al-Shabaab's partial retreat following AMISOM's military assault

from 2009 to 2011 consolidated the group's emergence and profiling as one of the most dangerous armed insurgent groups in the world. The chapter argued that while a military solution may evidently achieve short-term counterterrorism gains against Islamist groups such as Al-Shabaab, this has largely proven to be an inadequate approach to counterterrorism in the 'global war on terror' in the long term.

There is a need for a global counterterrorism framework of action that addresses the structural causes of violent extremism. In this perspective, political and economic grievances are the most grotesque elements of this problem. The bigger threats to global peace and security are diverse and basically non-military in nature. Thus, the global spread of militant extremism is deeply rooted in the deepening local, regional and global socio-economic inequality. Today, rising inequality, marginalization of youths and social exclusion arising from the complex processes of globalization constitute an existential threat to world peace. It also provides the enabling environment for the emergence of VNSAs such as Al-Shabaab. As we demonstrated in this chapter, Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world where the disintegration of the state starting in 1991 provided the social, political and economic context for the rise of a VNSA, which drew most of its fighting force from among the disgruntled youths in Mogadishu and the countryside. Countering Al-Shabaab's presence in the Horn of Africa and beyond will require both global and regional concerted efforts to reduce socio-economic and political inequalities that allowed the terror group to thrive in the first place.

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CHAPTER 12

Pirates in West Africa and Somalia

Clayton D. Allen

INTRODUCTION

Although the issue of Somali piracy has received much more international attention, since 2009, the main center of African piracy has in fact been located in West Africa, primarily in the Gulf of Guinea. The causes and consequences of piracy in these two areas are vastly different, but they do share some basic commonalities. Both are at least in part the result of poor economic prospects of legitimate work and the lack of a governmental or regional capability able to contain the activities of pirates, which has allowed them to grow far beyond what one should have anticipated, if there was an effective government response.

This chapter will give a brief overview of the history of piracy in the two regions before exploring the root causes of modern piracy. Next, the efforts to counter piracy will be examined, and the two conceptual models (failed state vs. regional) for dealing with piracy are explained. Finally, based on the above, recommendations and predictions for the future are discussed, with the continued suppression of Somali piracy likely to continue as the situation in West Africa will remain poor.

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MOTIVES FOR PIRACY

The key point of any discussion of piracy in a context adjacent to rebels, terrorists, warlords and the like is that piracy has one attribute that makes it completely and utterly different from other forms of violent and criminal operations by non-state actors. In almost all situations pirates have a pure profit motive. They do not espouse any sort of political or religious ideology, except on the occasions when they must operate from an area where local support for their activities is weak and they must then pay lip service to the local grievance of convenience in order to placate the population. Piracy therefore is fundamentally an economic, not a political activity. While other groups of rebels and terrorists might lose their way and become enticed by profit to become little more than gangs with an ideology, piracy always begins and remains a fundamentally economic activity.

This has a significant effect on how the international community and policy makers must consider and contextualize piracy when compared to other forms of violence prevalent in post-colonial Africa. While rebel groups, warlords and terrorists are predominantly the results of local social and political grievances, which do contain an element of economic motivations, piracy is a direct reflection of the economic issues of the affected states and region. Few people are generally happy to become crewmen on these high-risk pirate operations, but when overfishing has destroyed the livelihoods of local fishermen or infrastructure/economic issues make it impossible for individuals involved in maritime trade to earn a living, they often have little viable economic alternatives. The other factor to consider is that there must be an area with a maritime tradition in order to give rise to significant amounts of piracy. Those with no maritime experience would be unable to sail a small, light raiding vessel through 3- to 7-foot swells to attack and then scale at least 20 feet of steel in rolling seas to attack a cargo ship.¹ Thus, the two essential elements required are a maritime tradition that provides a pool of experienced sailors and an economy that makes legitimate economic activity unviable or possible to the extent of providing for one's family and offering a path to rising above subsistence level.

ROOTS OF PIRACY IN SOMALIA

The political history of Somalia is well known to most in the West as one of weakness and collapse, with the combination of the warlords and famine in the 1990s, leading to a total political breakdown that has yet to be

resolved. Somalia has become the quintessential ‘failed state’.² This was developed in the preceding chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, only the history of Somalia since the Barre regime took power in 1969 will be discussed. With regard to maritime matters, however, it is important to note Somalia’s ancient seafaring history, of which piracy was always a part, stretching back into the first century AD and almost certainly further back into the mists of antiquity.³ The geographical location of northern Somalia has historically made it a key port area and the narrowness of the *Bab al-mandeb* straight and the Gulf of Aiden forces cargo ships passing through this area into a relatively confined path. In ancient times, this meant that not only were there only a few predictable paths for ships but also they would be relatively close to shore, thus making it easier for land-based pirates to spot and raid the passing ships. Due to the economic opportunity afforded by piracy, there has always existed at least a low level of such crime in this area. Thus, Somalia could be said to have a pirate subculture stretching back thousands of years.⁴

This does, of course, beg the question of why piracy in an area that has historically been home to pirates has flared up again, particularly in the past decade. Why not 20 years ago or during the Somali Civil War, when the warlords and factions were weaponizing famine and terrorizing the population in an effort to carve out their own little kingdoms?⁵ There are several reasons that explain why the explosion of piracy witnessed at the end of the 2000s occurred, but to understand them, we must first examine Somalia’s recent political and economic history. Somalia, like much of Africa, was once a player in the chess match of the Cold War.⁶ Granted independence by the British in 1960, Somalia experienced a military coup in 1969 that established the Siad Barre regime, which was a quasi-socialist regime that also incorporated local traditions and Islamic beliefs into their hybrid ideology.⁷ They were a Soviet client state until the USSR reversed their support in 1977–1978 during the Ogaden war with Ethiopia, whereby Somalia sought to become an American client state.⁸ The regime was weakened by a slow economic deterioration that resulted from both the ongoing conflicts and issues with Ethiopian-backed rebels in the 1980s and the withdrawal of Soviet economic and military support.⁹ Eventually, the regime collapsed and the Somali Civil War began in 1990. Various rebel groups had been in conflict with the army since 1988 and in 1991 they finally succeeded in causing the collapse of the Barre regime. Rather than a victory for the rebels, the collapse of Siad Barre’s authoritarian regime plunged Somalia into an even more intense and chaotic period

of violence, as the former rebels and warlords all vied for personal power and control, carving up the state into their own personal fiefdoms. It is also important to note that during the Cold War era, the major powers supplied their client states in the Horn of Africa (Somalia and Ethiopia) with enormous weaponry to fuel their proxy wars, especially the Ogaden conflict of 1977–1978. The accumulation of weapon systems in the region, the collapse of Siad Barre's regime and the rise of internecine conflict between rival warlords in Somalia provided the national and regional context for piracy in the Horn of Africa.

However, the dramatic surge in piracy occurred in the mid- to late 2000s. Some of the factors are economic; after a decade as a failed state, there is little large-scale economic activity in Somalia. Poverty is more than rampant, with the former minister of the Interior for Puntland Mohamed Kalombi claiming ‘there is very high unemployment here, almost 100 per cent, with no factories or industry’ in an interview in 2014.¹⁰ Unless someone is lucky enough to be born into a fishing or farming family, there is little other economic activity in many coastal towns.¹¹ The problems surrounding the fishing industry are growing worse, as chronic overfishing by both locals and, to a huge extent, foreign fishermen that illegally catch in Somalia waters with impunity have devastated many fisheries and fishing stocks, pushing down the already meager wages of the local fishermen.^{12,13} In fact, for many, this was the beginning of the current wave of piracy; after 1991, many Somali fishermen, unable to rely on government support to combat illegal foreign fishing incursions, started to arm themselves and board these illegal operators. They charged them a few thousand dollars as a ‘fine’ and then released them. Gradually, they ‘realized that the fishing fine was more lucrative than the fish’ and thus became full-time pirates.¹⁴ The only way to rise above grinding poverty for many in Puntland and the rest of Northern Somalia is piracy. A generation of Somalis has been exposed to chronic violence, also making them far more willing to engage in violence in turn and able to take the risks associated with piracy in order to make a living.¹⁵

ROOTS OF PIRACY IN WEST AFRICA

Piracy is not only prevalent in Somalia. Recently, it has become the scourge off the West Coast of Africa, particularly along the Nigerian coastline and the Gulf of Guinea. By April 2016, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) was recording an average of one pirate attack each week off the Nigerian coast.¹⁶ These attacks include not only kidnapping and hostage

taking but also robberies to steal oil or gas and even food. The average ransom paid for these ships is \$2 million per ship. According to the think tank Chatham House, these attacks could cost the Nigerian government \$1.5 billion a month in lost revenue.¹⁷ Overall in 2015, there were 54 pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea and 67 in 2014. The loss of revenues due to piracy has had a significant impact on several countries' economies and national budgets, with Benin alone seeing a 28% reduction in its revenues as a result of piracy.¹⁸ In addition, the attacks in West Africa have generally been more violent than in Somalia, as mugging and theft have become as prevalent as kidnap-for-ransom.¹⁹ Just like in Somalia, the causes for piracy are rooted in a violent history, poor economic prospects and, to an extent, foreign incursions and interference.

The political history of Nigeria is also extremely turbulent and violent, with multiple terrorist and secessionist movements continually undermining the government and corruption and poor infrastructure depriving the state of any chance of creating economic prosperity. To provide even a cursory summary of the secessionists, rebels, piracy, cults and other violent and/or criminal movements would require another volume. However, in the case of Nigeria, the rise of piracy occurred in parallel to the emergence of Boko Haram (see Chap. 2) and the failure of the peace settlement with the rebels based in the Niger Delta. The explosion of violence unleashed by the killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 came merely months after the southern rebel group Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) rejected a potential peace deal from the government.²⁰ While MEND eventually did agree to a settlement based on amnesty and payments from the government to remain peaceful, the end date of the agreement was always a ticking time bomb and the expiration of the amnesty coincided with the creation of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in 2016.²¹ The NDA, which insists on equitable redistribution of oil wealth through the principles of derivation and balanced federalism, has launched attacks against oil-producing facilities in the delta, affecting Nigeria's oil production.²² They have issued a number of demands in exchange for a peace deal, including that all oil-polluted areas of the Niger Delta must be restored and the communities receive compensation; the extension of the Niger Delta Amnesty Program and most recently for the establishment of a sovereign state of Niger Delta.²³ Therefore, the Nigerian government is facing rebellions on two fronts, a budget devastated by continued depressed global oil prices and flailing production, an ongoing drought in certain portions of the country and severe infrastructure issues that hamper virtually every sector of the Nigerian economy.

At the time of writing, global oil prices were under \$50 for Brent crude,²⁴ which has created a significant budgetary shortfall that is projected to double Nigeria's budget deficit for 2016 to roughly US\$11 billion.²⁵ The decision to invest billions of borrowed dollars into Nigeria's poor infrastructure will hopefully be a long-term boom to Nigeria and is necessary—although whether this will happen is uncertain. In the short term however, it is placing an enormous amount of strain on their ability to properly fund their navy and counter-piracy efforts. The poor state of Nigeria's transport infrastructure is also causing food shortages exacerbated by the ongoing drought in certain parts of the country. An example of this was the 2016 tomato shortage that was not just due to the spread of the *Tuta absoluta* moth²⁶ but also because over 50% of the tomatoes rot or are damaged before they reach market due to the slowness of the rails, poor roads and a near total lack of refrigerated containers.²⁷ This is but one prominent example of a dramatic lack of basic infrastructure hampering the economy and stability of the country.

According to Attah, the underlying problems prompting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea remain poverty and unemployment.²⁸ This makes crime an attractive prospect, despite the high risks associated with piracy. However, piracy is just the tip of the iceberg. Pirates are now associated with global criminal networks and agencies worth billions of dollars that require a coordinated international response.

PIRACY TACTICS AND TOLL

In spite of the divergent histories of piracy and the different socio-political climates fueling its presence and recent rise, there are still several commonalities between the Somali and West African branches of the pirate family. The largest commonality is their shared tactics, which are necessitated by both groups' desires to be as efficient as possible and the limitations of their available resources. In both West Africa and Somalia, piracy is commonly centered around large, slow vessels that act as the 'mother ship' for the lighter, smaller vessels that conduct the actual assaults against the targeted vessels.²⁹ The mother ships are typically older cargo vessels stolen or obtained cheaply or older shipping vessels acquired in a similar fashion. The mother ships operate as a floating support base for the smaller vessels, allowing them some protection from rough seas that would otherwise result in the more frequent loss of ships and lives. This is not to say that pirates must always be based out of a mother ship. In West Africa, the lack of an effective

naval presence and the fact that the target ships can often be attacked soon after leaving or before entering the harbor with their cargo make land-based raids a much more viable option than in much of Somalia.³⁰

Once the target vessel is sighted and identified, two to four of the smaller vessels race-in as quickly as possible to board the target.³¹ This multi-pronged ‘swarm’ attack is characteristic of land-based African militia groups as depicted in David Kilcullen’s ‘Out of the Mountains’.³² The goal is to board the ship as quickly as possible for several reasons: (1) In Somalia, the primary income for the pirates is not selling the cargo but on ransoming it and the ship back to the shipping company, which means that the vessel and crew must be taken with a minimum amount of violence and damage in order to ensure maximum value in the bargaining; (2) Once the crew has retreated to a safe room found on most vessels, it is extremely difficult to force them out unless a weakness in the design can be found or there is sufficient time to wait them out. Thus, the crew must be taken before they can retreat to the safe room; (3) In the event the crew is illegally holding weapons or have non-lethal defense systems at their disposal (such as high-powered water cannons that can occasionally swamp or roll a smaller vessel), they need to be captured before they can employ them. It is extremely difficult for a pirate crew to board a hostile ship that is prepared for their assault due to the comparatively high sides of most cargo vessels, which have the effect of acting as walls that must be scaled by the attackers.³³ In addition, the natural roll and pitch of the ship, combined with swells and any evasion maneuvers executed by the captain, make remaining close to the target vessel to board it exceedingly risky. As the smaller vessels could be damaged quite easily by the larger ship, it is imperative that the time that these vessels remain adjacent to the target ship be minimized as much as possible, wherein the vessel can retreat to a safe distance as soon as its crew has successfully boarded.

After the attack is successful and the crew are captured or forced into the safe room, the actions of the pirates sharply diverge based on the purpose of the attack. For the Somali pirates, the ship must be steered to the nearest port where it is generally held for the duration of the ransom negotiations. In Nigeria, this is also a possibility, although the pirates are unable to use a legitimate port and thus usually resort to locating a sufficiently desolate stretch of coast and anchoring offshore. If the purpose of the attack is to steal the cargo and depending on the size and nature of said cargo, the ship will either repeat the above procedure while the cargo is offloaded or the mother ship is used to hold the cargo and then return

to its home base to offload. The mother ship option generally takes a few hours to a day, while the land-based option can take from several days to a week.^{34,35} The ship is then generally abandoned and the crew that were not killed and are not being ransomed are released to steer their empty vessel to the nearest harbor.³⁶

The main difference between the two approaches is the issue of the crew; Somali piracy is dependent on ransom and thus the safety of the crew is of a much higher priority, while West African piracy is often much more violent. As they often do not need the crew, just the cargo, they are willing to employ a much higher level of violence compared to their Somali counterparts. The crews of target ships are also hindered in Nigerian waters and that of several other West African states, due to the fact that they cannot legally arm themselves nor carry armed escorts.³⁷ There have been some outliers in this trend, and West African pirates have taken hostages in the past, but this technique is rare due to the need to hold hostages for weeks to months, which would give the local governments an opportunity to locate their base or holding area. As there was no government in Somalia able to exercise control in the areas in and around Puntland, this was never a concern for the Somali pirates.

The human and financial toll of piracy is vastly different in the Somali and West African cases. As noted above, Somali piracy was and is far less of a danger to the crews they capture and has resulted in far fewer deaths. Furthermore, the ships that were targeted at the height of pirate activity were almost exclusively foreign. The prevalence of piracy had no negative impact on the economy of Puntland, as they were not inflicting any harm on their own economic interests but were in effect importing wealth into the region. This is not the case when dealing with West African piracy. Not only is West African piracy considered the most violent, accounting for eight out of nine vessels fired upon worldwide in 2014, but also the damage to the governments and local economies of West Africa has been significant.³⁸ Nigeria loses roughly \$1.5 billion a month to piracy, theft at sea, smuggling and fuel fraud.³⁹ In 2004, Nigerian waters saw the third-most pirate attacks in the world, begging the question of, over the decades, what the total losses caused by piracy have been.⁴⁰ In 2012, Benin lost 28% of its total government revenue due to a 70% decrease in trade coming through the Port of Cotonou, which accounts for roughly 40% of the national budget.⁴¹ While piracy in Benin did drop thanks to the joint venture with Nigeria, ‘Operation Prosperity’, piracy in other states has been increasing, spreading the financial costs further afield to more states in the Gulf of Guinea.

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Having established the general pattern of piracy and the difference between the Somali and West African models, this chapter now examines the responses of the domestic, regional and international partners and organizations.

The successful international campaign against Somali piracy has led to a drop in attacks and attempted attacks since 2013. In contrast, West African piracy is thriving and the predominantly national and regional efforts have resulted in far less success than what was hoped for.⁴² The primary issues are coordination and a severe lack of resources. Quite simply put, few if any of the states involved in the current counter-piracy efforts have a sufficiently large and well-trained navy necessary to hunt down pirates in their own territorial waters. The few that do lack established communication systems with their neighbors that would allow them to continue the pursuit of pirates across territorial waters in the timely fashion required. This pattern has been illustrated in the recent efforts and operations

The differences between the two approaches partially reflect the domestic political situations of the states being used as pirate bases. The lack of a real central government in Somalia meant that the problem was left to the international community to solve, even though it took a few years for the major states to take action. This sharply reduced any potential problems resulting from jurisdictional squabbles and the conflict of local laws with best anti-piracy practices. The international response was motivated by the important geo-strategic location of Somalia, which meant that piracy was a direct threat to large Western shipping interests and threatened to have a significant financial impact by disrupting the maritime insurance market.⁴³ Thus, when the international community took action, it did so with an adequate amount of resolve and resources to ensure positive results.

Unlike the Somali case where the international community had more or less free reign in creating and implementing its counter-piracy strategy, in West Africa, any international and regional assistance must adhere to the conditions of several central governments. This vastly complicates counter-piracy measures and makes the most important issue the matter of regional and international coordination. Attempts to convince close to a dozen governments as well as regional and national organizations to adapt and implement a roughly identical anti-piracy program have so far been unsuccessful.

These efforts have had wildly different results, with Somalia experiencing a more than 90% drop in piracy between 2012 and 2013⁴⁴—thanks almost exclusively to outside efforts—and Somalia has allowed several prisons to be built on its territory to house pirates in accordance with the UN’s Piracy Prisoner Transfer Program.⁴⁵ In 2014, an attempt was made to create an international task force or operation along the lines of Operation Atlantis in the Gulf of Guinea, but there was no appetite for such an operation among the international community.⁴⁶ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has established a center for coordination and cooperation between its member states to better combat piracy,⁴⁷ but as of mid-2016 has yet to show significant results.⁴⁸

TWO MODELS OF COUNTER-PIRACY OPERATIONS

There are two different models of countering piracy that could be useful in assessing piracy issues in the future: one is the ‘regional’ model and the other being the ‘failed state’ model. It appears that it is, in fact, easier to conduct successful counter-piracy operations when dealing with a failed state as opposed to addressing regional piracy with states that are fully or partially politically functional.

There are several advantages for the international community or regional organizations in the ‘failed state’ model: the absence of a government to defend their sovereignty and deny access to territorial waters—the international community can create its own strategy and implement it without needing to pander, accommodate or otherwise deal with a potentially hostile, corrupt or reticent government. Furthermore, the problems of corruption or of having to work around or suspend cooperation with a government due to political or human rights issues do not exist. Thus, the involved partner states are free to craft a policy that is determined by what is effective without political interference from the failed state, thereby allowing it to develop a strategy based on effectiveness as opposed to domestic political posturing. The partner or coalition states are then also better able to implement the selected strategy, with much less concern for staying strictly outside territorial waters in the pursuit of pirates.

The disadvantages are, of course, that any efforts must be taken from and use only the resources the invested parties are willing and able to supply. This will present problems when applying the lessons of Somalia to a region where the major world powers do not have a significant vested economic interest and where the regional powers lack sufficient naval resources

or the finances to employ private military companies with such resources. There is also the issue of donor fatigue and the unwillingness of many states to lend military forces to an operation that could potentially be dangerous, indefinite or unsuccessful. While in general the danger posed by pirates is relatively low, as most pirates will surrender when cornered by a naval vessel rather than attempt to fight it, there is still a chance of violence, particularly if states go beyond blue water operations and begin to chase pirates in shallow or so called ‘brown’ water environments. In addition, states are reticent to become entangled in a situation that threatens to drag on indefinitely. While the operations against Somali piracy were relatively short and decisive, other efforts have the potential to drag on for much longer. For example, the issue of piracy in the Strait of Malacca, between Indonesia and Malaysia, has been an ongoing issue for decades.⁴⁹ International and regional partners must be reassured that the issue of piracy in an area can be successfully suppressed and that it will not begin immediately again if the international/regional forces withdraw. Finally, the piracy problem has to be of a nature where successful suppression is possible for primarily maritime-based policing operations. Potential partners will not desire to get involved in land-based or military-style operations without significant self-interests involved, which usually means something more than economic losses are at stake. Thus, regions where piracy is a shallow water issue and the majority of raiding parties are both land-based and operate close to the shore are unlikely to receive meaningful international or regional aid, as is the case of the Gulf of Guinea. The entire problem of the ‘failed state’ model is that there must be an existence of conditions that creates an ability and willingness for regional or international coalitions to successfully act against piracy in or near the territorial waters of the failed state.

In contrast, the availability of local partners is both the greatest advantage and the greatest hindrance to countering piracy in the ‘regional’ model. It is an advantage because of the viability of local sovereign governments to pressure the pirates from a land-based perspective, which means that they are able to find the pirates’ primary ports, smuggling routes and black market partners and take actions to address the underlying economic motivations for piracy. Furthermore, the availability of local knowledge with regard to not only local waters but also methods of operation and operators can significantly increase the efficiency of counter-piracy operations.

However, there are also significant problems with the regional model. The issues range from forcing international partners or transnational organizations to dealing with human rights abusers and corrupt local officials who

can often benefit financially from piracy, to dealing with governments that fiercely guard their sovereignty, strictly enforce border regulations, may or may not be able/willing to pass recommended domestic laws and regulations and create additional levels of bureaucracy which can dramatically slow down or interrupt the implementation of the recommended counter-piracy strategies. The combination of these issues can poison efforts by outside partners to assist local governments and discourage such efforts altogether.

ROADMAP TO COUNTER PIRACY

Thus, based on the above analysis and keeping in mind the current failures of the West African efforts, the following recommendations should be implemented before the situation has an opportunity to deteriorate further. There must be concrete and significant efforts taken to prevent the transportation and sale of stolen cargo. If a pirate finds himself unable to sell the fruits of his labor, it will significantly reduce the currently large profit incentive that piracy offers. The business side of piracy must be made unprofitable if it is to be curbed. This will necessitate a crackdown on domestic black markets, particularly in Nigeria, and the larger multi-national corporations that operate in the area will likely also need to be brought in so that the legitimate, legal origin of products can be firmly established and the buying and selling of black market goods can no longer be winked at by corrupt businessmen and officials. This is an understandably tall order in certain countries, but it is necessary to remove the profit motive from piracy.

In addition to the above recommendation, it is also necessary to issue separate, additional recommendations for the Nigerian government due to its large size relative to other regional partners. The first and largest issue in Nigeria is corruption which is deeply embedded not only within the national bureaucracy, armed forces and intelligence agencies but also through patronage networks that percolate into the larger society. At present, there is significant evidence that not only have some government officials in Nigeria been turning a blind eye to piracy and the selling and transportation of stolen oil cargos but they also have actively assisted some crews for financial gain.⁵⁰ The most serious accusation that has been made is that some maritime officials have in the past supplied pirates with the timetables, cargo and routes the ships will be taking while in Nigerian waters, thus allowing them to perfectly time and execute an assault on the desired ship.⁵¹ While this has not been definitively proven, what is known is that the large black market for oil and illegal refineries that has been

allowed to exist in Nigeria's Niger Delta creates a cycle of corruption and piracy that must be stopped.

As the hub of the oil black market in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria will be the key state in working to deny the pirates easy access to the black markets necessary to sell their stolen goods, with oil being the most prominent.⁵² It is important to remember that the pirates lack the capability to ship stolen goods long distances; they do not have a fleet of cargo ships or oil tankers handy and do not generally steal ships but rather commandeer them while the cargo is being offloaded. If the pirates can be denied a convenient local black market, selling their goods becomes much harder if not occasionally impossible, which severely cuts into their profitability, undermining the economic advantages of piracy. This by itself will not end all piracy but economically undercutting the larger players and operations will reduce it significantly. There may still be some piracy as an economic necessity in areas where the socio-economic conditions are extremely poor, but this sort of piracy may be localized and will not necessarily be a major threat to larger container vessels in high seas.

Furthermore, regional efforts need to be harnessed into a coherent counter-piracy strategy. There is a problem of underreporting of piracy attacks in West Africa; local cooperation and communication between the navy, police, judicial and private sector need to be reinforced and international financing is required to boost these efforts, offer training and logistical support, and counter criminality on a global level. Indeed, both in Somalia and in West Africa, piracy emerged as a solution to local problems.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The efforts to counter piracy should be analyzed in the context of two opposing models—the ‘failed state’ model embodied by Somalia and the ‘regional’ model of West Africa. The two models broadly account for the situations in which piracy is found, namely those of a failed or virtually failed state or where regional cooperation and the issue of coordinating different national efforts has allowed piracy to become a significant problem.

The Somali piracy issue appears to be, at present, largely resolved. The rate of attacks has dropped more or less steadily since 2009, before which the number of attacks per year was rising steadily from 2005 to its peak of 214 per year in 2009,⁵³ declining dramatically with no reported attacks between January 1, 2016, and August 1, 2016, according to the IMB’s Piracy Reporting Center.⁵⁴

In contrast, West African piracy has been rising steadily since 2012, with the potential to continue rising for the foreseeable future.⁵⁵ The efforts thus far attempted to stem the rising tide of piracy have failed to reduce piracy and have at best acted to shift it further north and south. The problem is a lack of adequate regional cooperation, the difficulty in coordinating efforts and pooling limited resources, a lack of involvement by major foreign navies to provide adequate assistance and the continuing plague of corruption, particularly as it relates to the ease of selling stolen cargo on the black market.

Thus, based on the above analysis, it is likely that Somali piracy will remain mostly suppressed for the foreseeable future, while it will likely take a few more years for the level of West African piracy to peak and stabilize, supposing of course that the domestic problems faced by the Nigerian government and the revived insurgency in the Niger Delta do not become worse. If the situation in Nigeria deteriorates, it is highly likely that piracy will experience another significant increase. However, if piracy is successfully combated in the Gulf of Guinea, the ‘balloon’ effect will push it toward the periphery and thus test the capabilities of states, which at this time are not heavily involved in anti-piracy efforts. If they are unable to cope or if the international community is unable to provide adequate resources to improve their enforcement capabilities, the issue of piracy will simply be relocated rather than reduced.

Finally, it is interesting to note the role of the private sector and private military and security companies (PMSCs) in particular in combating piracy. Another violent non-state actor but operating within the control of the state and accountable, at least in theory, PMSCs have taken a leading role in combating piracy, arming ships and advising crewmembers on how to respond. This has been controversial, however, particularly as some companies have already deployed floating armories in the high seas. New questions on violence and accountability in the high seas have arisen. If the international community and regional and local efforts are insufficient to combat piracy, then the private security sector may be the only solution. However, the use of PMSCs in combating piracy may also have some risks, especially over issues of accountability, the dangers of disproportionate use of force and compliance with maritime international law. In the final analysis, the solution to piracy will require concerted efforts not only from sovereign states in the Horn and West African coasts but also from regional actors such as ECOWAS, the AU as well as international maritime agencies.

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Conclusion

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Collectively, this volume has put forward a framework for studying and understanding Violent Non-state Actors (VNSAs) in Africa in the twenty-first century. VNSAs, as put forward in the introduction, can refer to many typologies of non-state actors. This volume has focused on three broad categories: terrorists, rebels and warlords. While they have been treated separately in three different parts, similarities can be found in these case studies of violent groups. What quickly becomes clear is that distinctions between violent groups are increasingly murky as their goals and methods change and evolve, particularly through their exposure to other VNSAs in the country and abroad. The development of these networks of violent groups is facilitated by improved access to communication and transportation technology, which have created new opportunities for VNSAs to broaden their appeal and find like-minded organizations and sponsors around the world. This is characteristic of globalization and shows that a coherent counter-terrorist/counter-insurgency strategy will also need to transcend borders. This will depend a lot on the political will of the international community, but as Allen shows in Chap. 12 with the example

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of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, success can be achieved.

While many of the VNSAs treated in this volume have been covered elsewhere, it is the systematic analysis of all these actors under one cover that reveals valuable new information about them. Together, the authors demonstrate the increasing hybridized nature of non-state actors on the African continent. As a result, *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa* has made a unique contribution to the literature by bringing forward new empirical and theoretical insights into the security environment of the continent today.

TERRORISTS AND TERRITORY

The issue of territory has long been contentious in international relations and international law. By law, territory can only belong to the state, which remains the central actor in international relation, and yet this Western concept of property has been challenged by non-state actors since the time of colonialism in Africa. De la Caille and Sánchez-Cuenca¹ argue that insurgents hold territory in countries with a weak state capacity. If 'the city is the grave of the guerilla' as stated by Fidel Castro, this is because the survival of governments depends on holding control of the main cities, and subsequently they deploy the necessary means to guarantee their security against challengers. In Africa, where the state is often weak, many rebel groups have successfully held on to territory beyond the control of the state, but few of these have included cities. In our volume, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Rwanda, the militias in Central African Republic (CAR) and the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone made it to the capital although only the RPF was able to maintain power. Nonetheless a defining characteristic of rebels has been their ambition to overthrow the government and rule themselves, with several examples of relative success in Africa.

A more surprising finding in this volume is the territorial ambitions of terrorist groups in Africa. This VNSA has traditionally been characterized by its politically driven terror tactics within cities, but territory has not until now featured in the definitions of terrorists. As we see in Part I of this volume, all three terrorist groups in Mali, Nigeria and Libya have explicit territorial ambitions and were able to rapidly 'conquer' and control huge swathes of land. In Nigeria, a history of Islamic power illustrated by the Sokoto Caliphate suggests a natural environment to reestablish an Islamic state. Likewise, the existence of an Islamic empire in Mali for nearly

400 years also provides an opportunity to those dreaming of a modern-day Caliphate. Regardless, a shared characteristic of all Islamist terrorist groups in Africa—and possibly the Middle East, but that's another book—appears to be territorial aspirations. Having succeeded in their quest in 2012, Al-Qaeda in Maghreb showed that such ambitions were realistic in states with weak government and military capacity that fell beyond the interests of the Western world. Boko Haram's expansion in northeastern Nigeria and ISIS's establishment in Libya reveal an ongoing trend for this VNSA.

INCONSISTENT REBELS

The rebel groups covered in this volume have also prospered in weak states, occupying territory and exploiting resources. However, a major limitation for these groups appears to be fluctuating goals and poor leadership. Jesper's analysis of the ADF, an 'Islamist' rebel group, shows that political ambitions born out of economic marginalization can quickly change when presented with an economic opportunity. Indeed, the group appears to have put aside their objectives of creating an Islamic society in Uganda and instead now focuses on trade and exploiting resources beyond the reach of the state. As such, they do not represent an existential threat to government whose motivation to pursue the ADF is subsequently weakened, unfortunately for the civilians in the area who fall victim to the dictum of the rebels.

Likewise, the many rebel groups in Ethiopia, who have ample reason to resent an authoritarian state controlled by the repressive Tigray People's Liberation Front, have been unable to mount a coherent challenge due to split and weak leadership. The Oromo Liberation Front, for instance, is so decentralized and heterogeneous that it has been organized loosely into smaller groups that are politically fragmented with leaders who lack the skills and determination to organize. Similarly, the Ogaden National Liberation Front has been unable to maintain a consistent political objective—regional autonomy, secession or reunion with a future reunited Somalia.

No matter how weak and incompetent the state is, if the opposition is split, undecided and disorganized, the government will not need to invest in security and politicking. In the case of Rwanda, where a rebel group was able to take over the government following a ruthless and bloody war, the RPF has put in place such policies as to discourage any significant opposition inside the country.

MONEY, POWER AND PERSONALITY

Finally, the success of VNSAs depends largely on the personality of their leaders. Warlords such as Kony in Uganda or Charles Taylor in Liberia have managed to carve out an enclave within the state that they rule. These leaders and others such as Paul Kagame in Rwanda have successfully organized a militarized group strong enough to challenge the state. This lies in contrast with the above-mentioned indecisive rebels whose lack of leadership and fluctuating goals weaken their position. Indeed, to be a successful VNSA, a recipe of money, personality and power is necessary. This is the case for terrorist groups, rebel groups and warlords.

Furthermore, resources and their accessibility are vital to ensure survivability both before and after gaining power. The RUF, for instance, camped around the rich mining regions of Sierra Leone whereas the ADF maintains its positions around Democratic Republic of Congo's resource-rich North Kivu. Access to these resources has also been a primary objective to many groups and their leaders, especially since maintaining the morale and commitment of their followers requires funds. As a result, the political motivations can be perverted toward economic survivability and prosperity.

On a continent rife with politically ambitious warlords, maintaining power can be a complicated endeavor. This is evident in Somalia, where competition between clans accelerated the fall of the government and has since hindered attempts to reinstate the rule of law. As a result, the extremist group Al-Shabaab managed to insert itself into the country, not to mention the pirates off the coast who terrorized merchant ships for years. In order to maintain power, the presidents in CAR were forced to turn to militias, thereby exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions in the country and indebting themselves to violent and uncontrollable supporters.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Africa continues to be rife with VNSAs who challenge already weak and unstable governments. Historically, many of these VNSAs benefited from foreign support, either from Western patrons or from neighboring countries hostile to the regime in power. Today, while many of these VNSAs continue to receive financial backing, training and weapons from foreign states, they are also able to circumvent this model by hacking into the global network of criminal actors.

This volume has explored the relationships between VNSAs in Africa and finds that the interconnection between groups acts as a force-multiplier.

Furthermore, these new relationships and methods will be difficult, if impossible to reverse in view of the easy access to new media that facilitates uncontrolled communication across borders. Islamist terrorists under the umbrella of the Islamic State (ISIS) have shared know-how, weapons and fighters with other groups of terrorists and rebels. They have benefitted from this alliance and multiplied their capability by copying each other's strategy and propaganda campaigns. Only since the advent of rapid global communication can such a feat be achieved. Likewise, rebel groups have entered alliances with drug, weapons and human traffickers as well as with other terrorist groups. Nowhere is this more evident than in Mali and Libya, where a prospering smuggling trade across the enormous territory and porous borders has facilitated the accumulation of wealth for all actors involved. Where this economic boom turns political, or territorial, we find our terrorists, rebels and warlords.

In future, we can expect to find the categorization of VNSAs increasingly difficult as they learn and borrow from each other, change their objectives and their methods: they are becoming hybridized. As a result, it will become more difficult to counter these groups. While the usual development recommendations can be made—investing in the economy and infrastructure, democratizing and educating society, and strengthening the security apparatus—this will not be enough to halt the rise of terrorists, rebel groups and warlords. In addition, states will have to do precisely what their enemies have already done: work with allies, make a concerted effort between governments, local, national and international to share information, work across borders and not just along the border and lend each other financial, political, technical and material support. This may yet be the most difficult operation, especially in Africa where there is limited integration and cooperation between countries. As the counter-piracy operations have shown, international cooperation can yield effective results. However, as evidenced in the chapters of this volume, many African states are reluctant or unable to cope with their own security challenges, let alone lend a hand to their neighbors. In an increasingly connected and complex world, violent non-state actors will continue to have the advantage unless the African state manages to overcome its inertia and work confidently with regional and global partners.

NOTE

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