

**AFRICAN CAUCUS**  
**Topic A: Tackling Terrorism in North Africa**

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# Background Information

Africa has always been a central focus of terrorist groups. In the past decade, the African continent has witnessed a major expansion and escalation of terrorist violence. Security experts say the threat of terrorism is accelerating across Africa at an alarming rate; so far, 22 countries have



been targeted. Furthermore, a series of deadly attacks in East, North and West Africa has put Islamist militancy on the continent under the spotlight, raising the question of whether it is turning into the new frontier of international terrorism. In fact, Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Algeria, Mali, Sudan, Angola and Ethiopia were the scenes of major terrorist attacks in the past few years.

## Nigeria

The main terrorist group in Nigeria is the Boko Haram. They first gained notoriety internationally on August 26, 2011 (however, they had been active in Nigeria since 2002), as a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle at a United Nations compound in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, Killing at least



21 people, the terrorist group openly claimed responsibility. The Boko Haram is situated in Nigeria's northwestern states of Yobe and Borno. Its popular name connotes "education is

forbidden”, as a result of the perception that the group stands against any form of non-Islamic education. Furthermore, it has gained recent notoriety because of its transition from being a local radical group, to a Salafi-jihadi (definition in key terms) group that has demonstrated the capacity to carry out major operations, including suicide attacks in central Nigeria. The Boko Haram is responsible for major problems and assaults in Nigeria. This became evident after the creation of the Ansaru, an offshoot militia of the Boko Haram. The Ansaru has claimed responsibility for a prison break at the Special Anti-Robbery Squad headquarters in Abuja in November 2012, a January 2013 attack on a convoy of Nigerian troops on their way to participate in the conflict against Jihadist groups in Northern Mali and a 23 May 2013 attack on a French-owned uranium mine in Niger in cooperation with Mokhtar Belmokhtar. Also, more recently, On 14 April 2014, they kidnapped 329 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, northeastern Nigeria.

## Somalia

An ICG report identifies three active terrorist groups in Somalia. One is an al-Qaeda



Offshoot, believed to be responsible for the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya, and later for the simultaneous bombing of a Mombasa resort hotel and a failed missile attack on an Israeli passenger jet in 2002. Despite the high profile of this cell's attacks, the ICG estimates the number of ranking al-Qaeda operatives in Somalia is less than half a dozen. The second terrorist group, composed largely of local *jihadis*, which before the Ethiopian invasion to secure Somalia, in the 1919's, was called al-Itihaad or al-Islaami, emerged in 2003 and has since carried out a number of massacres and assassinations, including the murder of an Italian nun. Led by Aden Hashi Ayro, who was trained in

Afghanistan, the group operates in decentralized units and has no clear ideological agenda. Some members of this new group, including Aryo, are former members of the now-defunct al-Itihaad al-Islami, a Somali terrorist group from the 1990s whose militia once had more than 1,000 members, but was destroyed by Ethiopia, after attacks on Ethiopian territory. The third and most active terrorist group in Somalia is the Al-Shabaab, responsible for the constant civil war in Somalia. Al-Shabaab fights the African Union and Somali forces, in Somalia in a hope of controlling and establishing terrorist bases in the country. Since 2007, Al-Shabaab has been the responsible for many bombings and smuggling happening in Mogadishu and against the Transitional National Government (TNG) in Somalia.

## **Kenya**

Since late 2011, Kenya has seen an upsurge in violent terrorist attacks. Kenyan government officials believe that the blasts have been carried out by Al-Shabaab in retaliation for Operation Linda Nchi, a coordinated military mission between the



Somali military and Kenyan military that began in October 2011, when troops from Kenya crossed the border into the conflict zones of southern Somalia. According to Kenyan security experts, the bulk of the attacks have increasingly been carried out by radicalized Kenyan youth who were hired for the purpose. By mid-2014, the cumulative attacks began affecting Kenya's tourism industry, as Western nations issued travel warnings to their citizens.

## Algeria

The main terrorist group in Algeria is the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA adopted violent tactics in 1992 after the military government voided the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front, the largest Islamic opposition party, in the first round of legislative elections held in December 1991. Between 1992 and 1998, the GIA conducted a violent campaign of civilian massacres, sometimes wiping out entire villages in its area of operation. Since announcing its campaign against foreigners living in Algeria in 1993, the GIA has killed more than 100 expatriate men and women in the country. The group uses assassinations and bombings, including car bombs, and it is known to favor kidnapping victims. The GIA is considered a terrorist organization by the governments of Algeria and France.



## Mali

Mali is one of the central focus of lots of terrorist groups. The first is the Mourabitounes group, a terrorist group, formed in August, 2012, when the one-eyed terror leader Moktar Belmoktar officially joined forces with the Movement for Oneness and



Al-Qaeda terrorists in Mali

Jihad in West Africa, a radical al-Qaida-linked jihadist group that once controlled part of northern Mali and has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in the Gao region since France intervened. Since then, the group has carried out diverse of terrorist operations, especially in 2013, including attacks in Niger and Mali, and the killing of foreign hostages

at a natural gas plant in southeastern Algeria. The second terrorist group found in Mali is the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), responsible for the Tuareg Rebellion of 2012, where the group attempted to overthrow the government of Mali (which they actually succeeded for 3 days), and proclaim the Azawad's independence from Mali. The third, fourth and fifth terrorist groups in Mali are the Al-Qaeda, the AL-Shaabab and the Boko Haram, who are responsible for innumerable civilian kidnaps of civilians, and of bombings in the capital of Mali, including attacks to the African Union stronghold in Mali.

## Sudan

Terrorism was introduced to Sudan in the early 1990s when Osama Bin Ladin and his followers came to the country and built a training camp infrastructure as well as setting up a business and finance network. Since then, Sudan



provides military training and support to Hezbollah, Hamas,

The SPLA Militia

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Algeria's Armed Islamic Group, and regional Islamic and non-Islamic opposition and groups in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda and Tunisia. In addition, hundreds of Iranian Revolutionary Guards are sent to terrorist training camps in Sudan to train in the subversion of moderate Arab regimes. One of the most secretive terrorist groups in Sudan is the SPLA, which uses terrorist methods in their fight for autonomy. In 2001, the SPLA escalated its campaign and attacked civilian oil targets, murdering a significant number of civilians and aid workers, as well selling rockets to civilians. Many of the terrorist groups have a number of training camps in the country.

Sudan, being the third largest African country (after the secession of South Sudan in 2011) is a common place to hide a terrorist training center. Certain locations are known for training particular groups or people from certain countries. Camp al-Maokil near Shandy was for training Algerians and Tunisians. In early May 1990, some 60 Arabs from North Africa, France, and Belgium began to train in the Shambat district of Khartoum. In the al-Khalafiyya area north of Khartoum training took place for the Algerian Islamic Salvation Army and the Armed Islamic Group. In Akhil al-Awliya on the banks of the Blue Nile, south of Khartoum more than 500 Palestinians, Syrians and Jordanians were trained.

## Angola

There were only few cases of terrorism in Angola. The main one was known as the Togo national football team bus attack. Which was a terrorist attack on the team bus of the Togo national football team that occurred on 8 January 2010 as the team traveled through the Angolan province of Cabinda on the way to the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations tournament. A little-known offshoot of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), a group promoting independence for the province of Cabinda, known as the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda - Military Position (FLEC-PM), claimed responsibility for the attack. Many people were killed and several others severely injured. The head of the FLEC-PM Rodrigues Mingas, currently exiled in France, claimed the attack was not aimed at the Togolese players but at the Angolan forces at the head of the convoy.



Rodrigues Mingas



## Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a controversial country in the topic of terrorism because it suffers from terrorism, but it also was said to be a sponsor for terrorist groups. Firstly, the terrorist group in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian



Ethiopian EPPF

People's Patriotic Front (EPPF) also known as Alliance for Freedom and Democracy, founded in Eritrea, in 2000, with the merging of the Ethiopian Democratic Movement (EDM), the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM), and the Ethiopian Patriotic United Front (EPUF). The organization's stated goal is "to bring an end to the TPLF tyranny and oppression through armed struggle and bring about unity, justice, democracy, and equality to the Ethiopian people." Founded as a rebel group in Eritrea in 1987-88 at the beginning the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, it operated primarily in the northern Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region in Eritrea. This group tried unsuccessfully to deploy armed dissident groups inside Ethiopia: the Kefagn Patriotic Front, the Ethiopian Unity Front, the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces and the Benishangul People's Democratic Movement. In 2005 the movements both dissolved into different Ethnic movements:- Tigerian, Beneshagoul, Southern, Gambella. Ethiopia also has been in commotion with the UN because the country was said to be arming and providing financial aid to militia groups in southern Somalia's conflict zones, including Al-Shabaab. Planeloads of weapons said to be coming from Eritrea were sent to anti-government rebels in southern Somalia. In 2010, the UN International Monitoring Group (IMG) also published a report charging the Eritrean government of continuing to offer

support to rebel groups in southern Somalia, despite the sanctions already placed on the nation. The Eritrean administration emphatically denied the accusations, describing them as "concocted, baseless and unfounded" and demanding concrete evidence to be made publicly available, with an independent platform through which it may in turn issue a response. In November 2011 the UN Monitoring Group repeated claims that Eritrea would support al-Shabaab. The report says that Eritrea gives US\$80,000 each month to al-Shabaab linked individuals in Nairobi. However, in July 16, 2012, a United Nations Monitoring Group report stated "it had found no evidence of direct Eritrean support for al-Shabaab in the past year."

## Timeline

- In 2002, bin Laden dispatched one of his aides to Nigeria to distribute \$3 million to sympathetic Salafi groups. Among the recipients was Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder.
- 2011 February - Kenya closes border to Somalia after nearby fighting between Al-Shabab rebels and government-backed forces.
- 2011 July - UN formally declares famine in three regions of Somalia. Al-Shabab partially lifts ban it had imposed on foreign aid agencies in the south, and UN airlifts its first aid consignment in five years to Mogadishu.
- Al-Shabab pulls out of Mogadishu.
- 2011 October - Kenyan troops enter Somalia to attack rebels they accuse of being behind several kidnappings of foreigners on Kenyan soil.
- August 26, 2011, a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle at a United Nations compound in Nigeria's capital, Abuja.
- In November 2011, Al-Shabaab attacked several other locations including the East African Pentecostal Church, a military convoy, and a Holiday Inn hotel.
- On 10 March 2012, six were killed and over sixty were injured after four grenades were thrown into a Machakos bus station in Nairobi.
- On 30 September, 2012, at around 10:30am, a 9-year-old boy was killed when a grenade was hurled towards Sunday school children at St Polycarp Anglican Church along Juja road in Nairobi.
- On 16 January, 2013, suspected Islamic militants shot dead five people and injured three others at a restaurant in the eastern city of Garissa. Authorities said they believed the gunmen belonged to the Al-Shabaab group, as the victims included a senior prison warden, fitting a pattern of attacks against security forces.
- 23 May 2013 attack on a French-owned uranium mine in Niger in cooperation.
- On 14 April 2014, they kidnapped 329 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, northeastern Nigeria.
- On 23 April 2014, a car exploded at the Pangani police station in Nairobi, killing the four occupants: the driver, a passenger, and two police officers who had boarded the vehicle to guide it to the police station. A second vehicle with explosives was subsequently found abandoned just blocks away.

## Key Terms

**Salafist jihadism-** The Salafi (Jihadist or Salafist) movement, also known as the Salafi methodology, is a movement within Islam used to identify the earliest Muslims, who, its adherents believe, provide the epitome of Islamic practice. The popular hadith that quotes Muhammad as saying 'The people of my own generation are the best, then those who come after them, and then those of the next generation,' is seen as a call to Muslims to follow the example of those first three generations, the salaf ("predecessors", "ancestors"). The term also describes the beliefs of Salafis who became interested in violent jihad(a war or struggle against unbelievers), starting in the mid-1990s.

**Boko Haram-** was created in 2002 by the now-deceased Islamist cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, though forms of it have existed under a variety of names since the late 1990s. Boko Haram aspires to create an Islamic state in Nigeria, and is willing to kill Christians and Muslims they deem to be insufficiently pious in order to achieve it. Boko Haram's violent insurgency, which began in 2009, has led to over 6,000 deaths, including over 2,000 this year (2014), excluding the latest bloody attacks in June.

**Ansaru-** is a splinter group from Boko Haram that has been operating since May 2011, though only announced its existence in January 2012. Ansaru supposedly formed in protest against Boko Haram's indiscriminate killings of Muslims, criticising 'inhuman' Boko Haram operations and claiming they would restore 'dignity' to Islam. Ansaru's charter prevents attacks on Nigerians, a clear difference to Boko Haram's actions. Since its inception, Ansaru has largely focused on kidnap for ransom, primarily of Europeans.

**Al-Itihaad or Al-Islaami-** Somalia's largest militant Islamic organization rose to power in the early 1990s following the collapse of the Siad Barre regime. Its aims to establish an Islamic regime in Somalia and force the secession of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia have largely been abandoned. The group is believed to be responsible for a series of bomb attacks in public places in Addis Ababa in 1996 and 1997 as well as the kidnapping of several relief workers in 1998.

**Al-Shabaab-** Al Shabaab is al Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia and operates primarily out of the country's southern and central regions. The group is fighting an insurgency against the internationally recognized Somali Federal Government, which is based in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Al Shabaab has targeted African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers for their support of the federal government.

**GIA-** Also known as the Armed Islamic Group, the GIA is an Islamist organisation that wants to overthrow the Algerian government and replace it with an Islamic state.

**Al-Qaeda-** Al-Qaeda is a global militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in Peshawar, Pakistan, at some point between August 1988 and late 1989, with its origins being traceable to the Soviet War in Afghanistan.

**Islamic Militants-** Are the terrorist groups (Al-Qaeda, Armed Islamic Group, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, and others), which fight for Islamic causes, wanting to take over the governments of countries in Africa.

## Guiding Questions

- How can the threat of terrorism be eliminated from Africa?
- Should the UN or other countries interfere to help the African countries?
- What are the similarities between different terrorist cells in countries in Northern Africa?
- Should countries enter direct military confrontation with terrorist groups?
- How is terrorism connected to other problems afflicting African nations?

## Further Research

### **Nigeria**

<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-rise-of-boko-haram-in-nigeria>

<http://www.nairaland.com/854516/how-deal-terrorism-nigeria-making>

<http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-06-12/behind-boko-harams-terrorism-nigeria-radical-islam-and-environmental-crises>

<http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/al-shabaab-leadership>

### **Algeria**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed\\_IsLAMic\\_Group\\_of\\_Algeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_IsLAMic_Group_of_Algeria)

### **Somalia**

<http://www.war-memorial.net/Ethiopia-vs-Somalia-3.160>

<http://www.cfr.org/somalia/somalias-terrorist-infestation/p10781>

### **Kenya**

<http://web.stanford.edu/class/e297a/Terrorism%20in%20Kenya.htm>

<http://www.latimes.com/world/africa/la-fg-kenya-clerics-20140824-story.html>

### **Mali**

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-new-terrorist-training-ground/309446/>

### **Sudan**

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-terrorist-climate-of-sudan>

<http://defenddemocracy.org/sudans-sponsorship-of-terrorism-violence2>

### **Angola**

<http://world.einnews.com/news/angola-terrorism>

### **Ethiopia**

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28366841>

<http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/ethiopian-peoples-patriotic-front-eppf>