Forum: Disarmament & International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Working to reduce terrorist action in Sub-Saharan Africa

Student Officer: Grace Almond

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Hello delegates, and welcome to the Social Humanitarian & Cultural Committee at QEGS MUN,

I am your co-chair for this committee, Grace. This is my second QEGS MUN, and only just a year ago I was where you are now. I was a delegate for Canada at my last conference here - which was my first time partaking in MUN. It is my absolute delight and pleasure to welcome you, whether you are first-timers or returning delegates. I will say that, firstly, do not worry if you don't know anyone or if you don't quite know what you're doing! I have experienced the supportive community that you will encounter and they are more than willing to help you. Do not be afraid of anyone! This study guide will cover topics like what exactly is classified as sub-Saharan Africa, some of the largest extremist groups active, counterterrorist initiatives, their humanitarian impacts, displaced populations to governmental initiatives, and even the root causes of extremism. I can't wait to meet you all in person and hear what fabulous resolutions you manage to come up with and I do not doubt that they will be perceptive, creative and diplomatic!

Most importantly, have fun :)

If you have any questions before the day, please feel free to contact me by email, at grace.almond@canterburians.org.uk

Kind regards,
Grace

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The issue of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a pressing concern that demands our immediate attention. Over the past decade, this vast region has experienced a surge in terrorist activities; destabilising nations, displacing communities, and threatening regional and global security. It has become a hotspot for global terrorism, with nearly 50% of global terror-related deaths occurring in SSA in 2021.

From 1970-2020 a total of 19,320 attacks were recorded, resulting in 77,565 deaths and 52,986 injuries. Firearms were the most frequent weapons used (8,745), followed by explosives (6,031), unknown (2,615), and incendiary (1,246), with all others making up the remainder (683.)

Private citizens and property were the most frequently targeted entities (8,031), followed by general government facilities (2,582), police (1,854), business (1,446), military (805), diplomatic government facilities (741), and religious figures/institution (678), with all other targets making up the remainder (3,183).

With a large population and complex geopolitical and social climate, terrorist activity further burdens an already strained medical system. Nigeria, Somalia, South Africa, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan have had the largest number of attacks since 1970, and Nigeria has the largest number of people killed and injured. Hospitals are heavily supported by foreign aid and healthcare is critically underfunded.

As we convene to discuss this critical topic, it is essential to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa, exploring its root causes, regional dynamics, and potential solutions - whether our solutions should aim to combat outcomes or eliminate root causes.

Our collective efforts in understanding and addressing this challenge should contribute to fostering peace, stability, and development in this vital part of the world.

MAP OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX MAP:
https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/
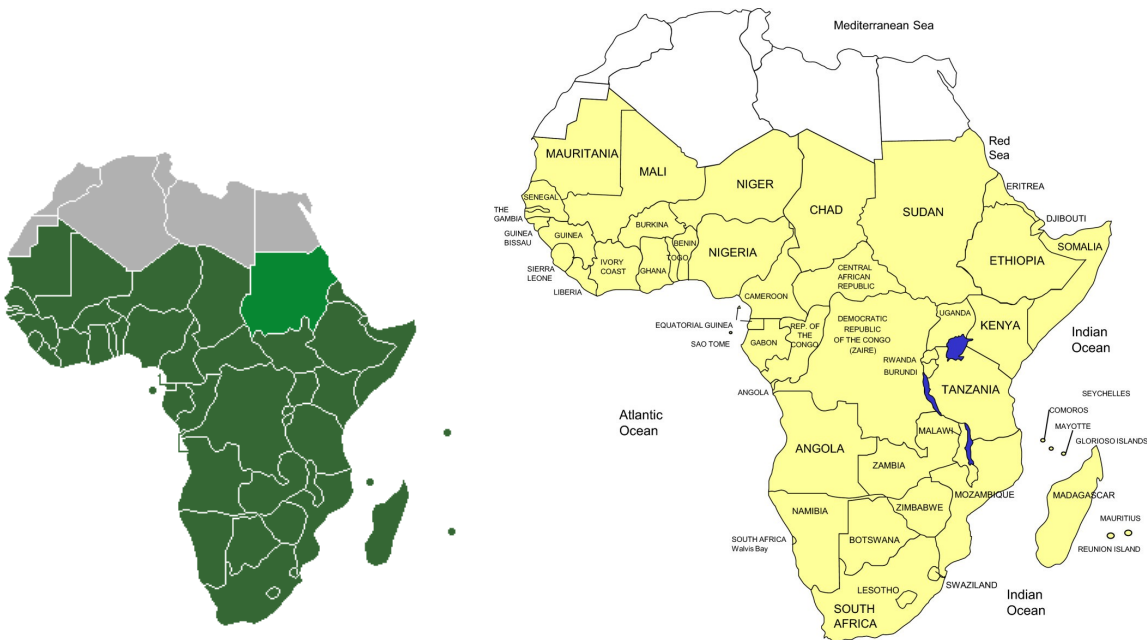
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Splinter group - a small organisation, typically a political party, that has broken away from a larger one.

Militia - a military force that is raised from the civilian population to supplement a regular army in an emergency.

Extremist - a person who holds extreme political or religious views, especially one who advocates illegal, violent, or other extreme action

Humanitarian - concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare

Displacement - the enforced departure of people from their homes, typically because of war, persecution, or natural disaster

Ummah - the whole Muslim world, or the community of believers. The ummah is meant to transcend national, racial, and class divisions to unite all Muslims.

Caliphate - A caliph is a spiritual leader of Islam who claims succession from Muhammad. The word stems from the Arabic khalifa meaning "successor."

Shari'ah (Sharia) - Islamic Law; Sharia acts as a code for living that all Muslims should adhere to, including prayers, fasting and donations to the poor

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How Terrorist Action Impacts on Civilian Populations

Terrorist actions have lots of impacts on the civilian populations in the areas where the groups are active. These impacts are things such as:

- Loss of life and Injuries
- Displacement - the last decade of conflict has displaced 2.6 million people in Liptako-Gourma and 2.8 million people in the Lake Chad Basin. Boko Haram alone has displaced more than 3.4 million civilians across the region.
- Psychological trauma - Victims can suffer from PTSD, anxiety, depression, self-medication, and substance abuse
- Economic hardship - The economic growth of Sub-Saharan Africa dropped to 3.6% in 2022 from 4.1% in 2021 and is expected to dip to 3.1% in 2023, along with lingering inflation and tough financial conditions with high debt, all contributing to this decline.
- Disrupted education - The destruction of schools, parental deaths, transport, the deaths of teachers, and lack of supplies all create an environment inconducive to education.
- Humanitarian crises - This ranges from food scarcity and famine to drought and water scarcity, to contaminated drinking water, injuries and lack of medical facilities
- Eroded social cohesion - This refers to the fracturing of social networks reflected by persistent public anger, distrust, and divisiveness - people are much less likely to be able to form communities and help one another in a very difficult period.

- Gender-based violence.
- Reduced trust in government.

These consequences collectively pose significant challenges to the well-being and stability of affected communities and can also have significant domino effects on other aspects of society.

Kidnappings and Ransom

Extremist groups often engage in kidnappings for ransom, targeting both locals and foreigners, further financing their operations. Over the past decade, kidnappings have risen nearly 200 percent. According to crime statistics from the South African Police Service, the figure ballooned from 3,832 cases in 2013 to nearly 11,000 in 2021.

Resource Exploitation

Some extremist groups fund their activities through illegal resource exploitation, such as oil smuggling or poaching. Resource exploitation serves multiple purposes for these groups, providing them with funding to purchase weapons, pay fighters, and maintain their infrastructure. It also allows them to exert influence and control over local populations by manipulating their economic activities. Additionally, the illicit trade of resources can fuel instability and conflicts, making it even more challenging for governments and international actors to address terrorism in the region.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

The region has seen the emergence and expansion of various extremist groups, such as:
- Boko Haram: Based in Nigeria, Boko Haram seeks to establish Islamic law in the region and has conducted numerous attacks, including abductions and suicide bombings.
- Al-Shabaab: Operating in Somalia and parts of East Africa, Al-Shabaab aims to establish a strict form of Islamic rule. It has carried out attacks both within Somalia and in neighbouring countries.
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): This affiliate of Al-Qaeda operates in North and West Africa, including Mali, Niger, and Algeria. AQIM is involved in kidnappings, bombings, and other terrorist activities.
- Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP): A splinter group from Boko Haram, ISWAP has established a presence in northeastern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, aiming to create an Islamic state.
- Lord's Resistance Army (LRA): Active in Central Africa, particularly Uganda, the LRA is known for its brutal tactics, including child abduction and mass killings.
- Allied Democratic Forces (ADF): Operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, ADF is responsible for attacks against both civilians and security forces.
- Jihadist groups in the Sahel: Various groups, including Ansaroul Islam and Katiba Macina, operate in the Sahel region, destabilising countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.
- Janjaweed: While originally a militia group in Sudan, elements of Janjaweed have been involved in conflicts in Darfur and, more recently, in neighbouring Libya.
- These extremist groups often adapt to local contexts, exploiting grievances, ethnic divisions, and weak governance structures. They pose significant challenges to regional stability and require coordinated efforts to counter their activities

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE

Governments, regional organisations like the African Union, and international partners have launched counterterrorism operations to combat these groups. Counterterrorism efforts against terrorist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa involve a range of strategies and initiatives by both regional governments and international actors. These efforts aim to combat extremism, enhance security, and address the root causes of terrorism. In some cases, negotiations with militant groups are pursued to achieve ceasefires and peace agreements, as seen in Nigeria with the government's efforts to engage with Boko Haram.

Efforts to counter terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa are ongoing and require sustained commitment and cooperation between regional governments, international organisations, and local communities. Balancing security measures with efforts to address the underlying drivers of extremism is crucial for long-term success. Many countries, including Western nations, already provide support through training, intelligence sharing, and development aid to assist sub-Saharan African nations in their counterterrorism efforts. Regional cooperation and initiatives like the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and G5 Sahel aim to enhance security and coordination.

POSSIBLE FUTURE SOLUTIONS

Terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa has global implications, including the potential for the spread of extremist ideologies and the need for international support especially with displaced peoples, refugees etc. should the situation get worse. The debate on future solutions often centres itself on whether military or non-military approaches are more effective in countering terrorism - whether passive measures are more likely to be more effective long-term, or alternatively if military measures are more effective in the short term. Military approaches to counterterrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa often involve the use of force to target and neutralise both members and leaders of active terrorist groups within a certain area. While they are able to disrupt immediate threats, they often need to be complemented by non-military approaches in order to address the root causes that terrorist groups stem from, in order to build long-term stability.

Non-military strategies encompass diplomatic, economic, and social measures; these strategies aim to: reduce the appeal of extremism that terrorist groups use to recruit new members, strengthen democratic governance within areas governed by terrorist groups, and promote peace and further development in the region. There are several key factors to address the root causes of extremism in individual countries, such as: promoting education so that more people have access to financial security, improving governance, and building a good rapport between citizens and the government (in doing so improving the public's view of the government). In undermining extremism and radicalisation within states, there will be fewer members of the public who join terror groups, and thus these groups will hurt less vulnerable people.

.

A balanced combination of both military and non-military approaches is essential for a comprehensive and sustainable counterterrorism strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Achieving lasting peace and security in the region requires a comprehensive approach that combines security measures with social, economic, and political reforms.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boly, A., & Kere, E. N. (2023, July 18). *Tackling terrorism in Africa needs urgent collective efforts*.

CEPR. Retrieved August 5, 2023, from

https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/tackling-terrorism-africa-needs-urgent-collective-efforts

Busher, J. (2019, June 24). . . - YouTube. Retrieved August 3, 2023, from

https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10023/4912/824-1859-3-PB.pdf

Harsch, E. (n.d.). *Uniting against terrorism across the Sahara | Africa Renewal*. the United Nations.

Retrieved August 4, 2023, from

https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/uniting-against-terrorism-across-sahara

Harnischfeger, J. (2004). Sharia and Control over Territory: Conflicts between "Settlers" and Indigenes' in Nigeria. *African Affairs*, *103*(412), 431–452. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3518565

Institute for Economics and Peace. (2023, March 14). *Global Terrorism Index 2023 - World*. ReliefWeb. Retrieved July 29, 2023, from https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2023 International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. (n.d.). *Sub-Saharan Africa*. International Centre for

Counter-Terrorism. Retrieved August 2, 2023, from https://www.icct.nl/taxonomy/term/40

Ousman, A. (2019, June 24). . . - YouTube. Retrieved August 3, 2023, from

https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/48029516/b_3Aijps.0000048108.65370.fe20160813-8193-

urblbu-libre.pdf?1471121454=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Pot

ential_of_Islamist_Terrorism_in_S.pdf&Expires=1694614003&Signature=AvgceZXkRb~PUo

Shinn, A. D. (2016). Poverty and Terrorism in Africa: The Debate Continues. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, *17*(2), 16–22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26396167

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017. (2017). *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited*

by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System. English, Publishing

and Library Section, United Nations Office at Vienna.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Childr

en_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Jus

tice_System.E.pdf

U.S. Government Publishing Office. (2016, May 10). - *TERRORISM AND INSTABILITY IN*

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. GovInfo. Retrieved August 2, 2023, from

https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114shrg29581/html/CHRG-114shrg29581.htm