

RESPONDING TO TERROR:

An assessment of AU Counter-Terrorism Strategies
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INTRODUCTION

- Terrorist threat on African continent escalating – 22 African countries targeted, 3 terrorist attacks every single day
- This despite the existence of an AU CT regime
- Beginning with a broad overview of the existing CT regime, we then turn to understanding the reasons accounting for the AU's inability to eliminate the terrorist threat. Finally a case in study of AMISOM in Somalia is provided where several themes discussed are unpacked in more concrete terms
- At outset we need to acknowledge that AU built on the CT platforms created by its predecessor – the OAU including its July 1992 Dakar resolution which aimed to curb extremism and its 1994 Summit Resolution which rejects both extremism and fanaticism as legitimate avenues to address grievance

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THE 1999 ALGIERS CONVENTION

- Designed to prevent and combat terrorism
- Attempt to address terrorism holistically – 4 core areas:
- Addressing the structural conditions contributing to the spread of terrorism; capacity-building of Member States with a view to increase their resilience; preventative measures; and promoting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism
- Convention stressed importance of sub-regional bodies in the fight against terrorists. Rationale was that such regional bodies could design specific counter-terrorism policies given the particular cultural and contextual issues in that region.

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CADSP AND ACSRT

- Adoption of the Common African Defence and Security Policy and the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism also important milestones in fight against terrorism.
- Need for CADSP when it comes to threat assessment, common command and control etc.
- Main purpose of ACSRT was to centralise information, studies and analysis of terrorism and terrorist groups, as well as to initiate research and develop training programmes with the view to raise awareness, prevent and eliminate the threat of terrorism to the continent
- In practice, then, the Centre was to serve as the technical arm of the AU

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2002 AU PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT TERRORISM

- Plan aimed at state-building and inter-governmental co-operation with a view to seal Africa's borders
- Specific features of the Plan aimed to prevent forged IDs, computerise ports of entry and to criminalize terrorist financing and money laundering
- The enactment of legislative frameworks, however, does not necessarily translate into successful CT strategies
- Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning sadly write that, "... the AU is yet to overcome a legacy of the OAU, namely a tendency to adopt landmark decisions and make pronouncements without ensuring effective and appropriate follow-up"
- So what accounts for this failure?

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6 REASONS ACCOUNTING FOR FAILURE

- Lack of political will. Many African leaders are more focused on domestic threats which might unseat them as opposed to international terrorism. They seem oblivious of the connection between the local and international threats
- The effectiveness of international organizations is intimately related to the amount of sovereignty or power its constituent elements is willing to yield to them. Despite the fact that most African countries acknowledge the transnational nature of the terrorism threat posed, they are reluctant to share their sovereignty with the AU. As Anneli Botha has noted, “The Secretariat in Addis Ababa was not given a mandate to enforce decisions and instruments adopted by the AU. In enabling the AU, to fulfil its role Member States need to provide this mandate to strengthen the Secretariat’s position”.

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6 REASONS ACCOUNTING FOR FAILURE

- The lack of common values is also undermining the AU. This has undermined CT efforts. Whilst many West African/Sahelian states have welcomed foreign assistance; other African countries have viewed such assistance with suspicion. Whilst some African states have understood the need for robust democracies in the broader effort to combat terrorism; countries like Ethiopia and Zimbabwe have made use of CT to stifle legitimate political dissent.
- Perennial problem of financial deficit. Bjorn Moller stated: “It would be surprising if the world’s poorest continent were able to solve the world’s most frequent and widespread as well as most deadly conflict” – e.g. ECOWAS lack of strategic airlift capacity during Malian crisis.

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SIX REASONS ACCOUNTING FOR FAILURE

- The AU places particular emphasis on the role of SROs to secure their respective regions – the objectives of Ethiopia and Kenya in creating buffer zones and a weakened Somali government however raise serious questions regarding the effectiveness of this strategy.
- The final and most important reason contributing to the AU failure is the hollowing out of state structures as well as the growing criminalization of the state apparatus. The bedrock of the AU CT strategy relies on the African state as the primary instrument to combat terrorism whilst the AU sought to provide overarching guidelines. At no point is the weakness, incompetence, and growing criminalization of the African state taken into account or the fact that elements of the state are now making common cause with terrorists for personal gain.

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AN `AFRICAN SUCCESS': THE CASE OF AMISOM

- Triumphant tone of analysts and commentators regarding AMISOM in Somalia – beat back Al Shabaab
- They ignore that AMISOM exists outside the current AU strategy of using SROs (in this case IGAD) and has a number of extra-regional forces including Sierra Leone and Nigeria
- AU had no money for AMISOM since its inception in 2007 – supported by France, UK, US, NATO – from equipment, to airlift, to logistics and intelligence
- Uganda largest troop contributor – human rights violations in northern Uganda, DRC and now Somalia – WHAM I think not!

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CONCLUSION

- Terrorist threat worsening in Africa
- AU – a paper tiger – great legislation, means little on the ground
- Much of the wounds self-inflicted, e.g. donor funds drying up and ACSRT is facing financial abyss on account of non-performance
- Need to move towards shared sovereignty, responsive and democratic governance, legislation without monitoring and enforcement is useless
- Role of SROs needs to be re-thought
- At its core the problem lies with the African state – its lack of empathy to citizens, its growing criminalization, etc. Unless this continues, the terrorist threat will continue to escalate

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