

TERRORISM AND STATES SECURITY IN AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: This paper examined terrorism and states security in Africa. The paper reviewed the concepts of terrorism and states security. Conflict theory was used as the theoretical framework of analysis to better understand and explain the causes of terrorism and its impacts on states security in Africa. Methodologically, the study adopted secondary sources of data collection. Data were generated from books, journals, and articles. Content analysis was used as the tool for data analysis. The paper revealed that terrorism in Africa is caused by unemployment, poverty, religious tension, weak government, bad governance and external factors. The paper also found that terrorism has been a significant security challenge in Africa for several years now, with many countries experiencing various forms of attacks from extremist groups. These groups often target civilians, military personnel, and government officials, causing widespread fear and disruption. The paper further revealed that apart from the numerous deaths, lots of people have been deformed as a result of injuries sustained during terrorist attacks. Based on the findings, terrorism has resulted in a humanitarian crisis in Africa as millions have been displaced, and have little or no access to clean water, medicine and food. The impact of terrorism on states security in Africa is severe, as it undermines the authority of governments, creates fear and mistrust among the population, and disrupts development efforts. The study recommended that African states should invest in modern technology and ammunitions which would assist the security agencies in combating terrorism in Africa.

Keywords: Terrorism, States, Security, States Security, Unemployment, Instability, Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has become a frightening phenomenon and a concern for many governments and citizens around the world which draws our attention to the vulnerability of modern societies (Kamta et al., 2020). Terrorism is now a significant threat to state security in Africa. It has caused political, economic, and social instability, undermining the authority of governments, creating fear and mistrust among the population, and disrupting development efforts. Acts of terrorism in Africa are typically carried out by extremist groups that seek to promote their political or ideological agendas through violence and intimidation. These groups often target civilians, creating a sense of fear and insecurity that undermines the ability of governments to maintain public order and ensure the safety and security of their citizens.

Terrorism in Africa is often rooted in political, economic, and social grievances, including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and religious extremism. Weak governance, corruption, and lack of accountability are also contributing factors that allow extremist groups to thrive. According to Agbiboa (2015), terrorism is not limited to individual countries but can have regional implications, making it difficult for individual countries to address the problem on their own. The impact of terrorism on state security in Africa is significant, and its effects can be long-lasting. Political instability, economic disruption, social unrest, and human rights abuses are just some of the consequences of terrorism in the region. Therefore, it is essential for African countries to adopt a multi-pronged approach that involves improving governance, promoting economic development, protecting human rights, and strengthening regional cooperation to address the root causes of terrorism and promote peace and stability.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The Concept of Terrorism

From the etymological point of view, the word terrorism comes from Latin and French words: *terrere*, and *terrorisme*, meaning “to frighten,” and “state rule by terror” respectively. The English word “terrorism” was first recorded in English Dictionaries in 1798 as meaning “systematic use of terror as a policy” (Aderonke, 2015). There are no generally accepted medulla operandi of terrorists. Also, there exists no generally accepted definition among terrorism experts. In fact, none of the thirteen major multilateral conventions on terrorism defined terrorism.

Thus, terrorism both as practiced and justified by terrorist themselves, is a tool used to achieve a specific outcome by using force or violence on one segment of society with the primary goal of causing fear in the larger society to make change in that society (Garrison, 2019). Sulaiman (2018) stated that the situation can be likened to genocide and defined it as the deliberate and systematic destruction in whole or in part, of an ethnic, religious, racial or national group. Terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.

According to Elemanya (2018), the term terrorism was coined to describe the systematic inducement of fear and anxiety to control and direct a civilian population and the phenomenon of terrorism as a challenge to the authority of the state grew from the difficulties revolutionaries experienced in trying to recreate the mass uprising, similar to those of the French revolution. Murtada (2013) defined terrorism as the use of violence for political ends and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public in fear. In contemporary times, as the trend continually evolves, the phenomenon of terrorism has translated to connote forms of illegitimate and unconventional violence by a group of people aimed at the society, state or a targeted population as it were. It could also be said to include any violent threat or action which is executed as a part of a singular or collective criminal plan for the purpose of cowering or bringing bodily harm to people. Additionally, acts of terror involve putting the lives, security and freedom of people in danger.

The Concept of States Security

The concept of state security is concerned with protecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of a state. It is a fundamental aspect of national security and encompasses a range of issues, including political stability, economic prosperity, and social cohesion. State security is the responsibility of the government, which is charged with ensuring the safety and security of its citizens, maintaining law and order, and protecting the state from external threats. The government achieves this by maintaining a strong military and security apparatus, implementing effective border controls, and developing intelligence capabilities to identify and respond to security threats. The concept of state security includes both internal and external dimensions. Internally, it is concerned with maintaining social and political stability, ensuring the rule of law, protecting human rights, and promoting economic development. Externally, it involves protecting the state from external threats, such as terrorism, cyber attacks, and military aggression.

State security refers to the capacity of a state to maintain its territorial integrity, political independence, and economic stability, and to protect its citizens from external and internal threats, while respecting their human rights and civil liberties. State security involves the prevention and response to threats posed by foreign and domestic actors that may harm the state's interests, including but not limited to physical security, economic security, and societal stability (Acharya, 2013). According to Krahmann (2013), state security refers to the protection of the state and its citizens from a broad range of threats, including terrorism, insurgency, organised crime, and cyberattacks. It involves the maintenance of law and order, the protection of critical infrastructure, and the preservation of the state's economic and political stability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict Theory

The theoretical framework employed in this study is the conflict theory, which is deeply rooted in the work of Karl Marx. Marx understood human society in terms of conflict between those who own and who control all the means of economic production called the bourgeoisie and those who work in order to earn a living known as the proletariat. Conflict theory is a theory which examines the ways in which groups of people disagree, struggle for power and compete for resources such as wealth and prestige. Conflict theory shares the basic assumption that no group exists which does not possess conflicts of interest and that conflict is necessary for growth and social change. Marx saw class struggle as the major determinant of the evolution of one form of society and the other (Ntete-Nna, 2004). Sears (2008) noted that societies are identified by inequality that produces conflict, rather than produce order and consensus. In the light of this, conflict theory holds that inequality in the access to the means of production will give birth to two antagonistic social classes which ushers a radical change.

Conflict theory is very useful in explaining terrorism and states security in Africa. According to this theory, conflict arises when people feel deprived of what they perceive are their fair belongings, which produce a significant or far-reaching consequence on socio-economic development. African states are quite endowed with many natural resources such as land, crude oil, forest, coal, uranium, gypsum, limestone, iron, lead, zinc, kaolin, quartz etc but the people do not derive a corresponding benefit from the exploitation of the resources.

The State who wields political power of control does little or nothing to improve the living standard of the people. Rather, what is seen on a daily basis is government officials carting away millions without being punished. Furthermore, multinational corporations in connivance with state actors and local leaders exploit the abundant economic resources of the region to the detriment of the people and without commensurate compensation. Consequently, many youths in Africa indulge in acts of terrorism, violence, crime and criminality with the perceived deprivation and waste of resources meant for their development and that of their land by those in authority.

METHODOLOGY

This paper used document analysis method to examine terrorism and states security in Africa. The paper adopted secondary or documentary sources of data collection which has to do with information gathered from textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, online documents and official documents. The data sourced form the basis for the literature review, theoretical framework and results or findings and interpretations of this study. In this scholarly work, no statistical treatment was applied on data. The researcher made use of content analysis in analyzing the data sourced. Content analysis is a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual materials. Offiong (2014) stated that content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

Terrorism and States Security in Africa

Terrorism has been a significant security challenge in Africa for several years now, with many countries experiencing various forms of attacks from extremist groups. These groups often target civilians, military personnel, and government officials, causing widespread fear and disruption. In response, African states have employed different security measures aimed at addressing terrorism and its impacts. One of the most significant forms of terrorism in Africa is carried out by the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram, which originated in Nigeria but has since spread to neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The group has been responsible for numerous attacks on civilians, schools, and government installations, causing significant displacement of people and creating a humanitarian crisis in the region. To counter this threat, states in the affected areas have formed the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to coordinate their military efforts in tackling the group (Asante, 2018).

Mbaku (2018) noted that another significant threat is posed by Al-Shabaab, a jihadist group based in Somalia but with a significant presence in neighboring countries such as Kenya. The group has carried out several high-profile attacks, including the 2013 Westgate mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya, which killed over 60 people, and the 2019 DusitD2 complex attack in the same city, which killed over 20 people. In response, the Kenyan government has increased security measures in the country, including the use of military forces to patrol border regions and the implementation of stricter immigration policies. Furthermore, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) has emerged as a significant threat to security in the West African region. ISWAP is an offshoot of Boko Haram that has gained significant ground in the Lake Chad region, carrying out attacks in Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. The group has been known to use suicide bombers and to target military installations, civilians, and aid workers.

Causes of Terrorism in Africa

The causes of terrorism in Africa are complex and multifaceted, and vary from country to country. However, some of the major causes of terrorism in Africa are outlined below:

Unemployment: According to Olulu et al. (2014, p. 38), unemployment is “a situation whereby people who are willing and capable of working could not find any work to do”. They insist that unemployment is one of the socio-security challenges that governments over the years have identified. But just as Okoli and Iortyer (2014) asserted, it is very unfortunate that government effort towards solving the problem of unemployment in Africa has yielded little or no positive results. Nowadays in Africa, unemployed youths are used as thugs during political campaigns, rallies, as well as in the time of crisis. The rate of unemployment in Africa is very high. Most people in the region do not have a source of livelihood.

The truth remains that when people are jobless, the tendency for them to involve in crime and criminality is high. There is also the tendency for them to look at their plight as the making of a cruel society that does not seem to care for them. Sulaiman (2018) has argued that terrorism is an offshoot of unemployment. He also claimed that frustration of unemployed youths fuels insurgency and terrorism. The idleness of the youths, he contended, is consequential on the Almajiric system which serves as “a social laboratory for terrorist recruits”.

Political instability and weak governance: Political instability and weak governance are among the primary causes of terrorism in Africa. In many African countries, weak governance, corruption, and political instability have created an environment of chaos and lawlessness, which has allowed terrorist groups to thrive. The lack of effective state institutions and rule of law has also led to widespread poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, providing fertile ground for radicalisation and recruitment by terrorist groups.

Poverty and economic marginalisation: Poverty and economic marginalisation are also significant causes of terrorism in Africa. Poverty and unemployment make young people particularly vulnerable to radicalisation, as they are often attracted by the promises of economic opportunities, social status, and a sense of belonging offered by terrorist organisations. Economic marginalisation and inequality also breed resentment and frustration among the poor, who may feel excluded from mainstream society and turn to violence as a means of expressing their grievances.

Ethnic and religious tensions: Ethnic and religious tensions are another factor contributing to terrorism in Africa. Many African countries are deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines, and these divisions have been exploited by terrorist groups seeking to gain a foothold in vulnerable communities. These tensions are often exacerbated by political manipulation, economic inequality, and historical grievances, which can create a sense of victimisation and fuel a desire for revenge among certain ethnic and religious groups.

External factors: External factors, such as foreign intervention and geopolitical competition, can also contribute to terrorism in Africa. Many African countries have been the target of foreign intervention, which has often been perceived as a violation of their sovereignty and independence. This has led to resentment and hostility towards foreign powers, and in some

cases, has provided terrorist groups with a pretext for attacking foreign interests. Geopolitical competition, such as the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, also fuels sectarian tensions and creates opportunities for terrorist organisations to exploit these divisions.

Impact of Terrorism on State Security in Africa

Terrorism has had significant impact on state security in Africa. The following are the impact of terrorism on state security in Africa.

Political instability: Terrorism has been a major contributor to political instability in many African countries. Acts of terrorism can lead to a breakdown of law and order, undermining the government's ability to maintain security and provide essential services to its citizens. This can create an environment of fear and mistrust among the population, making it more challenging for the government to assert its authority and maintain public order.

Economic disruption: Terrorism has also had a significant impact on the economy of many African countries. Terrorist attacks can disrupt economic activities, resulting in a loss of revenue and investment. In addition, they can cause damage to infrastructure, including transportation and communication systems, which can further exacerbate economic disruption.

Social instability: Terrorism can also contribute to social instability in affected countries. Acts of terrorism often target civilians, which can create fear and panic, leading to social unrest and division. Furthermore, terrorist activities can cause displacement of people, resulting in refugee crises and exacerbating social tensions.

Impact on human rights: Terrorism has also had an impact on human rights in Africa. In some cases, governments have used terrorism as a pretext to violate human rights, including the restriction of civil liberties and the use of torture and extrajudicial killings. Furthermore, counter-terrorism measures can sometimes result in the targeting of innocent individuals, leading to human rights abuses.

Regional Instability: The impact of terrorism in Africa is not limited to individual countries but can have regional implications. Terrorist groups often operate across borders, making it difficult for individual countries to address the problem on their own. This can create regional instability, making it more challenging to maintain peace and security in the affected area.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism has become a significant threat to states security in Africa, and its impacts are widespread and far-reaching. The underlying causes of terrorism in Africa are complex and multifaceted, including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and religious extremism. These factors have created an environment that makes it easier for extremist groups to gain traction, recruit members, and carry out terrorist attacks (Campbell, 2014). The impact of terrorism on state security in Africa is severe, as it undermines the authority of governments, creates fear and mistrust among the population, and disrupts development efforts. Acts of terrorism often lead to political instability, economic disruption, social unrest, and regional

instability. They can also result in the violation of human rights and the restriction of civil liberties, which further undermines state security.

Rupiya (2014) stated that addressing the problem of terrorism in Africa requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach that involves improving governance, promoting economic development, protecting human rights, and strengthening regional cooperation. This approach should focus on addressing the underlying causes of terrorism, such as political instability, economic underdevelopment, and religious extremism, and creating an environment that makes it more difficult for extremist groups to operate. Terrorism is a complex and multifaceted problem that poses a significant threat to state security in Africa. Addressing this problem requires a concerted effort by governments, civil society, and the international community. If African countries work together, they can create a more secure and stable environment for their citizens, promote economic growth and development, and protect human rights. This will help to address the underlying causes of terrorism and create a more peaceful and prosperous Africa for all.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, the following are recommended:

- African states should invest in modern technology and ammunitions which would assist the security agencies in combating terrorism in Africa.
- African states should focus on strengthening border security to prevent the infiltration of terrorists into their territory.
- African states should address socio-economic issues to prevent vulnerable populations from falling prey to extremist groups. This can be achieved by investing in education, healthcare, and job creation programmes.
- African states should collaborate with regional and international partners to share intelligence and coordinate efforts to combat terrorism. This can include joint military operations, information sharing, and capacity building programmes.
- There is need for better civil-military relations in African states.

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