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Editorial Note

Terrorism in Africa: History and Trajectory

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The history and trajectory of terrorism in Africa is deeply intertwined with the continent's complex socio-political landscape. Added to this labyrinth is the definitional problems associated with the concept of terrorism Who is really a terrorist? Do they see themselves as terrorists? What are the causes of terrorism in the continent? And what is its trajectory?

Terrorism is a problematic concept to define (Schmid, 2023; Kebede, 2021) with no consensus on what it means. Many discussions of the concept even by journals such as this which focus essentially on the concept of terrorism and its related term of insurgency often avoid getting entangled in the definitional controversies surrounding the concept. What seemed to have been a consensus in the literature on terrorism is the aphorism that “one man’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter” (Bedoun, 2022). In essence terrorists are driven by the causes they espouse and they passionately believe in the rightness of those causes, meaning that they do not see themselves by the label through which they are derogated or de-legitimized. But terrorists are not necessarily groups – individuals have also been labelled terrorist such as the ‘shoe lace bomber’, Richard Colvin Reid (born 12 August 1973), who was the perpetrator of the failed shoe bombing attempt on a transatlantic flight in 2001. Similarly we also have the notion of ‘state terrorism’,

which has equally been mired in definitional controversies with various meanings attributed to the concept such as terrorism by “state agents using threats or acts of violence against civilians, marked by a callous indifference to human life, to instil fear in a community beyond the initial victim for the purpose of preventing a change or challenge to the status quo” (Taylor, 2021) or as “terrorism practised by states (or governments) and their agents and allies” (Sluka, Chomski & Price, 2002). Sometimes state terrorism gives rise to or exacerbates group terrorisms and insurgencies.

What is the trajectory of terrorism in the continent? While scholars like David Rapoport (2022) see terrorism in terms of waves, with each wave lasting approximately 40 years before it mutates into another form, many scholars focus on dynamics that are unique to each country such as the nature of the ethno-religious conflict in the country, the character of economic disparities and social justice in that country or the quality of governance in order to estimate its trajectory and make appropriate recommendations. The contributors to this issue of the journal appear to have embraced the latter approach.

Afroz Ahmad in ‘A Critical Examination of India’s Concerns and Responses to the Financing of Global Terrorism’, discusses the various ways in which terrorists raise money to fund their activities. He interrogates efforts by India, which has been a victim of terrorism for decades, particularly state-sponsored ones, to crackdown on terrorism financing in recent years.

In ‘Spate of Terrorism and Security Threat in West African States’, Adekunle Alaye explains the foundational causes and consequences of terrorism in West Africa and recommends possible solutions to the challenges of the menace in the sub- continent.

Felix Makonye in ‘Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Interventions and *Ansa al Sunna*’s Insurgency: The case of Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique’, interrogates the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC’s) interventions against the *Ansa al Sunna* insurgency and terrorism in the Cabo Delgado Province of Northern Mozambique. Relying on secondary research/desk research as its methodology and the theory of Securitisation, the author argues that though SADC has posted major victories in containing the *Ansa al Sunna* insurgency and terrorism, the divisions within the SADC member states arising from different perspectives on how to tackle the insurgency and terrorism of *Ansa al Sunna* negatively impacted on the Community’s counterinsurgency efforts in the Cabo Delgado Province.

Akogwu Chukwunonso Joseph, Ezeh Kelechukwu Dennis, Sunday Aideloje & Yildom Katmwan Dungse in 'Kidnapping for Ransom (K4r) and Human (In) Security in Nigeria: Issues and Trends', examine the phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria with a view to exposing its implications for human security. Relying on documentary evidence of cases and descriptive qualitative methods as well as the 'queer ladder theory, the paper contends that kidnapping (which terrorists increasingly use as a source of fundraising), is essentially a lucrative organized crime.

In 'Africa's Responsibility to Protect: The Cabo Delgado Dilemma in Mozambique', Karabo Mokgonyana discusses the insurgencies in the northern province of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique since 2017 in which the civilian population and government institutions have been subjected to violent armed attacks by Islamist militants. He notes that though the Mozambican government has made attempts to put an end to the attacks over the past years through the deployment of the Mozambican Defence and Security Forces, they failed to put an end to the insurgencies due to the overpowering attacks of the Islamist militants. Based on this, the paper explores the possibility of invoking the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine to get the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), other African countries and the international community to get more involved in order to prevent the insurgencies from spreading to the rest of the country and to protect the civilians of Cabo Delgado.

Stanley Osezua Ehiane, Caleb Ayuba and Dominique Uwizeyimana in 'Ethnic Marginalisation and the Emergence of Terror Group in Mozambique', showed how the conflict in the Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique has greatly shaped the security thrust in Mozambique and the entire Southern African region. They interrogate the core issues responsible for the conflict, using the conflict theory of greed versus grievance and contend that that ethnic marginalisation is the core trigger of the conflicts in the Cabo Delgado province.

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