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D E F E N S E

F O R

A NEW ERA IN SOMALIA

AMISOM and Somali Forces Join
to Defeat al-Shabaab

PLUS

Rehabilitating Radicals
Ending Terror Financing

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ON THE COVER:

An Ethiopian Soldier serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia stands guard in the Hiran region of the country after a battle with al-Shabaab extremists. AMISOM

Diminished but dangerous. That's the current state of the extremist group al-Shabaab. Whereas it once controlled more than half of Somalia's territory and a population of about 5 million people, today its members are on the run and control only about 11 percent of the country.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army forces have fought and sacrificed greatly to push the group from its strongholds. Al-Shabaab's key moneymaking locations, including the Port of Kismayo and the Bakara Market in Mogadishu, are back under government control. Life in the capital city has returned to a degree of normalcy.

But this is no time to let up against this threat. As al-Shabaab abandons efforts to control territory, it resorts to asymmetric attacks against soft targets and extracts money by setting up roadblocks and threatening travelers. Additionally, other extremist groups will seek to take advantage of any vacuum left by al-Shabaab. ISIS is trying to make inroads in the country. AMISOM forces recognize that it is essential not only to liberate territory, but to secure it with a consistent military presence.

Defeating al-Shabaab will take a multifaceted effort that includes Somalia's military, international partners, the democratically elected government, civil society groups, traditional leaders and others. Rebuilding the Somali National Army is a top priority. The country estimates it needs a professional army of about 28,000 Soldiers who are well-trained and trusted by the people they serve. Somalia and its international partners also must cut off al-Shabaab's financial support by denying it access to profits from charcoal, sugar and khat trafficking. Finally, Somalia's civil and religious leaders must work to discredit the poisonous ideology that has infected the minds of al-Shabaab radicals. Part of this work will require rehabilitating and reintegrating former al-Shabaab fighters who agree to renounce violence.

It's a tall task, but Somalia is already seeing the first dividends of peace. After more than 20 years of war, the skyline of Mogadishu is being rebuilt, and a veritable housing boom is underway. Optimism abounds. Now that Somalia's war-weary population can see the prospect and the promise of peace, it is the job of the country's security forces, elected leaders and their international partners to make it a reality.

U.S. Africa Command Staff



Newly graduated police officers from the Interim South West Administration stand in formation during their graduation in Baidoa, Somalia. ILYAS AHMED/AMISOM



Defeating al-Shabaab

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U.S. AFRICA COMMAND

CONTACT US

U.S. AFRICA COMMAND
Attn: J3/Africa Defense Forum
Unit 29951
APO-AE 09751 U.S.A.
ADF.EDITOR@ADF-Magazine.com

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. AFRICA COMMAND
ATTN: J3/AFRICA DEFENSE
FORUM
GEB 3315, ZIMMER 53
PLIENINGER STRASSE 289
70567 STUTTGART
GERMANY

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Somalia Writes New Chapter in Its History



Hassan Sheikh Mohamud,
president of the Federal Republic of Somalia, spoke at the 28th Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in Mogadishu, Somalia, on September 13, 2016. The summit was the first in Somalia since IGAD formed in 1986. His comments have been edited to fit this format.

Today is a truly historic day for Somalia, its resilient people, and all our brotherly neighbors and valuable partners. To you all, I say Somalia and Somalis have turned a new leaf, and we are writing a new chapter in our history. This chapter is characterized by hope, inclusive governance and development in all its forms. Somalia is a proud founding member state of IGAD, and it is therefore a source of enormous pride that we are finally hosting our first Heads of State and Government summit in Somalia.



Somalia, with the support of its African brothers, is successfully fighting a war against international

terrorism. I say international because no country is immune from terror today, whether it is al-Shabaab, al-Qaida, ISIS, Boko Haram and others. Terrorism is an evil without purpose or geography, and it can only be defeated in partnership across all sectors internationally.

Over the past four years, the Somali National Army and AMISOM [African Union Mission in Somalia] have regained key towns and cities. Today, al-Shabaab controls less than 10 percent of the territory in the country. In recent months many of its key leaders have been killed, others have defected, and its violent ideology is truly shunned by the Somali people. The Somali National Forces and AMISOM have proven that al-Shabaab is vulnerable, divided and can be defeated through coordinated military action.

To this end, it is my duty as a head of state to say that Somalia and its people are indebted to the Somali security services and their African brothers in AMISOM who made the ultimate sacrifice in saving and restoring

peace and stability in Somalia. They are all in our hearts, and they will never be forgotten. The memory of their sacrifice will most certainly inspire progress and spur regional development and prosperity for the IGAD region, the African continent and the world.



Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, center, sits with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, left, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development summit in Mogadishu, Somalia.

REUTERS

Due to the success of the joint operations of the Somali National Army and AMISOM, al-Shabaab has turned to small-team asymmetric warfare tactics to conduct higher-impact terror attacks against various soft targets in Somalia and increasingly in neighboring countries. In response, I would like to suggest that we have to develop common security and legislative policies that enable us to respond to these threats in unison and swiftly.

In partnership and with great effort from all, especially the Somali people themselves, Somalia has turned the corner toward stability and progress. Today, shops are open, schools are full, and our markets are busy with traders and customers.

Hope, confidence and progress is the new narrative for Somalia and its people. For us now, there is no turning back, only going forward together and in partnership with the region and the rest of the world.



POKÉMON CRAZE

has Lagos Scrambling

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Nintendo's hit mobile game *Pokémon Go* may be best suited for tree-lined neighborhoods and public parks, but many in busy Lagos, Nigeria, are braving big-city chaos to play.

"Here it's like *Mad Max*," said Timi Ajiboye, a 23-year-old software developer. "You've gotta be sharp or else there will be some injuries."

"Sometimes it's just not safe to bring out your phone," added Ajiboye's younger brother, Tade. "If you do, thieves will come at you like flies." Still, Nigeria has its advantages for game players.

"There's so much rare Pokémon here because it's not a mainstream country," said the 19-year-old electrical engineering student at the University of Lagos. "Fortunately for me, I live here."

Based on the popular Japanese card game, *Pokémon Go* uses the GPS capability of mobile phones to let players search for, capture and train digital creatures that can be found in real-world locations. With its widespread mobile network coverage and relative security, the sprawling University of Lagos campus is quickly becoming a breeding ground for aspiring Pokémon "trainers."

Still, signal trouble often thwarts players.

"I'm on EDGE [cellphone network]," groaned Tobi Akinnubi, a 19-year-old chemical engineering student, as he walked on campus. "You can't do anything."

Soon the signal fog cleared, and Timi stopped

dead on the sidewalk and focused on the middle of a busy four-lane street full of yellow honking minibuses packed with students.

Where others saw a hedge, Timi saw treasure and zigzagged through the traffic to the central reservation, hunched over his phone. Seconds later he raised his hands over his head in victory: He had caught a fishy Goldeen and a buck-toothed Raticate.



Esther Mustapha, left, and Oyinbecks Olajide play *Pokémon Go* at the University of Lagos in Nigeria.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

These lags are likely just growing pains: With Nigeria's telecom industry booming, smartphones are becoming cheaper and data services are expanding.

But safety concerns mean that Nigerians will have to pass up many rare Pokémon in high-crime areas. The stakes are just too high, said Oyinbecks Olajide, a 20-year-old French student.

"They will steal you and your Pokémon!"



Ghana Academy Promotes

DREAMS

of LEARNING, FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Patience Kum strides across the training pitch of the Right to Dream (RtD) Academy, a football center of excellence nestled in the Ghanaian countryside, and welcomes visitors with an assured handshake.

The 14-year-old managed to convince her mother she should go to the school 100 kilometers east of the capital, Accra, because it teaches more than football.



RIGHT TO DREAM ACADEMY

"My mother didn't want me to come to the academy because girls aren't thought to play football, but the teachers explained to her that RtD is a good opportunity to get a good education," she said.

At RtD, all 93 students, ages 9 to 15, train in the sport and study hard. Patience is from a family of poor fishermen and came to the residential school's attention because of her football skills. But she said it's not just her shots on goal that have changed in the past three years.

"Beforehand I couldn't

even talk in public," she said.

"Of course, I would like to play for [Ghana's national team] the Black Stars one day, but there is not enough money in football for girls to sustain my family. ... My dream is to become an accountant."

The boys finish their training session as the sun sets behind the hills overlooking the River Volta. For them, football is a path to wealth, and they have their sights set on a contract with a European club.

The academy, founded in 2000 by Tom Vernon, chairman of Danish club FC Nordsjaelland, has a reputation across Africa and beyond. But before fame comes schoolwork — an essential fallback measure in case of injury

or if players don't make the grade on the pitch.

"Ghanaian players end up stranded in Europe or Asia or elsewhere," said Ibrahim Sannie Daara, spokesman for the Ghana Football Association, which has more than 40,000 licensed players on its books.

"Many young Africans have tragic stories; they are abused, because the continent doesn't have the right structures and opportunities for them to fulfill their potential," added RtD Director James Meller.



FAMILY FINDS PHOTOGRAPHER'S
— CHRONICLE OF —

Benin's History

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

T

ermes had nibbled their way through the dust-covered boxes containing photographer Cosme Dossa's life's work at his family home in Benin's capital, Porto-Novo. Despite such conditions, 15,000 negatives were discovered inside, well-preserved in their protective sleeves.

To his family's delight, the boxes contained a pictorial treasure trove. More than 600 photos of marriages, burials, graduations and everyday scenes from the last days of colonial rule and early days of independence.

"We never knew that these photos would be interesting and contribute to history and the country's heritage," said one of Dossa's sons, Jean-Claude, who still lives at the family home. Now, his father's work is forming the basis of an archive project that aims to preserve the West African nation's past for generations to come.

The man in charge of doing just that is Franck Ogou, a passionate history archivist at the Ecole du Patrimoine Africain (EPA, school of African heritage) in the capital where the photos will be archived. "Archiving isn't taken seriously in our country," he complained. "It's disappearing and if archives disappear, so do chunks of Benin's history."

Cosme Dossa, who learned photography using a correspondence course, died in 2003, and for more than 10 years his life's work gathered dust in his studio. During his life he moved around Benin taking portraits and recording daily life. The country gained independence from France in 1960. He was the official photographer of Hubert Maga, Benin's first president after independence.

"We have to save our heritage so the generations to come have an idea of the history of our people," Ogou said. As part of that plan, the huge collection has been digitized for a website aimed mainly at researchers — www.photoafricaine.org — before being sent to Benin's national archives.



A man holds a large-format camera at the studio of the late photographer Cosme Dossa in Porto-Novo, Benin. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

AMISOM

Pulls Somalia Toward Security



The Multinational African Security Force Has Made Steady Gains Against al-Shabaab Terrorists

ADF STAFF

Baardheere in Somalia is a town known for its agricultural production. Its climate is suitable for growing year-round crops of sorghum, corn, onions, beans and fruits, such as bananas, watermelon, oranges and papayas. Its name means “tall palm tree,” and its namesake lines the banks of the Jubba River, which winds its way through the area.

For eight years, the town also was known as a prime stronghold of the militant group al-Shabaab. Until July 2015, the al-Qaida-linked militants used Baardheere and neighboring Diinsoor as bases of operation. To fund terrorism, militants collected taxes from Baardheere



A man sells knives in Baardheere market, Somalia. The town was liberated by AMISOM and Somali forces in 2015, allowing business activity to resume.

ABDI DAKANE/AMISOM

farmers, controlled food production and extracted tolls on a bridge, according to *AMISOM Review* magazine. “Initially when we came over, the locals here were a little bit apprehensive because of

the long rule from the al-Shabaab, they were 50-50 in accepting us but now they have seen the profits of us coming over here,” Col. Abdirashid, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) battalion commander in Baardheere, told the magazine in late 2015. “Right now,

JULY 1, 1960
Somalia gains independence.

JANUARY 27, 1991
President Mohamed Siad Barre is ousted and flees the country; clan violence kills and wounds thousands.

JUNE 1, 2004
Eleven Sharia courts unite to form the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).

OCTOBER 1, 2004
Abdulah Yusuf is elected president of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was formed in exile in Nairobi, Kenya.

JUNE 1, 2006
Al-Shabaab militants and the ICU take Mogadishu after a clash with Somali warlords.

JULY 20, 2006
Ethiopian troops invade Somalia and capture Mogadishu in December.

An Ethiopian Soldier serving under the African Union Mission in Somalia stands guard in Halgan village, Hiran region on June 10, 2016. This was after a battle in which 140 militants were killed.

AMISOM



Soldiers serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia patrol outside a mosque during Eid al-Fitr prayers in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, on July 17, 2015.

REUTERS



there is a lot of activity going on in town. We have a marketplace that is bubbling with activities, we have a livestock market that is going on, we have small entrepreneurship businesses that are coming up and for the first time maybe in around eight years, locals are able to access television and radios, something that was not there when Al-Shabaab were in control here.”

AMISOM’s success in Baardheere has been replicated many times in Somalia as the force, in partnership with the Somali National Armed Forces, has liberated town after town. But the task has not been easy. AMISOM’s successes come after decades of violence, anarchy and lack of governance in Somalia. Al-Shabaab’s reach and influence has been reduced, but the group remains a deadly adversary. Much still must be done as AMISOM and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) work to build government institutions and a Somali security force that can guarantee security for years to come.

A HISTORY OF LAWLESSNESS

After the fall of longtime President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia slipped into decades of chaos. Rival warlords battled for influence and territory in the absence of any meaningful central government.

In this vacuum, a group of Islamic courts began trying to instill a degree of order after years of anarchy and political paralysis. The courts were “not so much an Islamist imperative as a response to the need for some means of upholding law and order,” according to a Chatham House paper. Clans recruited local militias to enforce rulings, mostly in sections of the capital, Mogadishu.

Soon, the courts began to proliferate beyond Mogadishu, into the port city of Marka and the Lower Shabelle region. Eleven courts in Mogadishu meted out justice for petty crimes and theft and murder, according to the BBC. They also oversaw marriages. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU) clashed with the TFG

JANUARY 19, 2007

The African Union’s Peace and Security Council creates the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the TFG moves into Mogadishu.

MARCH 2007

Uganda becomes the first African nation to deploy troops to Somalia under AMISOM.

DECEMBER 2007

Burundi becomes the second African nation to deploy troops to Somalia under AMISOM.

JANUARY 2009

Ethiopia completes its withdrawal from Somalia.

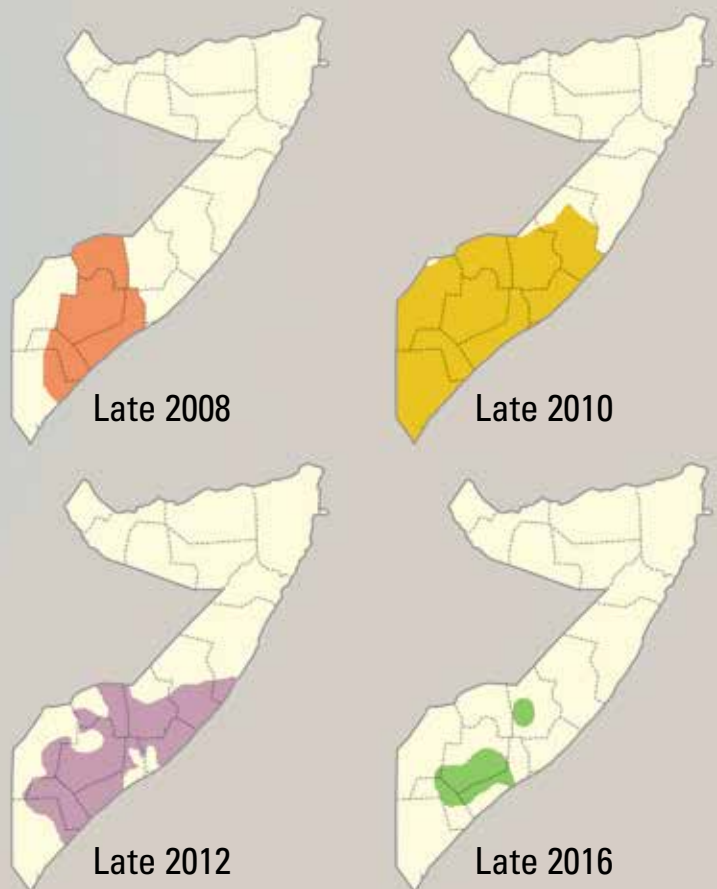
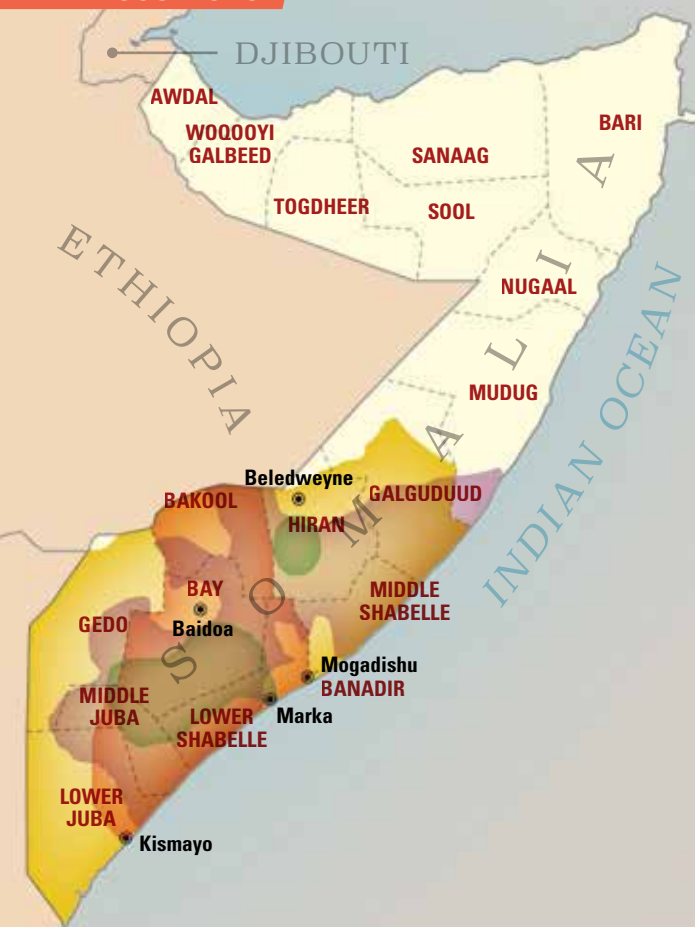
FEBRUARY 2010

Al-Shabaab agrees to ally itself with al-Qaida. Their formal merger is announced two years later.

Al-Shabaab Freedom of Movement

2008-2016

Al-Shabaab's control of southern Somalia reached its peak in 2010, but researchers say the group's asymmetric attacks outside the country, which caused civilian casualties, eroded its support. By 2016, al-Shabaab had freedom of movement in a small fraction of the country.



Al-Shabaab
Areas of Movement

Source: Rand Corp.
ADF ILLUSTRATION



JULY 11, 2010

Al-Shabaab's first terror attack outside Somalia kills 76 people and injures dozens at two locations in Kampala, Uganda, during outdoor screenings of the FIFA World Cup Final.

AUGUST 7, 2011

AMISOM forces liberate Mogadishu from al-Shabaab control.

OCTOBER 16, 2011

Kenyan forces move into southern Somalia, beginning Operation Linda Nchi, a coordinated operation between Kenya and Somali forces that translates as Operation Protect the Nation.

DECEMBER 2011

Ethiopian forces capture the strategic town of Beledweyne, and then Baidoa in February 2012.

DECEMBER 20, 2011

Djibouti sends its first troops to Somalia as part of AMISOM, the first 100 of more than 900.

as the fledgling government and Ethiopian troops occupied the capital in late 2006.

ICU hard-liners broke off to become a brutal military force known as al-Shabaab, or “the youth,” in 2006. Al-Shabaab consolidated territory and influence mostly in southern Somalia, including the ports of Kismayo and Barawe. This allowed it to import weapons and fighters and make money through the sale of sugar and charcoal. It was with the advent of al-Shabaab that Somalia became the epicenter for East African extremism.

THE MISSION IN SOMALIA

In January 2007, the African Union’s Peace and Security Council created AMISOM to protect the new transitional government and establish security. The mission began with about 1,500 Ugandan Soldiers in Mogadishu but later was expanded to a multidimensional force of 18,000. Later, its mandated total grew to about 22,000 uniformed personnel.

AMISOM was no ordinary peacekeeping mission, wrote Bronwyn E. Bruton of the Atlantic Council’s Africa Center and Paul D. Williams of George Washington University in “Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007-2013.” AMISOM “engaged in a variety of activities including VIP protection, warfighting, counterinsurgency, as well as facilitating humanitarian assistance in a city — and later wider region — torn apart by war and political disputes.”

Uganda was joined in late 2007 and early 2008 by Burundi, and troops from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sierra Leone followed. AMISOM troops “operated alongside but distinct from” Ethiopian troops, who

had entered Somalia in 2006 to defeat the ICU, until their withdrawal in 2009, Bruton and Williams wrote. AMISOM protected key TFG members, the presidential palace, airports and seaports.

THE TIDE TURNS

In battling TFG and AMISOM forces, al-Shabaab used asymmetric warfare, such as snipers, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide bombings. It was the use of this type of warfare outside Somalia that began to turn the tide against the extremists, Bruton and Williams wrote. In mid-2010, al-Shabaab bombed two public sites in Kampala, Uganda, as people watched World Cup football. Although more than 70 people died, Uganda and Burundi deployed more troops to Mogadishu.

“The second major turning point was the failure of al-Shabaab’s major offensive against the TFG and AMISOM launched during Ramadan of 2010,” according to Bruton and Williams. “The plan was to isolate approximately 40 percent of AMISOM’s forces which were deployed in the Villa Somalia area. ... After two weeks of intense fighting, however, al-Shabaab forces had suffered a series of significant losses, with AMISOM intelligence estimating between 500 to 700 fatalities with an additional 2,000 wounded.”

Over time, AMISOM forces would work alongside — and eventually absorb — some Soldiers deployed by Ethiopia and Kenya serving independently of the AU-backed mission. As the combined forces grew to about 22,000, AMISOM would begin to see a string of successes through liberated cities and the diminution of al-Shabaab-controlled territory.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected president of Somalia in September 2012.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FEBRUARY 22, 2012

Kenyan forces are formally integrated into AMISOM after passage of a United Nations Security Council resolution.

AUGUST 1, 2012

The National Constitutional Assembly in Mogadishu adopts the Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

AUGUST 20, 2012

Somalia’s first parliament in more than 20 years is sworn in after an eight-year transition.

AUGUST 27, 2012

Somali National Army and AMISOM troops push al-Shabaab out of Marka, southern Somalia’s third-largest port.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

AMISOM and Somali forces advance on the port city of Kismayo, pushing out al-Shabaab in Operation Sledge Hammer.

Countries' Contributions to AMISOM

The African Union Mission in Somalia is authorized to have a maximum of 22,126 uniformed personnel. Here is how the numbers break down for each country:

MILITARY



UGANDA

Uganda was the first nation to deploy troops in March 2007, and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) still has the largest contingent in AMISOM. It has more than 6,200 troops in Sector 1, which includes Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions.



BURUNDI

Burundi National Defence Force troops joined AMISOM in December 2007. Burundi based more than 5,400 Soldiers in Baidoa, and they are responsible for Sector 3, made up of Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions. Burundian troops also serve with UPDF forces in Sector 1.



DJIBOUTI

In December 2011, Djibouti became the third country to send forces. Djibouti has deployed 960 troops, who are based in Beledweyne, the headquarters of Sector 4, which covers the Hiiraan and Galgaduud regions.



SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone sent a contingent of 850 Soldiers to AMISOM in April 2013, but the forces have since returned home. While in Somalia, the forces served in the port city of Kismayo in Sector 2. The Ethiopian National Defence Force replaced Sierra Leone in Kismayo.



KENYA

Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) troops entered Somalia unilaterally to pursue al-Shabaab after a series of border incidents. Soon after, the KDF agreed to join AMISOM, and its Soldiers were formally integrated in February 2012. Kenya has deployed more than 3,664 troops in Sector 2, which is made up of the Lower and Middle Juba regions with its headquarters in Kismayo.



ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia was the sixth nation to join the mission. In 2014, the Ethiopian National Defence Force added nearly 4,400 uniformed personnel in AMISOM Sector 3. Burundian and Ugandan forces moved into parts of Lower and Middle Shabelle, allowing for the creation of Sector 5 in Middle Shabelle.



REUTERS

Timeline sources: AMISOM, BBC, Council on Foreign Relations, The Long War Journal, AEI Critical Threats Project, *Foreign Policy*, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007-2013," Rand Corp., Al-Jazeera

APRIL 3, 2013

Sierra Leone becomes the fifth country to send troops to AMISOM, deploying 850 to fight alongside Kenyans in southern Somalia.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2013

Al-Shabaab gunmen attack the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 67 and wounding more than 175.

JANUARY 22, 2014

AMISOM welcomes 4,395 troops from the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the sixth national contingent to be included in the mission.

MARCH 2014

AMISOM and Somali forces launch Operation Eagle, which liberates 10 towns, including some in the Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions.

AUGUST 29, 2014

AMISOM launches Operation Indian Ocean, its second major offensive action of 2014, eventually leading to the capture of strategic coastal towns.



Nigerian police officers serve with the African Union Mission in Somalia at General Kaahiye Police Academy in Mogadishu.

TOBIN JONES/AU-UN INFORMATION SUPPORT TEAM

POLICE

AMISOM police officers “train, mentor, monitor and advise the Somali Police Force” to ensure that it is a credible security organization.

Nigeria and Uganda each have a “formed police unit” of 140 officers serving under AMISOM, and Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda have varying numbers of individual officers serving.



REUTERS

THE ROAD AHEAD

As of late 2016, much work still remains. Al-Shabaab is diminished, but it still is capable of devastating attacks inside and outside Somalia. Although al-Shabaab had been pushed out of most major cities, the group perpetrated devastating attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In fact, 2016 was shaping up to be the worst year yet for IED attacks in Somalia, according to the Sahan Research Group, which had logged 225 attacks as of mid-October, according to Voice of America.

In August 2016, blasts at two Mogadishu hotels killed 22 people, VOA reported. Later, a car bomb killed a Somali general and his bodyguards.

“IEDs are the biggest threat in this counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism operation,” AMISOM Deputy Force Commander Maj. Gen. Nakibus Lakara told VOA. “Al-Shabab has been able to leverage its expertise on IEDs to very, very devastating effect.”

Al-Shabaab also has shown a willingness and ability to strike targets outside Somalia. In recent years, armed militants wreaked havoc in Kenya at Westgate Shopping Mall and Garissa University College. On October 6, 2016, al-Shabaab forces killed six people at a public works site in Mandera County.

In the midst of this, Somalia has shown remarkable progress in recent years, according to Ambassador Francisco Caetano Madeira, the civilian head of AMISOM. In *The Africa Report*, Madeira wrote that Mogadishu buzzes with new life, and international businesses are starting to take notice. But now is not the time for the international community to slacken its investment in Somalia’s security, he said.

“Thanks to the bravery of AMISOM and SNA [Somalia National Army] troops and considerable monetary investment, these victories and others have altered the security landscape in Somalia dramatically, allowing for government institutions to be installed and function in all regional governments,” he wrote.

Madeira said in advance of the 2016 Somali national election that the international community must stand firm. “We must continue to support the critical work of AMISOM, and commit to the future of Somalia — for the benefit of the humankind, free and peaceful interaction in the eastern Africa region, and, above all, the Somali people.” □

OCTOBER 5, 2014

AMISOM and Somalia Army troops liberate the port city of Barawe, al-Shabaab’s “terror capital,” from which it imported arms and fighters and exported charcoal to fund its operations.

MARCH 22, 2015

Somalia National Army and AMISOM troops liberate the island of Kuday, in Kismayo, the region’s last al-Shabaab stronghold and a key logistical and operational base used to launch attacks in southern Somalia.

JULY 19, 2015

AMISOM and Somali forces launch Operation Jubba Corridor to flush al-Shabaab from rural Bay and Gedo regions.

OCTOBER 25, 2016

AMISOM troops repel an attack on their camp in Beledweyne after al-Shabaab militants detonated a vehicle at the gate and forced their way in. All 10 militants were killed. Two AMISOM Soldiers died.



OMAR ABDISALAN/AMISOM

‘ CALM but FRAGILE ,

Brig. Gen. Sam Okiding of Uganda Says Conditions in Mogadishu Have Improved, but IEDs Remain a Threat

ADF STAFF

Brig. Gen. Sam Okiding of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) served as the Ugandan contingent commander for the African Union Mission in Somalia and as commander of AMISOM Sector One from November 2015 through November 2016. Sector One, which is based in the capital, Mogadishu, includes the Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions. Brig. Gen. Okiding spoke with ADF by phone in October 2016 about his experience and observations as the end of his AMISOM tenure drew near. His remarks have been edited to fit this format.

ADF: What was the situation on the ground in Sector One when you assumed command in 2015?

OKIDING: I was here in 2012, and then when I assumed the office of the contingent commander in 2015, the situation was different. I can tell you a lot of things have changed positively. In 2012, they were fighting all day. But since 2015 when I came back, up to now, the situation is relatively calm. However, there are other situations that have developed. The situation is calm but fragile — very unpredictable. Al-Shabaab is highly mobile, their IED [improvised explosive device] technology has advanced, and it is now the weapon of choice. But when we compare the two situations, the situation is calm; it is improving.”

ADF: When you assumed command of Sector One, what did you decide needed to be your highest initial priority?

OKIDING: My initial priority was force protection. When I came, there were about three incidents where al-Shabaab attacked our AMISOM positions, and then when I had been one month or two months in the office they surprised the Gedo region and they attacked AMISOM. In the past the enemy lines were defined. But as time went on, they resorted to insurgency, with no front, with no rear. These are the people you mix with every day. So I had to study the enemy. I discovered three principles in the way they operate. One of them, being natives, they are very good at gathering intelligence. The second one

is surprise. The third one, of course, is speed. When we looked at all the defenses al-Shabaab attacked, they applied these principles. So I decided to base my planning against these principles.

ADF: Without giving away operational details, can you speak a little bit more about how you pursued that priority?

OKIDING: Al-Shabaab these days uses VBIEDs; these are vehicle-based improvised explosive devices. In brief,



An AMISOM Soldier photographs the wreckage of a vehicle-based improvised explosive device south of Mogadishu in 2015. Car bombs have become a favored tactic of al-Shabaab.

these are vehicles which are loaded with explosives. Now, all the defenses they attacked, they used these vehicles. We fortified our defense by creating what we call armor ditches [to impede the advance of armored vehicles]. An armor ditch is actually a weapon for armor, even tanks. And we got the vehicles. So that is one way. And then, of course, we changed our lifestyle. That is the second point. I told the Soldiers never to sleep or to rest during nighttime. Our Soldiers now rest during the day. And during the night they start their normal activities. So there is no way you can surprise them. So basically those are the two areas that we have implemented, and we are seeing positive results.

ADF: Given that you are stationed in Mogadishu, can you describe what daily life is like in the Somali capital today?

OKIDING: The situation here is calm. A lot of things have changed. In 2007, the situation was very, very, very hostile — we all know that. But today, there are so many highscrapers mushrooming, people go to the ocean to do fishing, the businesses boom in the entire city, the boats dock [one] after the other. In fact, one of the busiest airports in Africa is [Aden Adde International Airport]. Because the interval for the takeoff and the landing is not more than 10 minutes. So

everywhere is busy. Despite the isolated cases of assassination, VBIEDs and the rest, the town is a normal town like any other city in Africa. People are busy, people are working and life is back to normal.

ADF: What do you count as your biggest success during your tenure as Sector One commander? What are you most proud of?

OKIDING: What I'm most proud of is the situation has changed. I'm also proud of having handled very important functions. Right now we are overseeing the elections, and Somalia is going through general elections — Parliament and the presidential election. That's one. Two, we have also hosted IGAD. [Somalia hosted the 28th Intergovernmental Authority on Development Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in Mogadishu on September 13, 2016.] The heads of state were here, and they were convinced that AMISOM is doing a very commendable job, because we managed the security. And the thing I'm most proud of is when I took over the office I promised my commanders, my political leaders, that al-Shabaab will not overrun any of my defenses. And I think God is supporting me in this endeavor. Because I have talked to the Soldiers; they have read

a lot, they are ready and will bridge the gaps, and I'm sure it will come to pass. And that's what makes me very happy and very proud.

ADF: What is your assessment of the current strength of al-Shabaab in Somalia and the East African subregion?

OKIDING: To come with actual figures then I would be deceiving myself, but what you hear from people is that they number between 3,000 and 5,000. But we can't rely on those figures. What I can tell you other than that is there is an increase of foreign fighters, from Yemen, Syria and other countries.

ADF: Uganda in 2010 was the victim of al-Shabaab bombings at the World Cup venues in Kampala. Have you gained any perspective during your Sector One command that you think will help the UPDF, Ugandan police and other Ugandan agencies effectively prevent and combat al-Shabaab attacks on Ugandan soil?

OKIDING: The answer is yes. One, our people have gained experience. Uganda deploys the military, the UPDF military, and also the Uganda Police Force. So both the military and the police are deployed in Somalia. We have also learned



Brig. Gen. Sam Okiding, second from right, visits the Jazeera Training Centre in Mogadishu, Somalia, with AMISOM's former Acting Force Commander Maj. Gen. Mohammedesha Zeyinu, middle, in December 2015.

killed our people in Kampala. So we have a global issue. It is not a Somalia affair; it is an affair which involves all of us. That's why African countries are here, that's why European countries are here, that's why Americans are here. So we have also gained some experience in combating them, whether in Somalia, whether at home, I think we're in a better position to do that.

ADF: *There has been talk of AMISOM's mandate eventually ending. And there have been news accounts of Uganda, AMISOM's first and largest troop-contributing country, indicating that it might withdraw in 2017. What will have to happen to ensure that sufficient government institutions are in place for Somalia to survive without AMISOM?*

OKIDING: What I will remind you is that right now we are not operating under Chapter 6 of peacekeeping. We are operating under Chapter 7 of peace enforcement. Now, after 2018, probably the United Nations would come in for peacekeeping in Somalia. And by that time, probably the SNA [Somali National Army] would have gained capacity. So, there will be two bodies in charge of the security: One will be the United Nations and then the other will be the Somali National Army, plus other security agencies. But for us, this is the line we think will be followed. When

a lot as far as fighting al-Shabaab is concerned. Two, specifically that is why we came to Somalia. I told you this is an ideological war. You put it right, because in 2010 they were in Kampala, they went and

AMISOM scales down, the U.N. and the SNA step up. That's our feeling.

ADF: *Did AMISOM forces under your command in Sector One play a role in training the Somali National Army, and if so, how has the SNA progressed? What is its capacity now, and what will it need to be able to take over security responsibilities in the country?*

OKIDING: Yes, we mentored the SNA. AMISOM military, AMISOM police mentored the Somali military and the Somali police. We mentored them in terms of training, we mentored them in terms of operations. We operate side by side. And there are some challenges, but those challenges now are beyond individual Soldiers. What you should be aware of is that Somalia is still under an arms embargo. But those are political decisions. As far as I'm concerned, the SNA is on the right track. If all goes well, I think by 2018 they will have built capacity.

ADF: *Is there anything you would like to add?*

OKIDING: The toughest challenge we have as we keep on degrading al-Shabaab ... they have resorted to the application of the IEDs. And you know, IEDs, they are in categories. There are those you can manage, and there are those which you cannot manage, especially those that use the pressure plates. The pressure plates are giving us some headaches, although we are trying our best. So that's what they have resorted to now; they are trying to make the roads impassable, but we are always there. So that is the most challenging aspect we are faced with right now. But other areas I don't see any problem; we are being supported, everything's going well, the population is on our side. □



Al-Shabaab

INC.

THE TERROR GROUP ESPOUSES A HATEFUL IDEOLOGY BUT OPERATES LIKE A BUSINESS

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY REUTERS

Farmers, herdsman and shop owners in al-Shabaab-controlled areas of Somalia have grown to dread the knock on their doors. Typically coming around the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr, the knock means a visit from heavily armed, aggressive “tax collectors.” The collectors tell the businessman it is his religious duty to pay *zakat*, a type of alms intended to help the poor. If he dares to tell the gunmen that they have no religious authority to collect the tax, he risks death. Either way, the money will not be used to help the poor; instead it will finance terrorism.

“If we tell them we have already paid our *zakat* directly to those who deserve it, they will not accept that,” said Isaac Osman of the town of Buurhakaba in 2012. “Instead, they impose on us steep penalties and take from us double the amount at gunpoint.”

In 2011, when al-Shabaab was at its strongest, the group held sway over nearly half of Somalia and used the territory as a virtual cash machine. The group collected \$70 million to \$100 million annually through a wide variety of enterprises, the United Nations reported.

Today it controls roughly 10 percent of the country, and its ability to extract revenue is limited. But the group is still dangerous, relying on a small cadre of hardened fighters and requiring only cheap explosives to inflict damage. Even the deadly attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi cost only \$100,000 to organize and execute.

“The territory they control has shrunk, so their operational costs are reduced,” Tom Keatinge, director

of the Centre for Financial Crime & Security Studies at the Royal United Services Institute, told ADF. “And, I think things like that get to a dangerous point where they realize they can’t just operate in the expansive way they were operating previously, and so their model starts to evolve from proto-state to dangerous insurgent group.”

The terror group uses four methods to generate income: taxation and extortion, trade and contraband, diaspora support known as *hawala*, and other external support, according to a study by Keatinge. The Somali government and African Union forces are working to restrict the group’s access to revenue by taking back territory and blocking access to ports where it can export goods. The international community is doing its part by making illicit financial flows more difficult, arresting top donors and enforcing a ban on illicit exports.

Still, the group has proven to be resilient. Al-Shabaab stunned local residents in October 2016 by swiftly taking back control of three Somali towns after the departure of Ethiopian troops. Later in the month they detonated a car bomb at an African Union base in the town of Beledweyne.

“It’s guerrilla fighting on the cheap, and they’re quite efficient at using the means that they have, and that means the insurgency can go on for years,” said Stig Hansen, a fellow at Harvard University’s Belfer Center and the author of the book *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*. “The key is to establish security for the villages in the countryside where they get taxes. Until that is done, Shabaab can stay alive.”

Porters carry bags of sugar and flour from a cargo ship at the Mogadishu seaport in Somalia. Al-Shabaab has trafficked sugar to Kenya to finance attacks.



TAXING AND EXTORTION

It is typical for terror groups to live off the land and demand money from citizens in occupied areas. Al-Shabaab went a step further and institutionalized the process. The group created a Ministry of Finance known as the Maktabatu Maaliya and recorded extensive information about the economic activity going on in territory it controlled. The ministry was typically headed by a Somali with advanced education or someone who had spent time abroad. One notable head was Ibrahim Afghani, who controlled the ministry until he fell out of favor and was later killed in 2013.

Through the ministry, al-Shabaab instituted a sales tax on commercial transactions, a land tax on farmers and aggressively collected the 2.5 percent zakat. In some places shop owners were forced to pay a “protection fee” to avoid having their goods stolen. In Bakara Market in Mogadishu, for example, vendors had to pay a transport tax to move goods in or out and paid \$50 to \$250 per month for protection.

“If al-Shabaab did one thing well it was rigorously collect taxes and scrape every dollar from the Somali economy,” the online news site Somalia Report said. “It is clear that al-Shabaab was far more diligent and successful collecting taxes than the [Somali government] ever was.”

In the port town of Kismayo, the group taxed goods entering and leaving the port. Boats paid \$2,000, and dhows paid \$1,000 to dock there.

The key to blocking this revenue source for al-Shabaab

is taking back territory and offering consistent security after the territory is liberated. African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces retook the Bakara Market in 2011 and the port of Kismayo in 2012.

Still, the taxing continues. After losing control of the port, al-Shabaab maintained checkpoints on the road leading from Kismayo north to a town called Jibil. Through this they continue to tax trucks going into or out of the port. Similarly, they have been opportunistic at setting up checkpoints in areas nominally under government control and harassing villagers to pay protection fees.

“They cannot face AMISOM in open combat, but they can actually put up a checkpoint and have quite a good time until AMISOM arrives,” Hansen said.

Hansen said until AMISOM and the Somali National Army have a consistent presence in all areas of the country, villagers and businesspeople will be forced to pay taxes to al-Shabaab out of fear for their lives. “The people in the village know there will be AMISOM Soldiers here one or two days a week, but when they leave Shabaab will come back, so it’s good to pay the Shabaab money in order to survive,” he said.

HAWALA

An estimated 14 percent of Somalis live outside Somalia, and the country relies heavily on remittances from the diaspora in Europe and North America to function. A study by the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization found that Somalis living abroad send



Traders sell khat at a market in Mogadishu, Somalia. The narcotic plant has been trafficked by the terror group al-Shabaab.



home at least \$1.2 billion per year. That figure is about one-fifth of the country's gross domestic product. These sums are mostly sent back through an informal network known as hawala. The network operates on a trust-based system in which users pay an agent locally and another agent transfers that money to the recipient in Somalia in exchange for a fee.

This is largely a positive way for Somalis living abroad to assist family members at home with badly needed money. Throughout the worst period of Somalia's 20-plus years of civil war, the hawala system continued to function.

After the United States designated al-Shabaab a foreign terrorist organization in 2008, the U.S. began prosecuting people who sent money to the group. Hawala networks were scrutinized, and some banks closed accounts linked to the system. Some Somalis complained that they were wrongly accused of sending money to terrorists.

Today it has become more difficult for al-Shabaab to obtain money directly through hawala, but the group has found other ways. The group has been known to use individual couriers to personally smuggle money in and out of the country. If they hold less than \$10,000, they are exempt from reporting it on international flights. Additionally, there is nothing to stop the group from imposing taxes on hawala networks and agents operating in areas of the country it controls.

"People can send money to their families with all good

intentions, but if it gets extorted from their families when they pick it up from the remittance agent, then there's not much you can do about that," Keatinge said.

DEEP-POCKETS

Al-Shabaab formally aligned with al-Qaida in 2012 and has received support through the network of terror financiers since that time. Terror groups promote a concept called *tajheez al-ghazi* from wealthy individuals who are sympathetic to their cause. According to Keatinge, this is a form of sponsorship that "allows those who cannot, or will not, join the jihad physically for whatever reason, to achieve the honor and heavenly reward of waging jihad by proxy." Osama bin Laden championed this network of rich donors, calling it the "Golden Chain." One Qatari businessman, Umayr Al-Nuaymi, is alleged to have funneled \$250,000 to the group, according to the U.S. Treasury Department.

In October 2016, two women were convicted in U.S. federal court of being part of the "Group of Fifteen," international donors who raised money online to support al-Shabaab.

But wealthy donors are no longer opening their pocketbooks to al-Shabaab in large numbers; instead they favor other terror organizations such as ISIS. "Fundamentally, the jihadi money is more likely going to Syria at this point," Keatinge said. "There's a sort of competition for jihadi dollars, and I'm not sure al-Shabaab is going to be a top pick."



Somali traders prepare charcoal for export near the port of Kismayo in 2013.

Workers serve customers at a Dahabshiil money transfer office in Mogadishu, Somalia. Al-Shabaab has used formal and informal money transfer systems to finance its attacks.

TRAFFICKING

Somalia is among the driest countries in the world, and what little tree cover exists is precious. Yet, for years al-Shabaab has profited by chopping down the country's acacia trees, burning the wood to make charcoal, and exporting it to Gulf states, where it is prized and sells for \$8 to \$11 per sack. The U.N. estimated in 2012 that al-Shabaab earned \$25 million per year from the charcoal trade.

The group exported the charcoal from Kismayo as part of a lucrative system for charging a production tax, transport tax and various checkpoint fees, earning money at each step along the production cycle. At the time Kismayo was liberated, al-Shabaab had amassed 4 million sacks of charcoal worth about \$60 million.

"The charcoal trade for al-Shabaab is like the poppy trade for the Taliban," the news site UN Dispatch reported in 2012. "It is the single most important source of income."

The group profits from numerous trafficking ventures including vehicles, sugar and the narcotic leaf khat. Sugar typically is imported from the Gulf states and then smuggled across the border for sale in Kenya.

As AMISOM and the Somali National Army have made it more difficult to operate trafficking networks domestically and restricted al-Shabaab's access to ports, experts say it is imperative to put pressure on Gulf states to decrease the demand for these goods. The U.N. imposed a ban on all member countries importing

charcoal originating from Somalia. The ban failed to stop the trade, and the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution allowing naval vessels in the waters off Somalia to inspect all ships suspected of carrying charcoal.

Al-Shabaab "still controls a number of arterial roads where khat and charcoal are transported. So while they might not actually be cashing in at the port, they are cashing in inland," Keatinge said. "The question is to what extent is that trade still going? To what extent is the UAE [United Arab Emirates] clamping down on it?"

As Somalia fights to turn the page on more than two decades of civil war and the brutal insurgency, the government and its burgeoning security forces are doing their part. In February 2016, the country passed an anti-terror financing law aimed at strengthening and cleaning up the country's financial sector. In September 2016, Somalia enacted a measure that will ensure that troops are paid on time, a key way to reduce corruption that aids al-Shabaab.

"Al-Shabaab has been denied its overseas supplies and free movement of foreign fighters who used to provide the group with training and know-how for the construction of explosive devices," President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud told *Newsweek*. "Equally importantly, al-Shabaab has lost the ideological battle. Their continuous indiscriminate killing has exposed their oblique and twisted un-Islamic behavior. The general population who was kept under their threats and extortion has not only distanced itself from them, but now feels free from fear." □



A student reads the Quran at an Islamic school in Zanzibar during Ramadan.

REUTERS

C O M B A T I N G

AN IMPORTED EXTREMISM

The Introduction of Salafist Ideology in East Africa Has Erased Long-Standing Peaceful Coexistence Among Religious Groups

BY ABDISAID M. ALI

Abdisaid M. Ali is the regional political advisor for the Office of the European Union Special Representative for the Horn of Africa. His views do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. This article originally was published by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, and it has been edited to fit this format.



he risk of Islamist extremism frequently focuses on Somalia and al-Shabaab. Yet adherents to extremist versions of Islam can now be found throughout East Africa. As a result, tensions

within Muslim communities and between certain Islamist groups and the broader society have been growing.

The genesis of this is largely the externally driven diffusion of Salafist ideology from Gulf states. Buoyed by the global oil boom and a desire to spread the ultra-conservative Wahhabi version of Islam throughout the Muslim world, funding for mosques, madrassas, and Muslim youth and cultural centers began flowing into the

region at greater levels in the 1980s and 1990s. Opportunities for East African youth to study in the Arab world expanded. As these young people returned home, they brought with them more rigid and exclusivist interpretations of Islam. The expanding reach of Arab satellite television has reinforced and acculturated these interpretations to a wider audience.

The effect has been the emergence of an increasingly confrontational strain of Islam in East Africa. The number of Salafist mosques has risen rapidly. In turn, it became increasingly unacceptable to have an open dialogue on the tenets of Islam. Growing intolerance has fostered greater religious polarization.

Over time, these tensions have turned violent. Attacks by militant Islamists against civilians in East Africa (outside of Somalia) rose from just a few in 2010 to roughly 20 per year since then. The vast majority of these have been in Kenya.

Connections between the region and the global jihad movement also appear to be expanding. The rising violence of Islamist extremists has generated a strong response from security actors in East Africa. At times, these operations are conducted indiscriminately. The result may be more support for violent Islamist groups.

In short, Islamist extremist ideology has been spreading throughout East African communities — bringing with it greater societal polarization and violence. Further escalation is not inevitable, however. The region has a long tradition of interreligious harmony. It is vital for East African governments and citizens to understand the external and domestic drivers of these extremist ideologies, so that the process of radicalization can be interrupted before it cements itself within local communities and grows increasingly violent.

THE EVOLUTION OF ISLAM

Muslims have lived in East Africa for generations. Trade and cultural exchanges between East Africa and the Arab world are centuries old. Muslims seem to comprise 10 to 15 percent of the population in Kenya and Uganda and 35 to 40 percent of the Tanzanian population.

There has never been a uniform Islamic community in East Africa. Most East African Muslims subscribe to Sunni interpretations of Islam, though there are also Shia communities and members of the Ahmadiyya sect. Sufism, often described as a “mystical” interpretation of Islam that includes the veneration of saints, is also common. Some Muslim communities have absorbed practices and rituals from traditional African beliefs. Despite these differences, religious communities in the region have historically coexisted peacefully.

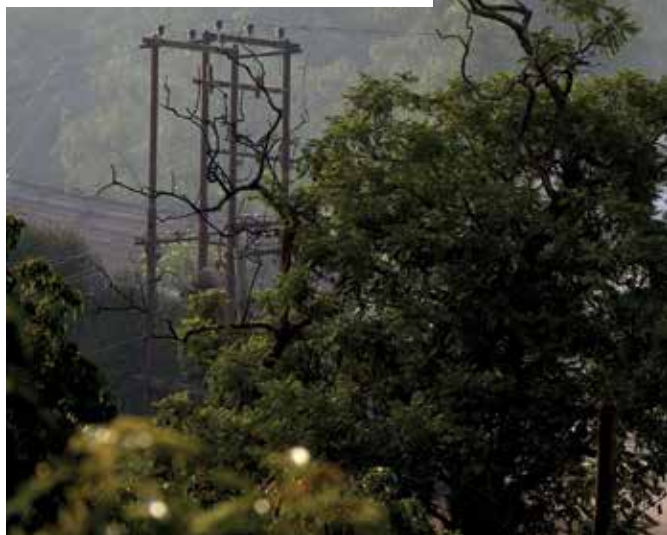
This has changed for some communities in recent decades as a result of the growing influence of Salafist ideology. A small but growing number of Muslims have adopted more exclusivist interpretations of their religion, thereby changing their relationship with other Muslims, with other faiths and with the state.

One channel by which this shift has occurred is through education. Lacking other opportunities for schooling, Muslim families in marginalized areas rely on madrasas, or Islamic schools. Over the past several decades, these madrasas have been the beneficiaries of growing streams of funding from Arab countries. In the process, students have been steadily exposed to the cultural and religious identity of their sponsors.

Opportunities for tertiary education have also expanded. While college degrees in the West continue to be viewed as most prestigious, after the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, Western countries raised immigration hurdles. At the same time, scholarship opportunities in the Arab world were ramping up. This trend has been accelerating since 2010.



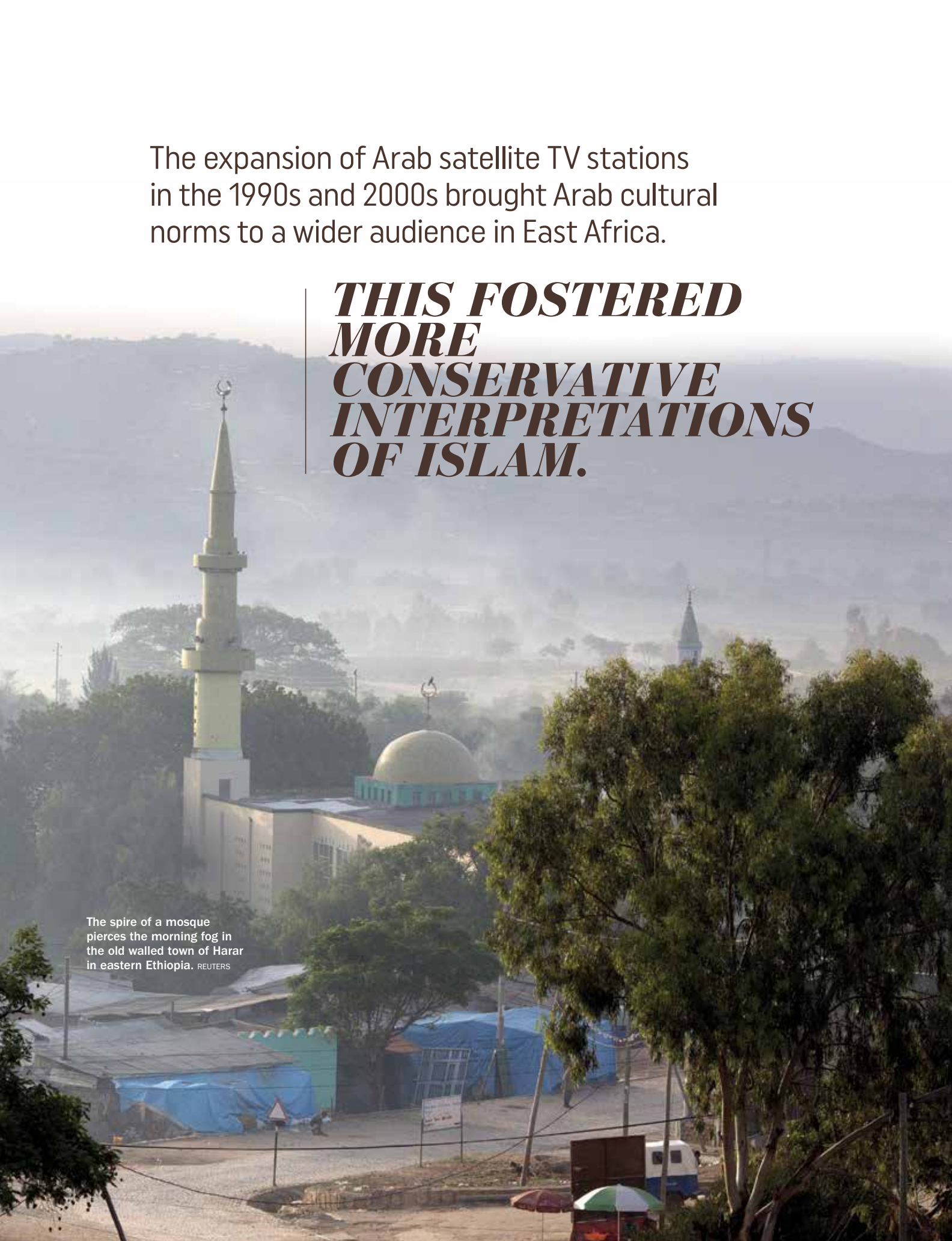
A Kenyan police officer rolls up an Islamic State flag after a raid on two mosques in Mombasa in 2014. Kenyan security forces arrested more than 200 people and seized weapons. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The expansion of Arab satellite TV stations in the 1990s and 2000s brought Arab cultural norms to a wider audience in East Africa.

***THIS FOSTERED
MORE
CONSERVATIVE
INTERPRETATIONS
OF ISLAM.***

The spire of a mosque pierces the morning fog in the old walled town of Harar in eastern Ethiopia. REUTERS



The expansion in the number and geographic reach of Arab satellite TV stations in the 1990s and 2000s brought Arab cultural norms to a wider audience in East Africa. This fostered more conservative interpretations of Islam.

The traction of such ideas is evident in the expanding popularity and influence of extremist clerics. Salafism, which had been a fringe offshoot of Islam in East Africa in the 1990s, has become common today.

In Tanzania, extremist clerics now aggressively challenge the authority of more moderate Islamic organizations and incite protests and clashes with government bodies.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

A major contributing factor to East Africa's shift toward more militant interpretations of Islam is the influence of well-funded foreign Islamist groups in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other oil-rich Gulf states. Wahhabism is an extremely conservative interpretation of the Quran. It forbids most aspects of modern education, requires strict dress codes, abides by ancient traditions of social relations, and disregards many basic human rights, particularly for women. Many Wahhabi preachers do not tolerate other viewpoints.

Foreign-sponsored East African Muslim groups have had a presence in East Africa since the mid-20th century but have expanded significantly since the 1970s, according to East Africa-based journalist Ioannis Gatsiounis. The aims of the foreign funding are diffuse, going to social centers; madrasahs; primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions; and to humanitarian and social programs.

Some activities supported by these foreign Islamic groups are laudable. They have sponsored medical care and provided aid during disasters. However, many of these groups will integrate proselytization into all their activities or will require that participants abide by strict, conservative customs to access funds or benefits, according to Humboldt University's Chanfi Ahmed.

Educational institutions have obvious strategic value in shaping the beliefs of youth. Some of these schools provide valuable instruction in math, sciences and more. However, they also inculcate a rigid interpretation of Islam that is exclusionary and emphasizes *da'wa*, or the further proselytization of this brand of Islam.

This growing influence of extremist Islam in East Africa has mostly been limited to particular neighborhoods, cities or regions. But those effects have been cumulative and compounding, leading an increasing number of groups in the region to adopt progressively more aggressive and confrontational missions.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES

Although the extremist Islamist ideology taking hold in East Africa is imported from elsewhere, exacerbating factors play a role in how the ideology resonates. Socio-economic marginalization fuels the credibility and dispersal of extremist narratives. In East Africa, perceptions of unequal socio-economic status and some ill-advised state actions have nudged Muslims toward more conservative tendencies and enabled "us-versus-them" narratives to resonate.

East African Muslims do have legitimate grievances. Youth unemployment in Kenya's Muslim-dominated Coast and North Eastern provinces are 40 to 50 percent higher than the national average, according to the United Nations Development Programme. Rates of primary and secondary school completion and attendance tend to be lower in Muslim counties. Similar patterns can be seen in Tanzania. The youth unemployment rate on the overwhelmingly Muslim island of Zanzibar has been about 17 percent in recent years, almost twice the national average of 9 percent, according to the *Tanzania Daily News* and the Tanzanian government.

Claims that Muslims are deliberately denied economic, educational and other opportunities relative to their non-Muslim compatriots have become common within the region's Muslim communities, moderate and extremist alike. For many Muslims, particularly youth, such inequality validates the divisive messages of fundamentalist Islamic centers, madrasahs and mosques.

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS THAT ALIENATE

East African governments have pursued legal action against various Muslim leaders in recent years in an attempt to isolate suspected extremists. Unfortunately, many of these judicial efforts have failed, further reinforcing a sense that the government is unfairly persecuting Muslims.

Prominent Muslim leaders in Kenya and Tanzania have also been detained by security agents without charge. Some have been mysteriously assassinated. Allegations of police-sponsored death squads that target radical Muslim leaders have been circulating widely for years.

The lack of transparency and pattern of haphazard arrests, bail policies and prosecutions have made many Muslims suspicious of political leaders and state institutions. Combined with a sense that they have been economically marginalized, many are increasingly disinclined to work through existing governance structures in order to right perceived wrongs. As a result, extremist and exclusivist Islamic narratives can seem more compelling.

The rising violence of Islamist extremists has generated a strong response from security actors in East Africa. At times, these operations are conducted indiscriminately.

THE RESULT MAY BE MORE SUPPORT FOR VIOLENT ISLAMIST GROUPS.

REVERSING THE SPREAD OF EXTREMISM

The drivers of Islamist extremism in East Africa are external and internal. A framework for redressing this threat, therefore, will require actions on both levels.

Counter external influences and emphasize domestic traditions of tolerance: Governments and civil society groups need to counter destabilizing, exclusivist narratives by emphasizing the region's much longer history of religious diversity and tolerance. This will take genuine and patient engagement on behalf of political leaders, as well as indirect efforts to support more interreligious dialogue that yields tangible benefits for participants.

As part of reinforcing indigenous, tolerant traditions, governments will have to address funding by foreign, fundamentalist Islamic entities. This will require adopting transparent and consistent means to regulate the funding sources, sectarian rhetoric and militant leanings of religious groups. Groups that promote violence or open confrontation should be banned and prosecuted. In addition, funding for social services should be separated from proselytization. However, blanket criminalization of conservative Islamic groups should be avoided because this will likely spur more support for violent movements.

Improve political inclusion of Muslim communities: Political leaders should acknowledge that Muslims have some legitimate complaints of marginalization. This alone will send a powerful message to Muslim constituencies and may spark a sense of trust in collaboration and reform. Leaders should also expand engagement with Muslim communities.

Invest in citizens economically and institutionally: Socio-economic inequalities must be addressed so they are minimized as legitimate grievances. Programs should target inequality of education, income and opportunity, regardless of whether the root cause is truly religious discrimination or a symptom of regional, urban or rural dynamics. Programs could aim to boost employment levels in Muslim-majority areas.

Strengthening and clarifying property codes and land rights would also help. Strengthened property rights may ease religious tensions and allow for the growth and political engagement of a successful Muslim middle class.

Education is also key. Muslim-dominated regions of East Africa lag behind in the number and quality of schools and teacher-to-student ratios. Politically, even small, quick improvements to facilities in these regions could build goodwill. Longer term, more Muslim youth should be targeted for scholarships to balance the effects from external ideological influences.

Practice due process: Governments must also understand that perceptions matter when countering radical ideology. Individuals who stir others to violence are certainly a threat to stability. However, if the public does not believe that legal processes are being followed, then police actions can further fuel support for radicals and their messages. Adhering to the law reinforces its value in the minds (and actions) of these marginalized communities.

Governments should thus avoid expansive legal actions that are likely to fail in court. Instead, they should focus on improving law enforcement procedures, evidence collection and building prosecutorial capacity.

Extrajudicial police action must also stop. The government should instead support transparent, credible investigations by independent experts to evaluate claims that Islamic leaders were killed by anyone connected to the state or political leadership.

These efforts should not focus on particular individuals who may come and go irrespective of the wider resonance of their views. Instead, they must delegitimize the ideology of violent extremism itself. □



David Samba, left, and Onomo Mugabi train at La Tete Haute de Muhammad Ali Boxing Club in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



SPIRIT OF 'RUMBLE'

LIVES ON IN CONGOLESE BOXING SCHOOL

ADF STAFF

David Samba and Onomo Mugabi don protective headgear and big, puffy gloves to punch away in the shadow of one of the world's greatest boxers. Both boys are students at the boxing club La Tete Haute de Muhammad Ali (the High Head of Muhammad Ali).

They swing their arms, punching at the air. They move their feet, bobbing and weaving to avoid imaginary jabs. In so doing, they help preserve a spirit born on a balmy night more than 42 years earlier in a place once known as Zaire.

The boxing club trains boys and girls at Tata Raphael Stadium in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo — the same venue where Muhammad Ali battled reigning world heavyweight champion George Foreman on October 30, 1974. The fight was known as the "Rumble in the Jungle," and in it, Ali amazed the world and won the hearts of Congolese spectators by sending the heavily favored Foreman to the mat at the 2:58 minute mark of the eighth round.

Many Congolese still idolize the American boxer, who died at age 74 on June 3, 2016. Club member Modestine Munga, 22, won a silver medal at an international match in Cameroon in 2013. She considers Ali a role model, even though the historic match was years before her birth. "I'm like his granddaughter," Munga told German news agency Deutsche Welle days after Ali's death. "I know so much about him from our coaches. I know he is the greatest boxer in the world, and that is my dream — to be as great as he was."

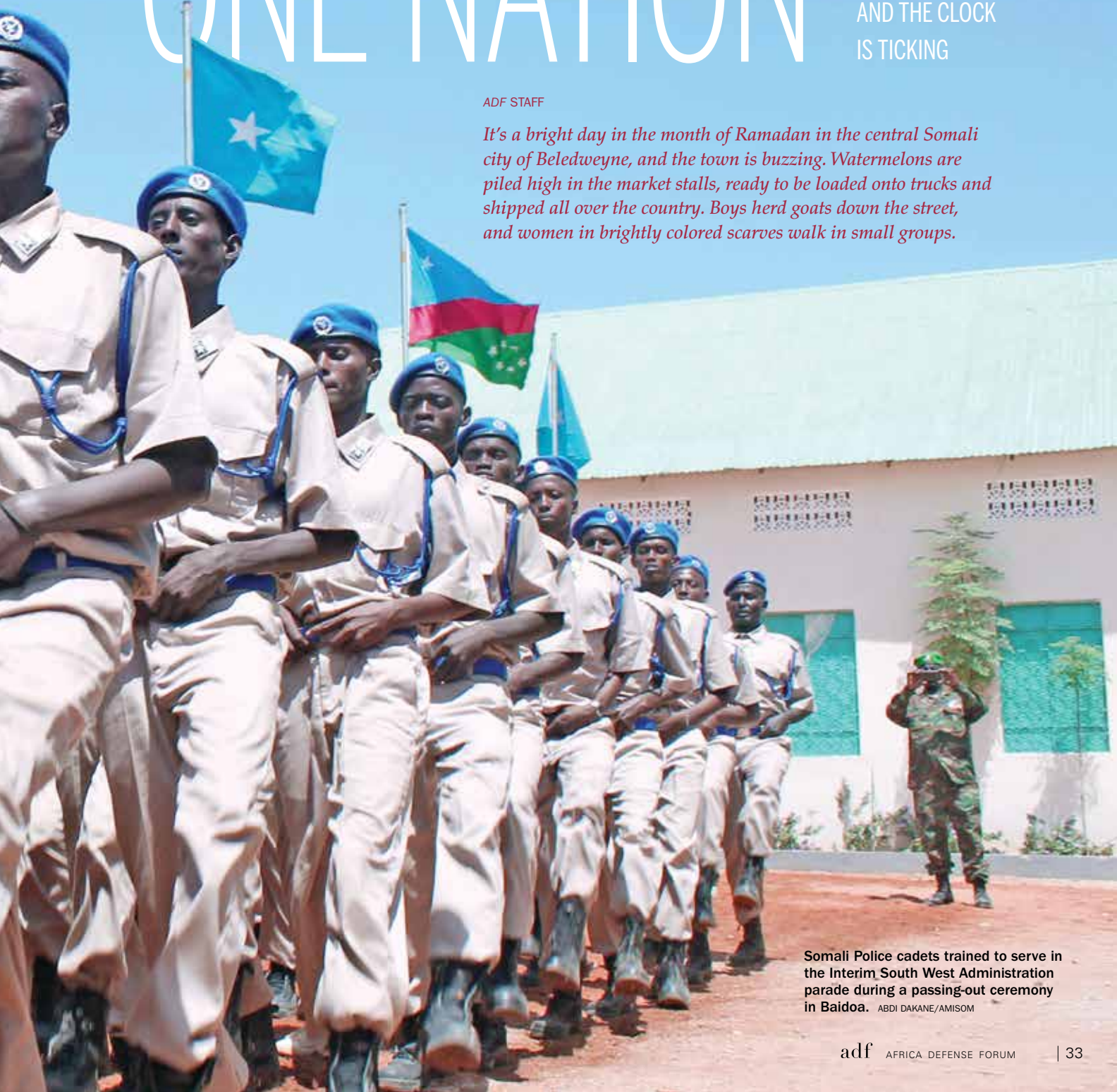


ONE ARMY, ONE NATION

BUILDING
THE SOMALI
NATIONAL ARMY
IS ESSENTIAL
TO RIDDING THE
COUNTRY OF
AL-SHABAAB —
AND THE CLOCK
IS TICKING

ADF STAFF

It's a bright day in the month of Ramadan in the central Somali city of Beledweyne, and the town is buzzing. Watermelons are piled high in the market stalls, ready to be loaded onto trucks and shipped all over the country. Boys herd goats down the street, and women in brightly colored scarves walk in small groups.



Somali Police cadets trained to serve in the Interim South West Administration parade during a passing-out ceremony in Baidoa. ABDI DAKANE/AMISOM

In the middle of it all is Brig. Ahmed Farah Abdulle of the Somali National Army (SNA) with a gun slung over his shoulder and wearing a red beret. He was only 25 years old when he was filmed for a United Nations documentary. He commands three units in the region and glides easily among the shopkeepers as he makes his rounds asking the same question: “*xalada ka waran*” or “How are you?”

“If they have problems, we will deal with the complaint,” he says. “Whatever is good for them is good for us.”

Viewing the peaceful scene, it’s hard to believe that just three years earlier the town was under the control of al-Shabaab. Fear reigned and people suspected of disloyalty, including two teenage girls, were executed in the town square. The Soldiers of the SNA are determined to turn the page on that dark chapter of history.

“I want to help every Somali that needs assistance,” Abdulle says. “I started as a Soldier within the government, and as you move forward, you move up. I have achieved a high rank. In the future I want to see unity and a government that works for everybody in Somalia.”

Somalia’s leaders know that the nation’s future depends on its ability to train more members of the SNA like Abdulle and replicate this scene across the country. That will include securing some of the most dangerous locales in the southwest of the country where al-Shabaab still holds power.

Time is of the essence. The Ugandan government has said it will pull out its contingent of troops, the largest in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), by December 2017 due to frustration with the SNA’s slow progress. Likewise, the African Union plans to remove all troops gradually beginning in 2018 and end its mission by 2020. At that point, the full burden of securing the nation will fall to the Somalis.

“AMISOM will not stay in this country forever,” former Somali Minister of Defense Abdulhakim Mohamoud Haji-Faqi told *ADF*. “One day sooner or later, maybe after two years if there is a real commitment and real logistical support for the SNA by the international community, AMISOM will be free to leave the country and the SNA will be able to take over.”

TROUBLED HISTORY

Somalia has not had a true national army since at least 1978. The army was factionalized along clan lines and riven with corruption during

much of the 22 years the country was ruled by the dictator Siad Barre. By 1991, the army dissolved, and the nation was divided up with warlords and militias vying for regional control.

After several unsuccessful efforts to form a national army, Somalia’s transitional federal government (TFG) and a rival faction signed the Djibouti Agreement in 2008, establishing the current military. By late 2009, the TFG had registered and vetted 2,904 Soldiers to be part of what it called the National Security Force. In 2010, the European Union Training Mission for Somalia began with 400 recruits undergoing training in Uganda. That mission continues to this day, although the training now takes place in Mogadishu.

There have been some signs of progress since that time. In the summer of 2011, Somali forces fought alongside AMISOM in the Battle of Mogadishu to take back the capital from al-Shabaab, including the main market. In 2012, the SNA established six brigades stationed near Mogadishu, including two trained by the European Union Training Mission. That same year, SNA and AMISOM forces collaborated on Operation Sledge Hammer to drive al-Shabaab from its most strategically important base, the port city of Kismayo. In March 2014, the coalition launched Operation Eagle leading to the liberation of 11 al-Shabaab-held districts, and Operation Indian Ocean followed in August, removing al-Shabaab from its remaining coastal strongholds, including the port of Barawe.

“The enemy today is al-Shabaab, and it’s not only Somalia’s enemy. It is a regional problem, it is a global problem,” Haji-Faqi said. “To face this problem, Somalia needs to establish a unified, capable, accountable army.”

As part of AMISOM’s concept of operations, 10,900 SNA Soldiers collaborate with AU forces. But doubts persist about the readiness of the SNA to hold territory on its own, and AMISOM is sometimes forced to rely on clan militias, which tend to be better resourced and more trusted by local communities. Indiscipline and corruption within the SNA have hampered trust. Stories of SNA forces selling their uniforms to insurgents, abandoning their positions, or even collaborating with al-Shabaab abound.

To be successful, AMISOM commanders agree, the mission requires a true joint effort.

“AMISOM is not in a position to hold a town and at the same time chase al-Shabaab. ... We can only liberate this country with

Somali National Army Soldiers demonstrate marksmanship during a passing-out ceremony in Baidoa, Somalia.

SABIR OLAD/AMISOM



“THE ENEMY TODAY IS AL-SHABAAB, AND IT’S NOT ONLY SOMALIA’S ENEMY. IT IS A REGIONAL PROBLEM, IT IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM. TO FACE THIS PROBLEM, SOMALIA NEEDS TO ESTABLISH A UNIFIED, CAPABLE, ACCOUNTABLE ARMY.”



— ABDULHAKIM MOHAMOUD HAJI-FAQI, SOMALIA'S FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE



Somali National Army Soldiers parade in a ceremony marking the end of a 10-week advanced training course conducted by the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Ambassador Francisco Madeira, center, of the African Union Commission for Somalia, participates in opening ceremonies for the Jazeera Training Centre in Mogadishu, Somalia.



the help of the SNA," a high-ranking AMISOM officer told *RUSI Journal*. "In order to do that, we must make a greater effort to build ... [its] capacity."

But Haji-Faqi said a large barrier to progress has been a lack of morale in the SNA, who fight alongside AMISOM but use inferior equipment and, he said, are being paid one-tenth the salary of AMISOM forces. "The members of the SNA are very brave and willing to die for their country and operate under very difficult circumstances," Haji-Faqi said. "They are not only side-by-side, they are in front of the AMISOM Soldiers. But they lack the proper equipment, the proper protection for themselves, proper medical treatment."

TRAINING/EQUIPMENT

Somali leaders have determined they need to build an army of 28,000 professional Soldiers in addition to a police force of 12,000.

For years, a range of external actors have played a role in training the SNA. These include the European Union, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the U.S. and a private security company, Bancroft Global. Although the help has been valuable, the lack of consistency poses a challenge.

In June 2016, Somalia opened the Jazeera Training Centre in Mogadishu, which includes classrooms and mock urban landscapes where Soldiers can be tested on a

range of scenarios in urban and asymmetric warfare.

"It's not important the number of Soldiers; what is really important is that they are well-disciplined and professional Soldiers that people can trust for their security," said Haji-Faqi. "The people should be running to them, not running away from them."

Building an army from scratch is an incredibly arduous process. A 2016 study co-authored by Somali scholar Abdirashid Hashi and Paul Williams of George Washington University determined that the biggest materiel needs were armored vehicles, heavy weapons and communications equipment. They also called for medical facilities, ambulances and better barracks for the troops. Citing a government estimate, the authors said it could cost \$85 million just to fill the equipment and facility gaps for the SNA Soldiers aligned with AMISOM.

Somalia is still under a partial U.N. arms embargo that prevents it from importing heavy weaponry while allowing it to import light weapons for its security forces.

A UNIFIED FORCE

To be a true national army, the SNA needs to reflect the country it serves. In March 2015, the federal government of Somalia approved its plan to rebuild the SNA called the Guulwade (Victory) Plan and, in it, acknowledged that the population does not yet view the army as a national force. Issues of clan bias persist.



"The major issue in Somalia is trust," said Stig Hansen, a fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center and the author of the book, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*. "You have to ensure that the army actually consists of generals and privates from all clans of Somalia, not just a couple of clans. Otherwise it will be seen as an army of occupation in many of these regional states."

To address this, the government created a National Commission for Somali National Army Integration and a military academy where cadets will be selected from all clans. There is also promise in the elite infantry company known as Danab, or "lightning," which accepts recruits solely on merit and has a wide representation from various clans. Danab units are credited with planning and executing raids that have taken out some of al-Shabaab's key figures.

Haji-Faqi said Danab and a rapid-reaction force known as Gaashaan or "the shield," which received U.S. training, are winning respect for their counterterror efforts.

"They have specialized training for fighting and operating under difficult circumstances," he said. "They are going inside the enemy areas and fighting them. If they want to capture or kill them, they do it successfully. We need more of those Soldiers with specialized training for fighting al-Shabaab and terrorism."

Hansen also sees promise in the "Darawish," or regional security forces, built up in each of Somalia's

states. He said they are earning trust among the communities they serve and are recording victories against al-Shabaab. "The regional leaders often don't trust the government and the Somali National Army, so I think there needs to be a regional component to this security solution," Hansen said. "And I think the Darawish forces will be very important in the final solution. They have a local ownership, and they have more incentives to protect at the local level."

There is similar progress in terms of regular payment of forces. An automated payroll system for the Armed Forces instituted in September 2016 will make the military a more attractive career opportunity for young Somalis and decrease the incentive for corruption.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud believes that an integrated and professional SNA is key to unifying the country.

"You are serving a nation that has been affected by civil war for more than two decades, and you are the ones who have been given an important task in reuniting them," he told the commission for army integration. "I kindly ask the people to forget about the dark days of our history and forgive each other. The heroes among us are not those who are busy with what happened in the past; the real heroes are the ones who are working to ensure that the old mistakes and mayhem do not reoccur in our country." □

MILITARY GAMES ARE **‘ALL ABOUT FRIENDSHIP’**

THE ANNUAL EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EVENT HAS BECOME A SOURCE OF
PRIDE AND BRAGGING RIGHTS FOR
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Participants parade with the Tanzanian flag in Kigali, Rwanda, at the East African Community Military Games.



ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY RWANDA DEFENCE FORCE

More than 500 participants gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, in August 2016 for the 10th edition of the East African Community Military Games with the theme, "One people, one destiny."

Military athletes from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda joined in the games. Burundi had planned to participate, but withdrew, saying it had not had enough time to prepare its teams. Burundians bearing their national flag attended the games in a show of support.

Rwandan Gen. Patrick Nyamvumba, speaking for the host country, said the goal of the games was to build camaraderie among the competing nations. Spectators were allowed to attend all events for free.

“Cooperation has already brought good results, not only in sports, but also in regional security, where such cooperation has helped in building peace,” he told *The New Times* of Rwanda.

The games, officially known as the East African Community Military Games and Cultural Event, have become a source of national pride and bragging rights among participating countries. On the eve of the 2016 games, Tanzanian officials presented their team with the national flag in Dar es Salaam in advance of the two-week event.

“Military teams must set a benchmark for others to follow,” Issa Nassoro of the Tanzanian delegation told Tanzania’s *Daily News*. “You must demonstrate the technical ability to learn your opponents’ weaknesses and destroy them.

“We cannot entertain the notion of participation,” he said. “We must compete and win for Tanzanians; this is why you have been given the national flag.”

He told his team that athletes must maintain discipline, observe game rules, and practice teamwork and fair play, “because sports are all about friendship.”

The four countries competed in football, team handball, women’s netball, cross-country running and basketball. Netball is similar to basketball, but it has seven players on each side instead of five. Netball allows only passing and no dribbling, and the goal has no backboard.

The games are not always the same. In previous events, boxing often was included, and basketball was excluded.

Kenya was the biggest winner, with gold medals in football, team handball, men’s cross-country and women’s



Officers hand off the East African Community flag during ceremonies at the 10th edition of the games.



Women compete in the cross-country event at the games in Kigali.

cross-country. Rwanda won the gold medal in basketball, and Tanzania won the netball gold medal. In the 2015 games in Kampala, Uganda, the big winner was Rwanda, with three gold medals.

In all, the Kenyan military teams won four gold medals, three silver and three bronze. Rwanda came in

ABOUT THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

ADF STAFF

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional inter-governmental organization that includes Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. South Sudan officially joined the group in April 2016, but its participation has been limited so far. The world's newest country is still dealing with internal turmoil.

The EAC has a combined population of 132 million people and a land area of 2.47 million square kilometers. It aims to widen and deepen cooperation among member countries and other regional economic communities on the continent.

The Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community was signed on November 30, 1999, and took effect on July 7, 2000, after ratification by its three original partner states — Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Rwanda and Burundi agreed to the treaty in June 2007 and became full members the next month.

The goals have included a customs union, a common market and a monetary union. The EAC ultimately would like to establish a Political Federation of the East African States.

second place, and Tanzania finished third in the overall rankings. Kenya took individual honors for best goalkeepers in handball and football, and it had the top scorers in handball and basketball.

The Kenyan football team in particular has a national following and is called the Ulinzi Stars, *ulinzi* being the Swahili word for “protection.” The team is composed of athletes from the country’s Army, Navy and Air Force.

Kenyan Maj. Gen. Samuel Nandwa told *The Star* of Kenya that the games gave athletes from the four countries a chance to interact and share ideas.

“The event certainly helped foster solidarity and esprit de corps among the East African Community and partner states’ defense forces,” he said.

The games have been rotating among countries since 2005, when the first event was held in Kampala. They are organized according to the EAC Protocol on Cooperation in Defence Affairs. It promotes visits among member countries and the exchange of information, which include sports

competitions and cultural exchange among the armed forces of partner nations. The site for the next games was to be announced in early 2017.

The 2016 games in Rwanda coincided with a major auto endurance race, the Mountain Gorilla Rally, which kicked off at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali. Twenty-eight cars from around the world competed.

The secretary-general of the East African Community, Liberat Mfumukeko, said the games symbolize something larger than just an athletic competition.

“It bears a great symbolic significance having regard to the broader goals and vision of a competitive, prosperous and united East Africa,” he said, adding that “when our common citizens watch these events and perceive that our defense forces are working together and engage in friendly activities that project mutual trust and confidence, they inevitably garner higher levels of confidence in the East African Community project at both economic and political dimensions.” □



THERE IS A
WAY
OUT

ISTOCK



A REHABILITATION PROGRAM OFFERS FIGHTERS AN **EXIT** FROM AL-SHABAAB

BY JACOB DOYLE AND
BERENIKA STEFANSKA

Ahmed, the son of a fisherman, joined al-Shabaab in 2006 as a way to earn money and support his five children. He headed a rapid-reaction team for the terror group and saw heavy combat. But he grew disenchanted with life inside al-Shabaab. Living in the harsh Somali desert, fighters would sometimes go days without access to food or water. Distrust was universal, and leaving was not an option.

"I clearly remember a man my colleagues arrested for allegedly being a government spy and a nonbeliever," said Ahmed, whose name has been changed for his protection. "They first tortured him to force out a confession, but after failing, they beheaded him. As they were beheading him, the old man was reciting the *Shahada* — the Muslim affirmation of faith — until he died. They killed him under the pretext that he was a spy and a nonbeliever, and yet he was reciting the *Shahada*. Though I could not protest, the incident really affected my conscience."

As pressure mounted on al-Shabaab and attacks by government forces became more frequent, group leaders grew suspicious of Ahmed because he used his mobile phone so much. “My superiors accused me of revealing the location of those killed,” he said. “As a result, they ordered that I be killed.”

Ahmed managed to flee from his depleted unit and walk 40 kilometers to Baidoa, where, he had learned, there was a camp that would feed him, give him drinking water and keep him safe. When he arrived, he found the Disengaged Combatants Programme (DCP) facility and checked himself in. He underwent a thorough screening process and began a new chapter in his life.

RETURNING TO THE MAINSTREAM

With centers in Beledweyne, Mogadishu and Baidoa, and a fourth planned for Kismayo, DCP targets al-Shabaab’s foot soldiers, rather

than its leaders. These foot soldiers typically joined al-Shabaab because they were promised money or they were simply kidnapped, often as children, from camps for displaced people.

To date, the program, operated by the Somali government and financed by donations from Denmark, Germany and the United Arab Emirates, has drawn about 1,800 combatants away from al-Shabaab and put them through rehabilitation and training, said DCP’s director, Malik Abdalla.

“When you reach out to and rehabilitate former fighters, then you save lives,” Abdalla said. “So much attention gets paid to the efforts at fighting al-Shabaab through military means, but not enough to rehabilitation. You can’t defeat violence with violence alone. By rehabilitating those who were violent, however, you can then reintroduce them peacefully into the larger mainstream context. I witness the changes every day.”



"YOU CAN'T DEFEAT VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE ALONE. BY REHABILITATING THOSE WHO WERE VIOLENT, HOWEVER, YOU CAN THEN REINTRODUCE THEM PEACEFULLY INTO THE LARGER MAINSTREAM CONTEXT. I WITNESS THE CHANGES EVERY DAY."

— MALIK ABDALLA,
DIRECTOR OF SOMALIA'S DISENGAGED COMBATANTS PROGRAMME



Al-Shabaab defectors undergo training at a center operated by the Disengaged Combatants Programme near Mogadishu.

ROBERT KANEISS/DISENGAGED COMBATANTS PROGRAMME

Once militants are off the battlefield and in custody, program stakeholders collect defectors' biometric data and interview them, explained Robert Kaneiss, a former U.S. Navy SEAL who directs security for DCP. Kaneiss said former militants who defected from a leadership position or who hold Western passports are generally sent to a separate "high-level" program with different procedures, and sometimes to prison.

"On average, participants are 18 to 19 years of age," Kaneiss said. "Sixty-five to 70 percent originate in Somalia and were recruited there and operated there, but decided to come out and volunteer for this program. There is a stringent vetting process for the low-level volunteers, either walk-ins or brokered by the government; they are vetted by government intelligence, background checks are performed, with oversight by NISA [National Intelligence and Security Agency] and the U.N."

Training consists of learning vocational skills, Abdalla said, but instructors place a greater emphasis on teaching positive values.

"They learn respect for human rights more than they learn welding, carpentry and other practical trade skills," Abdalla said. "Trade skills are, of course, important, and we emphasize them. We don't want to send out evil electricians into the world. We have

therefore hired international human rights experts. There is a mandatory human rights curriculum that all the participants must learn. They learn to discard the evil ideologies they were taught in al-Shabaab. This is the point of rehabilitation — to change their views.”

Kaneiss said program graduates receive amnesty from prosecution, as mandated by the Somali government under President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. A highly sophisticated exit board determines who is ready to graduate and qualify for social reintegration, Kaneiss added. “They interview the candidates for graduation. If the candidates have demonstrated a positive attitude and want jobs, if they convincingly demonstrate and assure disengagement and affiliation with al-Shabaab, terrorism, etc., then they are ready to re-engage society, their families, and often their kids, if they have any.”

A WAVE OF DEFECTIONS

Seth G. Jones, lead author of the 2016 Rand study on al-Shabaab, “Counterterrorism and Insurgency in Somalia,” said the DCP is an important component in the fight against al-Shabaab. “These kind of programs are absolutely essential,” Jones said, “especially as these groups weaken, because it gives group members an alternative.”

DCP’s effectiveness is clear to Abdalla. Each defection, he explained, is a “huge blow” to al-Shabaab’s morale. At the same time, it makes DCP’s centers more attractive to operatives who are thinking about defecting.

“When fighters leave al-Shabaab and join our program, we see al-Shabaab react, which is itself evidence that the program is working,” Abdalla said. “Moreover, each defection hurts them because the defectors know so much about them.”

Based on intelligence, Kaneiss estimates that, among the 5,600 to 6,000 active al-Shabaab members, as many as 2,000 are ready to defect, which poses a different problem.

“The terrorists are disengaging faster than we can support them,” Kaneiss said. “The program is working, but it is underresourced to handle the load.”

Kaneiss said he is working with the Somali government to get additional funds for the program from international donors and hopes soon to show positive results.

“Funding is required for the procurement of much-needed assets and resources,” Kaneiss said, adding that past charges of corruption haunt Somalia, and that the right steps must be followed when soliciting aid. “This way equipment and life support is provided rather than cash. The procurement process through which assets, food, equipment



and vehicles must be obtained has to be done in a highly transparent manner so that all parties involved, including donors, the Somali government, etc., can see what is happening and that this is not about money. This ensures stakeholders comfort that sustainability and accountability is achieved.”

Assuming the program perseveres, what is to prevent its graduates from slipping back to their roles in al-Shabaab? Abdalla emphasized that since he became director two years ago, he does not know of a single program participant who has rejoined al-Shabaab. “When they graduate from our program, they are handed over to the National Intelligence and Security Agency office in the district where they will live, and the defectors then work directly with NISA to help get them more defectors into our program.”

Moreover, Abdalla added, if a defector were to return to al-Shabaab, he would not be trusted.

MEETING SKEPTICISM WITH RESULTS

Despite its success, DCP has its share of detractors,

A guard patrols the outside of a Disengaged Combatants Programme center near Mogadishu.

ROBERT KANEISS/DISENGAGED COMBATANTS PROGRAMME



Jones said, adding that he couldn't think of an amnesty program that isn't controversial and that Somalis who have suffered most from al-Shabaab attacks "won't be happy with it." But support for the program needs to continue, he said.

"Those insurgent leaders involved in major human rights abuses have to be dealt with separately," he said. "But what societies have to do is to let go of punishing every single participant in a given insurgent group. This is how you move on and avoid tit-for-tat situations that prolong conflicts and stifle resolution."

On August 9, 2016, 30 former al-Shabaab members participated in a graduation ceremony at the Baidoa Rehabilitation Center. Among them was a young man named Abdi who joined al-Shabaab in 2006 and was told he was helping expel Ethiopian military occupiers from his country. After years of witnessing senseless death and hypocrisy in the group, he said he was ready for something new.

"I remember in my group we were about 60 fighters. Today less than 10 are alive," he said. "Our leaders lied

about the religion, the war, and they committed more crimes than God will forgive them for."

In the program he said he learned basic skills like reading and writing, but also empathy and the ability to respect differences in others. They "changed all the lies al-Shabaab inserted in our minds," he said of the program's instructors.

Ahmed also graduated from the DCP and said he believes rehabilitating extremists will be key to his country's future. "I would urge the others still in al-Shabaab to put down their weapons and stop fighting senseless battles," Ahmed said. It's time, he added, for former fighters to go through the DCP and begin rebuilding their country along with other "peace-loving Somalis." □

Editor's note: One of the authors of this article, Berenika Stefanska, was a freelance reporter based in Nairobi who died in a plane crash near Lake Naivasha, Kenya, on September 8, 2016. She was 33 years old. A native of Poland and graduate of the University of Cambridge, Stefanska spent five years reporting on events in East Africa for a wide variety of media outlets. She also produced film projects for the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization. An adventurer who enjoyed exploring rural Africa, Stefanska had a particular affection for the people and culture of Somalia and planned to write a book about the country in Polish.



Malian Soldiers stand guard at the Bamako airport during a visit from the president of Senegal in late 2015.

Mali Organizes to Stop Terrorist Cells

The country works with neighbors and international organizations to stifle extremists and stop recruitment

LT. MOHAMED KEITA/NATIONAL GENDARMERIE SCHOOLS COMMAND

PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Malian Lt. Mohamed Keita holds a bachelor's degree in social sciences from the French Université René Descartes and a master's degree in strategic studies and defense policies from the French Ecole des Hautes Etudes Internationales. He has served in the Malian Armed Forces as a gendarme since 2013, and he was appointed in 2014 as permanent instructor and director of studies at the National Gendarmerie Schools Command in Bamako.

Reducing violent extremism in Mali seems technically and tactically uncertain, owing to the complexity of regional politics. This is marked by an increasing number of players and stakeholders whose interests compete more often than they align.

Since 2012, the number of armed groups in Mali has increased, and the spread of intercommunal violence is jeopardizing the Algiers' Comprehensive Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (CPRA). Terrorist cells have proliferated throughout the country as the threat's epicenter has moved from northern Mali to the center and the south, with sporadic attacks in the Mopti, Koulikoro and Sikasso regions.

These attacks have targeted security posts and local administration facilities. The capital, Bamako, has not been spared. Terrorists move throughout the Sahel region, and Mali's national boundaries are still porous despite an international presence since 2013, notably through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Also deployed are personnel from the French military, who are engaged in Operation Barkhane, and the European Union, the African Union and the United States.

In such a volatile environment, knowing the enemy is necessary but not sufficient. Today, knowing how to collaborate with allies

and coordinate agendas is crucial. The best way for the Malian government to coordinate all regional and international initiatives for the Sahel is to develop a holistic national strategy to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

The Malian government's top security challenge is to make and consolidate peace with the former separatist Azawad movements of the north through the CPRA. This is necessary to preserve the territorial integrity of the country, protect core constitutional values and restore the state's full authority. The government's second-most-important challenge is terrorism and violent extremism.

To understand the scope of terrorism and violent extremism in Mali, it is important to explore its nature and dimensions.

Terrorism in Mali is based on a violent interpretation of the Quran and the call for jihad against the "unfaithful" and their allies. Indeed, terrorists' goals in the Sahel and Mali are to combat Western values and African "puppet governments" to, ultimately, create an Islamic state, or a caliphate, that would be ruled by Sharia.

Terrorism in Mali is transnational and local. The three largest transnational terrorist groups in Mali are al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West-Africa (MUJAO), and al-Mourabitoun, created by Mokhtar

Belmokhtar. In 2016, the latter was more active than the first two as it claimed responsibility for attacks in Mopti, Menaka and Gao against MINUSMA, Malian Armed Forces and the French Operation Barkhane. The group also attacked the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako in November 2015 and the Hotel Nord-Sud in March 2016, the site of the headquarters of the European Union Training Mission in Mali.

The key example of local terrorism in Mali is Ansar al-Dine, whose combatants are predominantly Tuaregs. Led by Iyad Ag Ghali, Ansar al-Dine's political and ideological agendas are more focused on Mali than on global issues. It has a strategy of spoiling the ongoing peace process, which runs counter to the group's interests, as well as extending an extremist ideology to the rest of the country. To achieve this, Iyad Ag Ghali created two affiliated cells in 2015: Katiba Ansar al-Dine Macina and Katiba Khalid Ibn Walid (Ansar al-Dine of the South).



French and Malian Soldiers patrol next to the Djingareyber Mosque in Timbuktu as part of an anti-terrorist operation.

Katiba Ansar al-Dine Macina is led by Hamadoun Kouffa, a former radical preacher of the Mopti region. Operating in the center of the country, the group is mainly composed of former MUJAO fighters and sympathizers. The other cell was led by Souleymane Keita, a former member of the Islamic police of Timbuktu created during the 2012 siege by AQIM and Ansar al-Dine. In June 2015, the group claimed responsibility for attacks on Malian military and administrative facilities in Fakola and Misseni, two villages of the Sikasso region near the border with Côte d'Ivoire. Keita was arrested in March 2016.

Transnational and local terrorist organizations have reorganized after being defeated by French and African forces in January 2013. They have become even more dangerous since January 2015, with subversive actions increasing against the Malian defense and security forces as well as international partners deployed to support Mali in its stabilization efforts. The United Nations has reported that the attacks are sophisticated, combining improvised explosive devices (IEDs) with mortar fire and ambushes.

A GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO EXTREMISM

The Malian government's approach to counterterrorism and violent extremism is based on prevention and collaborative policing. The government is implementing a five-year preventive strategy called the Governmental Actions Program 2013-2018. It is aimed at addressing the root causes of the 2012 crisis, including insecurity in northern Mali, the disintegration of public institutions, rampant corruption, the degradation of living conditions and loss of moral values within society. The program consists of six strategic concepts:

- Establish strong, credible institutions.
- Restore security all over the country.
- Implement a national reconciliation policy.
- Rebuild the Malian school system, including revising the curricula and building modern infrastructure.
- Build a stronger economy.
- Implement an active social development policy.

To effectively counter radicalism and violent extremism, a Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship was established in 2012. It is responsible for training imams and framing sermons. One major achievement has been the signature in 2013 of the Agreement for Islamic Cooperation with the Moroccan Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs. The aim of this "Islamic diplomacy" is to promote an enlightened way of practicing Islam based on tolerance. As a result, 500 Malian imams are expected to be trained in Morocco. As of late 2016, 200 had completed their two-year training in moderate Islam.

The new ministry also has collaborated with the Islamic High Council and the Malian Association of Imams to launch a counternarrative campaign called "Mali Kuma Kan," or "Mali's Voice." It is aimed at undermining terrorist recruitment, especially among young people. One-minute videos are broadcast in local dialects on TV, YouTube and Facebook. They begin with shocking images of extremists terrorizing civilians. Then they show Malian religious leaders explaining how such actions violate the Quran. The videos end with a core message, such as, "In Islam, killing a human being is like killing all of humanity."

SECURITY ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Mali's approach is mainly based on collaborative policing, which can be defined as law enforcement agencies, namely the police and gendarmerie forces/services, working together and cooperating with other allied units/partners/institutions, such as the National Guard or the Army. This collaboration can be at the national or regional level. A key focus of these efforts is building trust with the community to combat crime and foster confidence. At its best, community policing lets communities benefit from an improved policing service based on responsiveness, consultation, effective mobilization and problem solving.

As a response to the lack of clear leadership and coordination between security special intervention units during times of crisis, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSCP) adopted in December 2015 a Protocol for the Use



A Soldier with the United Nations mission in Mali guards a U.N. vehicle after it drove over a bomb in northern Mali.

of Special Intervention Units composed of the police, the gendarmerie, National Guard and Civil Protection. Thanks to that protocol, leadership becomes situational, and the distribution of responsibilities among these units becomes clearer when a crisis breaks out. Another innovative measure is the creation of the MSCP Centre for Operations as a core element of the protocol for crisis management. The center is responsible for designating an appropriate response unit and directing it to the area in need.

The protocol also contains a plan to secure Bamako to mitigate consequences of terrorist attacks. Protective measures have been taken, including identifying critical infrastructure, specifying units to protect certain installations, and installing monitoring cameras in sensitive areas.

Mali has taken part in regional initiatives to address terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel. In March 2013, the African Union began a strategy for the Sahel region called the Nouakchott Process, to strengthen regional security cooperation through intelligence sharing and joint surveillance. Eleven states are part of the process. The AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel, a political initiative led by Burundi's former President Pierre Buyoya, is mobilizing states for the implementation of the Nouakchott Process and is helping to coordinate efforts.

New regional initiatives also include the creation of the G5 Sahel, an organization that comprises Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Created in February 2014 to reduce poverty and crime, the organization enables members to better coordinate development and security policies. It stimulates collaboration among countries in terms of intelligence sharing, joint border patrols and joint military training. The G5 Sahel countries have adopted a strategic framework to combat radicalization and violent

extremism in the Sahel through a number of measures, including building religious leaders' capacities to combat radicalization, and promoting the role of women and civil society in preventing and combating violent extremism.

An important step was taken on May 9, 2013, when the National Assembly voted to create a Special Judicial Pole for Terrorism and Transnational Crimes within the tribunal of the sixth district of Bamako. This structure is operational and consists of a special prosecutor, a special investigating cabinet, and Special Investigating Brigades composed of gendarmes and police officers dedicated to combating terrorism. The judicial architecture confirms the role of law enforcement in combating terrorism and helps centralize and coordinate prosecutions.

To be effective in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, the Malian government should fulfill three conditions:

- All political, security and social arrangements contemplated by the Comprehensive Peace and Reconciliation Agreement should be implemented quickly to keep former secessionist movements strongly committed to preserving the territorial integrity of Mali. This will form a national front against terrorism, violent extremism and any other forms of crime, especially in the north.
- The National Combating Terrorism Strategy has to be flexible and ready to adapt its objectives, strategic concepts and national instruments of power to global and domestic changes.
- All stakeholders fighting terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahelo-Saharan region must collaborate and coordinate at the national, regional and international levels. □

TELLING A BETTER STORY

AFRICAN UNION FORCES MUST USE COUNTERNARRATIVES TO UNRAVEL AL-SHABAAB'S RECRUITMENT MESSAGING

BY LT. COL. DEO AKIIKI, UGANDAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Lt. Col. Deo Akiiki is head of strategic communications at the Uganda Ministry of Defence. He has led military information support operations to defeat al-Shabaab propaganda. He is an expert in crafting strategies to counter extremist narratives in print and electronic media. He holds a master's degree in human rights and local governance from Uganda Martyrs University, and he graduated from the Marshall Center's Program on Applied Security Studies. This article has been edited to fit this format.


As a military officer who has spent the better part of his career in communications and information management and served in operations in Uganda and Somalia — where the African Union (AU) has fought to defeat al-Shabaab for close to 10 years — I have seen tremendous efforts put forth to fight terrorism. It is high time that information operations — and indeed counternarratives — are given priority as a powerful weapon to deal with terrorism.

The East African region has been a hot spot for terrorist activities. Some of the terror groups in the region include al-Qaida, al-Shabaab, the Allied Democratic Front, the Lord's Resistance Army, al-Ittihad al-Islamiyah and al-Muhajiroon. All of these groups use narratives as their weapons of choice. These narratives target citizens in East Africa, the East African

diaspora, the terrorists' own forces and disengaged terrorist fighters.

Terrorists' strength emanates from how, when and what they communicate to their target audiences. There are numerous examples in which terrorists have recruited and mentored their fighters through the power of information operations. In Barawe, Somalia, an American-born terrorist confessed to being recruited online. Additionally, over the past 10 years, captured al-Shabaab members have confessed to believing al-Shabaab narratives, leaving them blind to alternative or contradictory information.

Military commanders must accept that terrorists have been playing this game successfully for a long time. It is time that the information war is seriously reconsidered. The Somali conflict is a contest of wills that has taken place in Somali minds as much as on



A Ugandan police officer guards a building in Kampala where five people were arrested on suspicion of terrorist activity in 2015.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the battlefield. Most terrorist acts are committed based on this ideological foundation that al-Shabaab has fostered, which makes extremist acts seem righteous.

To counter such a phenomenon, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) must not only attack and degrade al-Shabaab leadership and capabilities, but also delegitimize and counter the appeal of al-Shabaab ideology. This requires addressing the underlying conditions that terrorists exploit to spread extremist ideology.

For AMISOM and the Somali National Army to continue shaping current peace enforcement operations in Somalia, public perception must also be shaped. Counternarrative campaigns designed to convey messages to target audiences and promote themes that will result in desired attitudes and behavior will go a long way in the fight against terrorism.

TERRORIST NARRATIVES

Terrorist narratives may appear implausible, but because they are tailor-made for individuals that have little alternative information, they are believed. Let's look at just a few of the lies they spread:

- ***The need to reverse marginalization of Muslims:*** Terror groups have worked hard to propagate the notion among the Muslim community that they are marginalized by the central government. Every government action must consider the impact on the Muslim community or else it is worthless.
- ***The need to establish an Islamic state:*** They continue to assure their adherents of victory and heavenly rewards. This, they say, can only be attained through a regional Islamic state that is pure.
- ***The need to defeat "the Satanic Western" influence:*** Terrorists say that Western powers are exploitative and manipulative, thus the need for militant groups to fight for the sovereignty of their states.

TARGETS IN SOMALIA

Over the years, al-Shabaab terrorists have aimed their messages at certain audiences in Somalia, using the internet as a weapon to stream their activities in real time and post misleading information.

Their efforts mostly mobilize action against the so-called infidels, who in this case are AU troops from non-Muslim countries.

The language used is

Narratives that focus on recruitment of local and foreign fighters, especially using online platforms, have been the norm and the easiest method of attracting potential fighters. Today, young people use social media in large numbers. Consequently, they are most targeted by terrorists.

supposed to portray a religious fight. They divert the audience's attention from the heinous acts by focusing on an appealing subject. Such a narrative takes nonkinetic efforts to defeat. To dilute terrorist messaging, counter-narratives should be well-crafted and circulated in equal measure or beyond what the terrorists have done.



Gen. Kale Kayihura, Uganda's inspector general of police, speaks to the media at the scene of the murder of Joan Kagezi, head of the directorate of public prosecution's anti-terrorism and war crimes division, in Kampala in 2015. REUTERS

To a large extent, al-Shabaab has succeeded in portraying AMISOM as an occupying force. No country or individual would feel comfortable with foreigners occupying their territory. Countries that have been occupied have sacrificed all they could to rid their land of foreign forces. Such an allegation was readily consumed by al-Shabaab's audiences and, indeed, did damage to the legitimacy of AMISOM forces in the minds of the Somali people and the diaspora.

Narratives that focus on recruitment of local and foreign fighters, especially using online platforms, have been the norm and the easiest method of attracting

potential fighters. Today, young people use social media in large numbers. Consequently, they are most targeted by terrorists.

In a bid to control and refocus the minds of their troops, terrorists — especially al-Shabaab in Somalia — have not spared their own forces from their propaganda machinery. They promise heavenly rewards such as those promised in holy teachings and encourage them to fight to restore Islam. Recruits are encouraged to fight and defeat Western influence and are shown fake examples of success to boost their morale. This, to a large extent, keeps fighters fighting for what is assumed to be a “just” cause.

Those who have disengaged from terrorist activities, were captured or have surrendered are labeled as traitors. They and their families are threatened with painful death. Such threats have discouraged former terrorists, kept them in hiding, or left them in fear for their lives instead of reintegrating into society or participating in the fight against terrorism.

AMISOM and government troops and other participating forces, not only in Somalia but across the world, have been targets of terrorists' propaganda. African peacekeepers and governments are depicted as tools of Western nations rather than liberators fulfilling their pan-African responsibility. They are

labeled as occupying forces, encouraging troops to look at their leaders and governments as selfish and fighting for an unjustified cause. In such a situation, if troops are not well-grounded and briefed, it may affect their morale and favor their adversaries.

Captures and fake defections have also been used to portray the terrorists as victorious, and even when such incidents occur, their numbers are exaggerated and widely circulated to damage morale, discourage troops and their commanders, or even erode the will of participating countries so that they might consider withdrawing their contingents. It's no wonder that whenever



AMISOM troops cause a significant number of deaths in Somalia fighting al-Shabaab, the first narrative from the media and other platforms is a call for the withdrawal of coalition troops. This line of reasoning comes from al-Shabaab propaganda and not from the home countries of the contributing troops.

DEFEATING THE NARRATIVES

As global actors against terrorism, we need to fully use the media and engage in all debates, foster community engagement, and discover new ways of countering terrorist narratives. Carefully selected speakers should deny the terrorists their information monopoly over their target audience.

The following are suggested techniques to be used with AMISOM concepts of operation to counter al-Shabaab psychological operations. They can be used individually or in combination, depending on careful analysis and factual information about al-Shabaab and those living in areas controlled by them. For example, it is important to determine the populace's general perception of al-Shabaab, as well as the perception of the Somali government and government/AMISOM cooperation to craft a persuasive message.

- Serious point-by-point rebuttals of terrorist narratives must be displayed online and by other means to completely discredit the message and, by

implication, other messages originating from the source. Messages should be crafted so that the audience's attention is swayed away from the issues raised by terrorists.

- Insulate citizens from outside influences by preconditioning them against indoctrination. This way they will automatically dismiss messages from terrorists.
- Efforts to reach foreign terrorist fighters need to focus on legal, religious, social, diplomatic and other arguments. Based on the capabilities and resources available, terrorist narratives can easily be countered to reorient people and neutralize propaganda.

Finally, countering terrorism is a "war" characterized by ideas, perceptions and the mind. We often think the narratives of terrorists have been a decisive weapon for their side. These narratives are the competing storylines that, as a small country, we have attempted to counter at home in Uganda and while fighting terrorism across most of the region.

Global cooperation in countering these narratives can degrade the terrorists' power to justify indiscriminate violent tactics, propagate radical ideologies, and win over new recruits and sympathizers. We should never cede territory on this ideological battlefield. □



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

MOROCCO EQUESTRIAN EVENT FUSES ART, HISTORY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The equestrian art known as *tbourida*, inspired by the historical charges of the cavalrymen of Morocco, fascinated painter Eugene Delacroix two centuries ago and still draws enthusiastic crowds today.

At the October 2016 Salon du Cheval show in El Jadida, western Morocco, thousands were enthralled by the spectacle of groups of riders in traditional dress charging in a line and then coming to a halt with a synchronized firing of their muskets in a deafening and pungent blast of gunpowder.

The 15 finest troops of cavalrymen from across the North African country competed in the first King Mohammed VI Grand Prix of *tbourida*, taken from the word for gunpowder in a local dialect, at the sandy exhibition grounds of the port city of El Jadida.

The event showcased "the traditional equestrian art of Morocco dating back to the 13th century," Hamid Benazzou, who heads an association on Moroccan horses, told Agence France-Presse.

Mustapha Mallagui, 42, a civil servant and part-time

farmer who rides with the *sorba*, or troop, from Fes-Meknes in central Morocco, said "tbourida and its horses are like a work of art."

"Historically, [Arab and Berber] tribes would celebrate victories with the *tbourida* to display their equestrian know-how, their handling of guns, the beauty of their harnesses. It was a sort of military parade," Mallagui said, standing under one of the huge red-carpeted tents set up for competitors.

Today, the tribal wars are over, but the rituals remain a part of traditional festivities in the countryside. Villages and towns all have their own *sorba*, and a nationwide contest selects the best troop from each region.

The tradition of *tbourida* is deeply ingrained in central Morocco and the southern deserts, where cavalrymen in their majestic blue *gandoura*, or caftans, fire not in the air but into the ground because, as Mallagui explained, "the enemy is hidden in the sand and not in the mountains."

"Before, there were no tanks, no planes in wars ... there was only the horse," he said.

Tunisia's Hockey Team Takes African Cup

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AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

With its beaches and year-round sun, Tunisia is not the most obvious home for the winter sport of ice hockey. But one man is determined to change that.

In 2014, Ihab Ayed quit his job in finance in Paris to realize his dream of creating the North African country's first ice hockey team. Ayed had

dreamed of a Tunisian team playing the game internationally ever since he learned at age 5 how to hit a puck on ice.

"It took me six years, from 2006 to 2012, to bring together 40 players from around the world," said the Franco-Tunisian. "I combed ice hockey websites. I'd randomly type in Sami,



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Mohammad — Arabic names" to see whether any Tunisians came up.

With the help of social media and tips from friends, he cobbled together a team of amateurs and professionals, all of whom have at least one Tunisian parent. In 2014, the first ice hockey team from the country played, and lost, its first game outside Paris. But on July 30, 2016, the Carthage Eagles won for the first time in Morocco and went on to become champions of the African Ice Hockey Cup.

The unlikely competition, in which they faced off against teams from Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, may not be recognized internationally, but the Eagles' win sparked the interest of Tunisian authorities.

It was no easy feat. All of the team's members paid for their own flights to Morocco, and money from sponsors covered accommodations and equipment. And the team's players — largely from France, but also from Belgium, Finland, Sweden and Canada — cannot even train together.

"Each player trains with his own club," Ayed said.

Before the games in Morocco, he added, "we'd do a quick warmup to see what the ice rink was like on Monday morning, and on Monday evening we'd be playing."

The plan is for Tunisia to become an affiliated member of the International Ice Hockey Federation with its own Olympic ice rink. "The sport won't be able to exist in Tunisia if we don't have an ice rink, with the official dimensions," Ayed said. "Our ambition is for Tunisia to become renowned worldwide for ice hockey and for it to be able to send a team each year to the world championships."



Produced by Bolanle Austen-Peters • Peter Okumu • Steve Gukas • Penne Rami



Nigerian Ebola Movie Extols Moment of Heroism

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Hollywood plague movies usually are about a fictional viral outbreak that unleashes chaos and anarchy that can only be stopped by heroes who transcend the panic.

That's not true for *93 Days*, a Nollywood film that opened in September 2016. It dramatizes the story of Nigeria's response to the 2014 Ebola epidemic that killed more than 11,000 people in West Africa.

Hundreds had already died from the disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone when Ebola surfaced in Nigeria as a Liberian Finance Ministry official, Patrick Sawyer, arrived in Lagos on July 20, 2014, visibly unwell. When it was confirmed he had the hemorrhagic virus, there were fears it would spread like wildfire in the megacity of 20 million and across Africa's most populous nation.

But that's not what happened, and for many people that was nothing short of a miracle. Nigeria had just 19 confirmed Ebola cases and seven deaths, including Sawyer. The country lifted its state of emergency 93 days after he was first admitted to hospital.

"For the first time, Nigerians united to fight against a common enemy; everyone was scared," producer Bolanle Austen-Peters said. "Two years later, it is as if there had been a general amnesia; no one seems to remember what we went through."

Directed and co-produced by Nigerian filmmaker Steve Gukas and written by South African Paul Rowlston, *93 Days* portrays the medical staff of First Consultants Medical Centre, where Sawyer was admitted.

NIGERIA PARTNERS

with INTERPOL TO SHUT DOWN SCAM NETWORK

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Officials arrested a Nigerian man behind an online fraud network that engineered \$60 million in scams and took in hundreds of victims worldwide. The scams originated in the southern oil city of Port Harcourt, according to the international police agency Interpol. The arrest was carried out with the support of Nigeria's anti-graft agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

"In one case, a target was conned into paying out \$15.4 million," Interpol said. "The network compromised email accounts of small to medium businesses around the world."

The suspect ran a network of at

least 40 people working from Nigeria, Malaysia and South Africa that used malware to carry out the fraud. He also had money-laundering contacts in China, Europe and the U.S. who provided bank account details for the illicit cash flow.

"Following his arrest in Port Harcourt in southern Nigeria, a forensic examination of devices seized by the EFCC showed he had been involved in a range of criminal activities, including business email compromise and romance scams," Interpol said.

The suspect and a fellow alleged fraudster who also was arrested in the city face charges including hacking, conspiracy and obtaining money under false pretenses.

Noboru Nakatani, executive director of the Interpol Global Complex for Innovation, warned that scams in which the perpetrator sends emails designed to appear like business correspondence pose a significant and growing threat.

"The public, and especially businesses, need to be alert to this type of cyber-enabled fraud," Nakatani said. "Basic security protocols such as two-factor authentication and verification by other means before making a money transfer are essential to reduce the risk of falling victim to these scams."



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

JAPAN PLANS \$30B INVESTMENT IN AFRICA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Japan announced plans to invest \$30 billion in African projects by 2018, including \$10 billion in infrastructure development. The announcement came at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2016. Thirty African heads of state attended.

"This is an investment that has faith in Africa's future," said Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

This marked the first time that the Tokyo International Conference on African Development was held in Africa. All five previous events were in Japan.

The goal of the conference, organized jointly by the United Nations, the African Union, the World Bank and Japan, is to boost trade and aid to Africa, because Japan hopes that quality will trump quantity in its battle against cash-rich China to create partnerships on the continent. Although Japan already has a well-established presence in Africa, its financial importance to the continent has long been eclipsed by its regional archrival China.

About 70 agreements were expected to be signed at the conference. "The wealthiest countries today, with very few exceptions, got rich by trading with others," President Uhuru Kenyatta said.

Chadian President Idriss Deby, who chairs the African Union, noted that many African nations' economies have been badly affected by falling commodity prices, several conflicts and climate change.

"Our struggle for development cannot succeed without peace, stability and, above all, security," he said.

Deby called on Africa's partners to contribute to a counterterrorism fund set up by the African Union and to help speed up economic growth, reduce poverty and promote better health care.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta speak during a joint press conference at the end of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Nairobi.

NATIONS UNITE TO PRESERVE OCEAN SANCTUARIES

REUTERS

Beachgoers enjoy the sunset over the Indian Ocean in Mogadishu, Somalia.

African nations are taking part in a global effort to preserve the seas for future generations. The United States joined more than 20 countries in announcing the creation of 40 new marine sanctuaries around the world to protect the ocean from climate change and pollution. The pledges came as part of the Our Ocean Conference in Washington, D.C., in September 2016. Among

those pledging to create protected areas were Morocco, the Republic of the Congo and the Seychelles.

The protected areas are meant to limit commercial development and human impacts on ocean ecosystems. Altogether, countries attending the conference announced the addition of new sanctuaries covering nearly 1.19 million square kilometers of ocean.

Highlights from the conference were:

- Morocco announced the creation of three marine protected areas in Moghador, Massa and Alborá, covering 775 square kilometers on the Moroccan Atlantic and Mediterranean shores and plans for a fourth in M'diq along the Mediterranean by 2018 where trawling will be banned.
- The Republic of the Congo announced its intention to create a special marine conservation zone of 1,970 square kilometers in Loango Bay, in the city of Pointe-Noire, to protect sea turtles and sharks.
- The Seychelles announced that it will establish up to 400,000 square kilometers of marine protected area, 30 percent of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), by 2020 as part of a comprehensive marine spatial plan for its entire EEZ. The plan is being financed via a debt swap of up to \$27 million with its Paris Club creditors and the South African government, with the support of the Nature Conservancy and private capital.

ETHIOPIA, EUROPE JOIN to CREATE JOBS for REFUGEES

BBC NEWS AT BBC.CO.UK/NEWS

Britain, the European Union and the World Bank have announced a plan to create 100,000 jobs in Ethiopia to help tackle the migrant crisis.

Two industrial parks will be built in the country at a cost of \$500 million. Ethiopia, which



Workers install a roof on a new building at the Mercato market in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

REUTERS

proposed the plan, will be required to grant employment rights to 30,000 refugees.

United Kingdom Prime Minister Theresa May said the project would be a model for how to support poorer countries housing large numbers of

migrants. Ethiopia hosts more than 700,000 asylum seekers, mainly from Eritrea, Somalia and South Sudan.

The deal, announced at a United Nations summit on refugees in New York, will be funded by loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and grants from the U.K. and the World Bank.

A number of the new positions will be reserved for Ethiopia's growing ranks of young job seekers.

EIB President Werner Hoyer said Ethiopia is a stopping point for many making their way to Europe, but job opportunities could benefit Ethiopia and the migrant population. "Initiatives and projects like this provide people with a choice to stay closer to home and an opportunity for economic growth as well," Hoyer said.



TANZANIAN MILITARY *Helps Rebuild* AFTER EARTHQUAKE

ADF STAFF

The Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) is playing a key role in distributing aid and rebuilding infrastructure after the earthquake that struck the far north of the country.

In September 2016, a magnitude 5.7 earthquake killed 17 people and injured 360 in Bukoba.

After the quake, President John Magufuli ordered the TPDF to assist where possible.

"The disaster committee has asked the TPDF members to chip in, and they have already responded by allocating its engineering unit and some medical officers ready for the tasks," Kagera Regional Commissioner Salim Kijuu, a retired major general, told Tanzania's *Daily News*.

As of late October, a team of field engineers from the TPDF was working to repair a health center in the Misenyi district, the *Daily News* reported. The team had plans to assist in other projects in Karagwe, Misenyi and Bukoba districts.

However, the need remains great. Kijuu told reporters that work to repair damaged government buildings alone would cost more than 10 billion Tanzanian shillings. The damage to civilian infrastructure is even greater. Kijuu reported that 2,072 houses had collapsed and 14,595 had developed major cracks.

Fadhili Manongi, a commissioner from the Fair Competition Commission, said he was shocked by the devastation. His group donated 5,743 corrugated iron sheets to help in the reconstruction effort.

"The gravity of the earthquake is enormous," Manongi told the *Daily News* "I have learnt this after arriving in Bukoba municipality. Actually, many people living in faraway towns and cities like Dar es Salaam and Arusha are ignorant of the devastation caused by the earthquake."

CHILDREN RESCUED FROM BOKO HARAM TO *'Cut the Cycle of Violence'*

ADF STAFF

A Nigerian Army operation led to the release of 566 people from the hands of Boko Haram. Many of those released were children of the extremist group's members.

Among those freed in the September 2016 operation in the northeastern state of Borno were 355 babies. Brig. Gen. Victor Ezegwu of the Nigerian Army's 7 Division handed over the former captives to state Gov. Kashim Shettima at a rehabilitation center run in partnership with the United Nations' children agency, UNICEF, where they will receive medical care, Bloomberg News reported.

Boko Haram has terrorized northeast Nigeria since 2009, when the group launched an insurgency in an effort to oust the government and impose an extreme version of Islamic law.

"Our ultimate aim in taking custody of families of insurgents is to cut the cycle of violence so as to secure the future of Borno State," Shettima told the newspaper *Vanguard*. "Our aim is to give education to the children of the insurgents so that these children will grow to despise the values and doctrines their parents lived and preached."

This marked the fourth time the Nigerian Army has handed over children and others to the Borno State government after rescuing them from the extremist group, *Vanguard* reported.

"The goal of Boko Haram fathers is that even if they are killed by our armed forces, they want to bequeath to us a future of violence in Borno State, a future of violence in the northeast and a violent future for our country," Shettima said. "These children will be raised like every other child; they will be raised to love and not to hate like their parents wished for them."



Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo meets a girl and her child who were rescued from Boko Haram in October 2016. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



A security officer speaks to a worker on board a commercial ship carrying iron ore in the port of Nouadhibou, Mauritania, where cocaine was seized.

REUTERS

MAURITANIAN AUTHORITIES SEIZE A TON OF COCAINE

ADF STAFF

A joint effort by Mauritanian security forces led to the seizure of 1 ton of cocaine at the Nouadhibou seaport.

The Army, Coast Guard, military police and other police forces launched the coordinated operation at the port more than 400 kilometers north of the capital, Nouakchott, in August 2016 after authorities were tipped off that a vessel was carrying the drug, the *North African Post* reported.

The vessel's port of origin was

not known, but authorities have launched investigations to identify accomplices.

Mauritania has become a main West African transit point for drugs bound for Western Europe. In April 2016, the Mauritanian Army seized 475 kilograms of narcotics from traffickers after a pursuit and gun battle, the *Post* said.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has launched its Regional

Programme for West Africa 2016-20 and said it plans to emphasize stemming the flow of illicit drugs into the region.

"These challenges are a growing threat to development, peace and stability in West Africa, gradually crumbling the foundations of the rule of law, challenging progress in good governance, and jeopardizing the economic and social development of the subregion," said Yuri Fedotov, executive director of UNODC.

South Africa Looks to Save Penguins

MEDIA CLUB
SOUTH AFRICA

In 2001, there were 56,000 pairs of African penguins in South Africa. By 2014, there were just 19,000 pairs. This drastic decline has prompted BirdLife South Africa to try something it has never done before to prevent the penguin from going extinct.

Led by Christina Hagen, BirdLife South Africa wants to establish a new African penguin colony that will help increase the species' numbers.

"The penguins need all the help they can get," said BirdLife chief executive Mark Anderson. "Establishing new mainland colonies are immensely important management interventions."

Two major populations of the birds remain, made up of numerous colonies in Western Cape between West Coast National Park and Gansbaai and of colonies in Algoa Bay, Eastern Cape. The problem for conservationists is the 600-kilometer gap between the two populations.

Hagen said penguins breed more successfully on islands, where there are no terrestrial predators. But because there was no island between Gansbaai and Port Elizabeth, the gap remained. It was for this reason the new colony will have to be built on the mainland.



Penguins walk to the ocean after being released by workers from the South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds. More than 200 penguins were found covered in oil after a tanker spill.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BirdLife South Africa was still assessing suitable areas to establish the colony in August 2016. The choice of location will be based on whether there is an abundance of sardines and anchovies in the area; the fish are the penguins' two main sources of food.

Besides having enough fish to feed on, there are numerous other factors that determine the best location for penguins. The land has to be suitable for penguins to make a nest, typically by burrowing into soft guano.

The area must make it easy to protect the birds from predators such as caracals, leopards and mongooses. And it should not be too close to sources of pollution such as oil.

In 2010, the African penguin was listed as endangered by BirdLife International, meaning that it had decreased by more than 50 percent in three penguin generations, or about 30 years. The decline is expected to continue. The drop in population is largely driven by human activity. First, egg-collecting and guano-scraping for use as fertilizer caused enormous losses, then overfishing in the 1960s continued to cause decreases.



Lab technicians work with an African giant pouched rat at a facility in Morogoro, Tanzania. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Bomb-Sniffing Rats Check for Tuberculosis

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

They have proven their worth in detecting land mines, and now Africa's giant pouched rats are demonstrating another surprising skill — saving lives by helping to detect tuberculosis.

It's all in the nose, says the Belgian nongovernmental organization APOPO. Its founders, in 1997, saw potential for these abundant rodents that possess a sense of smell as keen as a dog's but are dismissed as vermin.

"The biggest obstacle has been the negative perception that people have of the rat," said APOPO director Christophe Cox, whose NGO has been based in Morogoro in Tanzania's eastern highlands since 2000.

That is changing since 83,000 land mines have been neutralized in Africa and Asia, thanks to the rodents, saving

CAMEROON TRIES TO BALANCE EDUCATION, TRADITION

STORY AND PHOTO BY NGALA KILLIAN CHINTOM/INTER PRESS SERVICE

Cameroon is reaching out to children of the Baka Tribe, trying to get them to pursue education without forsaking their tribal traditions.

Almost all Baka children who enroll in primary school leave before advancing to the secondary level. A number of factors contribute to inadequate education for the Baka people, including poverty, discrimination and an ill-adapted educational policy.

Of the 30 Baka children who initially enrolled in 2014 at one school, only one remains. The others dropped out to join their parents in their traditional Baka hunter-gatherer role.

David Angoula, a Baka parent whose two sons left school to pursue this traditional role, notes that the Baka pygmies learn important lessons in the forest as part of a tradition handed down from their ancestors. “We go to the forest to look for food,” Angoula explains. “Our parents left us a school in the forest, and it is that school that parents have to show their children so that they don’t forget their ancestors’ culture. What matters to the Baka is the present. The past and the future does not matter.”

There are nearly 30,000 Baka hunter-gatherers living in the thick forests in the southeast region of the country. They depend on wild fruits, honey, tubers and game for their livelihood.

“The forest is our home,” explains 58-year-old Dominique Ngola of the Salapumbe community in Cameroon’s East Region. “It provides us with everything we need: the good air we breathe, the food we eat, and the medicinal herbs that keep us healthy. It is our pharmacy.”

Still, the Baka are aware that for them to survive in a fast-changing world, they need to acquaint themselves with modern education. But keeping children in school is a huge challenge for people who forage for food and medicine.

“We have had a lot of propositions coming from many

different actors: government ministries, organizations, the Baka themselves, and among the recommendations are first and foremost, using the Baka language in school,” said education consultant Sarah Tucker. Currently, most classes are taught in French.

“There is endless literature and information that confirms that the best way for students to learn is to learn first in their local language,” she said. “Also adapting the school calendar to the Baka traditional calendar; this means not teaching around January and December for instance — that involves students going with their parents and spending weeks in the forest.”

Teaching Baka children, she said, needs to include using more games, activities and hands-on lessons “because that is what Baka students love doing most.”



Baka children in a schoolyard

countless lives.

Eyebrows also were raised when the group, whose Dutch acronym stands for Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development, branched out in 2007 to use rats for TB detection under contracts with local authorities.

“When I first heard about this technique I was a bit shocked, but it proved to be quite efficient — in fact, more efficient than the microscopy we use,” said Daniel Magesa, a doctor at Pasada Upendano Clinic in the capital, Dar es Salaam.

The clinic sends APOPO’s Morogoro lab about 200 human sputum samples every month. Rats are given the samples, some of which contain tuberculosis traces. The rats indicate that they have detected the disease by pausing longer at a sample. The sample then is marked for further testing and confirmation.

Africa accounts for most of the million-plus people

who die of TB each year. Untreated carriers can infect dozens of others, making speedy detection essential.

“The problem is the concentration of the TB in the samples we have,” Magesa said. “It is sometimes not concentrated enough for us to see it through the type of microscopy we use, even though it is very modern.”

Today, more than 29 hospitals in Dar es Salaam and Morogoro send samples to the Morogoro lab. Another dozen clinics in the Mozambique capital, Maputo, send samples to an APOPO center that opened in that country in 2013.

The NGO says it has detected 10,000 missed TB cases, identified by workers like Oprah and Violet, whiskers bristling as they move along a row of test tubes.

“The big advantage is how quick the rats are,” Cox said. “They can go through 100 samples in about 20 minutes, and this is what a lab technician will take four days to do.”

SEYCHELLES TO INTERCEPT *Fishing Devices*

SEYCHELLES NEWS AGENCY

The Seychelles is taking steps to limit the damaging effects of fish aggregating devices (FADs) on the island nation's reefs and other areas through a new project that aims to intercept FADs before they wash up on beaches.

FADs are free-floating platforms used by the tuna industry to attract fish. They are commonly made up of a 4-square-meter bamboo raft covered with shade material and fishing nets or ropes hanging down from the corners to a depth of 20 to 50 meters.

Gathering data on the

seriousness of the issue around the Seychelles' islands and getting the fishing industry to contribute to the cost of FAD cleanups are the secondary aims of the project. The Island Conservation Society said software will be installed on a computer at the organization's head office, which will warn when a FAD is in danger of getting tangled in a reef or washing ashore. The fishing devices are equipped with GPS.

The Seychelles, a 115-island archipelago in the western Indian Ocean, relies on fishing and tourism to support its economy.

The FAD Watch Program has been described as the first of its kind. The chief executive of the Island Development Co., a parastatal company that manages 14 islands in the Seychelles, said the company will intercept FADs that end up close to the outer islands.

The pilot project will depend on conditions at sea, the facilities on the islands allowing the company to get to the FADs before they land on the reefs, and whether they can be brought ashore until the fishing boats or bigger vessels can recover them.

REUTERS

REUTERS

MADAGASCAR FARMERS LEARN HOW TO BEAT DROUGHTS



MIRIAM GATHIGAH/INTER PRESS SERVICE

Mirantsoa Faniry Rakotomalala is different from most farmers in the Greater South of Madagascar, who were devastated after losing an estimated 80 percent of their crops to drought during the May/June 2016 harvesting season. The drought was said to be the most severe in 35 years.

Rakotomalala lives in a village in one of the three hardest-hit areas. But she and her father were prepared for the drought.

"Most farms are dry, but ours has remained green and alive because we dug boreholes which are providing us with water to irrigate," she said. As of August, some of the crops, including sweet potatoes, were already on the market.

Rakotomalala was approached by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as one of the most vulnerable people in highly affected districts, where at least 80 percent of the villagers are farmers. They were then trained and encouraged to diversify their crops since most farmers there tend to favor maize.

"We are 16 in my group, all of us relatives because we all jointly own the land," she said. "It is a big land, more than 2 acres," she said.

Their drip irrigation uses containers that hold 5 to 10 liters of water, and it works; her carrots, onions and cornflowers flourished.

Experts such as Philippson Lee, an agronomist working in Androy and Anosy regions, said the southern part of the country faces three main challenges — "drought, insecurity as livestock raids grow increasingly common, and locusts."

The U.N. estimates that a quarter of the population — 5 million people — live in high-risk disaster areas exposed to natural hazards and shocks including droughts, floods and locust invasion. Lee studies the numerous ways plants can be cultivated, genetically altered, and used even in the face of drastic and devastating weather patterns.

The goal is for farmers to embrace climate-smart agriculture by diversifying their crops; planting more drought-resistant crops, including cassava and sweet potatoes; and looking for alternative livelihoods such as fishing.

PROGRAM TEACHES FARMERS HOW TO USE FERTILIZER, TECHNOLOGY

STORY AND PHOTO BY BUSANI BAFANA/INTER PRESS SERVICE

Brightly colored cans, bags of fertilizer and packets containing all types of seeds catch the eye upon entering Nancy Khorommbi's agro dealer shop, tucked at the corner of a roadside service station in South Africa.

But her seeds and fertilizers have not exactly been flying off the shelves since Khorommbi opened the shop in 2010. Her customers are smallholder farmers in the town of Sibasa in Limpopo, one of South Africa's provinces hard hit by drought in 2016.

The reason for the slow business is that smallholder farmers lack training on how to use plant-nourishing fertilizers to improve their productivity.

"Some of the farmers who walk into my shop have never heard about fertilizers, and those who have do not know how to use them effectively," Khorommbi said.

Khorommbi said fledgling agro-dealer businesses are a critical link in the food production chain. Agro-dealers, who work at the village level, better understand and are more accessible to smallholder farmers than are the poorly resourced government extension service for information on improving productivity.



Noting the knowledge gap on fertilizers, the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership launched agribusiness support to Limpopo province in 2015. It has trained more than 100 agro-dealers in the province. The project promotes the development of the agro dealer hub model, where established commercial agro dealers service smaller dealers and agents in the rural areas. These dealers, in turn, better serve smallholder farmers by putting agricultural supplies and information within easy reach and at reasonable cost.

Smallholder farmers hold the key to feeding Africa, including South Africa, but their productivity is stymied by poor access to information and effective markets for their produce.

In 2006, African Heads of State and Government signed the Abuja Declaration at a Fertilizer Summit in Nigeria, committing to increase the use of fertilizer in Africa from the then-average 8 kilograms per hectare to 50 kilograms per hectare by 2015. Ten years later, only a few countries had attained this goal.

Research has established that for every kilogram of nutrients smallholder farmers apply to their soils, they can realize up to 30 kilograms in additional products. Research has shown that smallholder farmers in South Africa do not generally apply optimum levels of fertilizers owing to high cost, poor access and low awareness about the benefits of providing nutrition for the soil.

QUEEN

NZINGHA of DONGO

The ruler of what is now Angola fought her would-be conquerors for decades

ADF STAFF

Southwest Africa never had a stronger advocate than Queen Nzingha of Ndongo, in what is now Angola. She fought to protect her people from slave traders for most of her long life.

And she was good at it. American scholar John Henrik Clarke described her as “the greatest military strategist that ever confronted the armed forces of Portugal.”

Ana Nzingha was born around 1580 in Kidonga, the capital of the kingdom. Her father was the king, and he was succeeded on the throne by his son, Ngola Mbande. “Ngola” means “king,” but the Portuguese mistook it for the name of the country — that’s how Angola got its name.

At that time, the English and the French were muscling in on Portugal’s Atlantic slave trade. The Portuguese responded by moving into other parts of Africa. They built a fort and settlement on the southwest coast, in what is now Luanda, in 1617. Five years later, they invited Mbande to discuss peace terms, and he sent his sister in his stead.

The meetings were unusually sensitive. The Portuguese already controlled neighboring Congo, so Nzingha had to negotiate a way for her brother’s kingdom to continue to trade with Portugal without coming under its control. At the first meeting, her hosts provided only one chair, for the Portuguese governor. She was to sit on a mat on the floor, in a subservient position. Nzingha would have none of it — she instructed one of her entourage to drop to her hands and knees, so that Nzingha could use her back as a chair.

In 1626, her brother died. One story has it that he committed suicide, unable to deal with Portugal’s slave trade demands. Nzinga inherited his throne and took an aggressive tact, building alliances with rival states. In 1627, she attacked the Portuguese, sparking a war that lasted 30 years.

Nzingha was a resourceful military leader in a sprawling, on-again, off-again war. She offered sanctuary to runaway slaves and deserting soldiers. She developed a system in which young men gave up all family ties to be raised in communal brotherhoods of soldiers.

In 1641, Queen Nzingha allied with the Dutch, who had been her kingdom’s former rivals. Together, they overwhelmed the Portuguese in 1647. Portugal defeated the Dutch a year later, forcing the Dutch to abandon parts of Africa. That did not stop the queen, who continued to fight Portugal, often personally leading her troops into battle, even when she was past the age of 60.

Queen Nzinga organized guerrilla attacks on her enemy. Portugal and its allies responded to the attacks by trying to find and dethrone the queen. But she was elusive, and years after her fighting was over, she died of natural causes in 1663. She was in her 80s.

Today she is remembered as a brilliant diplomat, a master of military tactics and a lifelong tormenter of her would-be conquerors. Historians say that Angola’s independence in 1975 has its roots in Nzinga’s guerrilla tactics. In 2002, Angola dedicated a statue of her in Luanda to celebrate the country’s 27 years of independence.



CLUES:

1. This is the largest church in the world.
2. It can hold 18,000 people inside its walls, and the esplanade can accommodate 300,000.
3. Its design is based on St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, with a 149-meter-tall dome and colonnade forming a Latin cross.
4. The colonnades are supported by 272 Doric columns, which are up to 31 meters tall.



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Headquarters, U.S. Africa Command
ATTN: J3/Africa Defense Forum Staff
Unit 29951
APO AE 09751 USA

Headquarters, U.S. Africa Command
ATTN: J3/Africa Defense Forum Staff
Kelley Kaserne
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