TUNISIA BATTLES THE ISLAMIC STATE—TACTICAL WIN BUT STRATEGIC LOSS?

By Richard J. Pera

On March 7, 2016, Islamic State (IS) fighters attacked Tunisian government targets in Ben Gardane, a city of 80,000 people, 20 miles from Tunisia's Mediterranean border with Libya. Security forces repelled the attack, killing or capturing most IS fighters and prompting Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid to declare victory. But this was not just another attack in Tunisia's war with the IS. How was it different, who won, and what is next in IS's campaign against Tunisia? *more...*

The wall of a house bears the signs of fighting as Tunisian soldiers search for attackers still at large in the outskirts of Ben Gardane, southern Tunisia, Tuesday, March 8, 2016. (Source: AP Photo.)

Richard J. Pera is a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

KENYA'S POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AHEAD OF 2017 VOTE

By Alexander Noyes

Kenya is scheduled to hold national elections in August 2017. While the campaign season has not formally begun, the political environment is heating up. On April 5, 2016, the International Criminal Court (ICC) dropped its case against Deputy President William Ruto of the ruling Jubilee Alliance, which is headed by President Uhuru Kenyatta. Ruto faced charges of crimes against humanity stemming from Kenya's 2007–2008 post-election violence. On March 22, the leading opposition coalition, the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), led by former Prime Minister Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party, lost a bid to amend the country's new constitution. Both of these recent developments have implications for the upcoming 2017 elections. *more...*

In this Thursday, September 1, 2011, file photo, William Ruto sits in the courtroom of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands. (Source: AP Photo/Bas Czerwinski, File.)

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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Why Did IS Select Ben Gardane?

Ben Gardane is close to the border with Libya, where IS has expanded. IS has a presence in Sabratha, Libya, about 60 miles from the Tunisian border, and the Ben Gardane operation likely was planned there. But Ben Gardane also has a long history of involvement in jihad: "The tradition of jihad is so strong in Ben Gardane that the former leader of al Qaida in Iraq, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, allegedly said, 'If Ben Gardane had been located next to Falluja, we would have liberated Iraq.'" Of the more than 6,000 Tunisians who traveled to Syria and Iraq to join IS, 15 percent originated from Ben Gardane.

How Did the Battle Play Out?

IS fighters illegally entered Tunisia from Libya before the March 7 attack; they remained in safe houses where weapons were pre-positioned. Reporting suggests that the attack may have been planned for March 20, but was moved up because IS suspected the operation had been compromised in late February.

The signal to attack early on March 8 coincided with the muezzin's call to prayer from a local mosque, which had been used as a safe house. At dawn, the fighters departed in multiple cars and trucks, picking up other fighters on the way to their targets. Fighters in moving vehicles handed out weapons to other fighters on foot. IS fighters used megaphones to chant "God is great," and reassure residents: "Don't worry. We are not here to target you. We are the Islamic State and we are here for the tyrants in the Army." Armed with automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), suicide vests, and large amounts of ammunition, they attacked three targets: an Army barracks, National Guard post, and police station. With detailed knowledge of the battlespace, IS fighters drove to the home of the local chief of anti-terrorism forces and killed him. By late morning, IS controlled downtown Ben Gardane. By midday, Tunisian soldiers and security personnel joined the battle, supported by helicopter reconnaissance. Tunisia imposed a curfew in Ben Gardane and closed its border with Libya. Most gunfire ended by dusk, March 8.

Tunisian authorities subsequently conducted numerous raids on suspected IS locations, resulting in many arrests. They discovered several underground caches of weapons and ammunition. By March 10, the battle had claimed the lives of 46 IS fighters, 13 Tunisian military and security personnel, and seven civilians.

Why the Battle Was Different

Each of the previous four IS attacks against Tunisia involved no more than three attackers. Two were against tourist targets, and two were against security forces. Two were in Tunis, and two were in the Mediterranean resort of Sousse. Three employed automatic rifles, and one used a suicide vest. The battle of Ben Gardane was significantly different:

- Personnel and Weapons—Unlike previous attacks, the attack at Ben Gardane was large-scale, involving 60 or more fighters—many of whom were Ben Gardane residents. Some of the fighters may have come from as far away as Syria and Iraq, where they likely received weapons training. This was IS's first use of RPGs in Tunisia.

- Targets—The battle of Ben Gardane likely reflected IS's shift in strategic focus from economic targets to the Tunisian government's military and security forces. This was IS's first attempt to strike multiple security targets simultaneously.
- Planning and Tactics—The battle of Ben Gardane reflected a higher degree of sophistication than previous attacks, probably including long-term operational planning, multiple international border crossings for personnel and weapons, multiple safe houses, a disciplined communications plan, multiple vehicles, multiple assembly points, multiple ingresses to targets, and local leadership to ensure coordinated targeting.

Who Won?

IS capitalized on the battle via the Internet and social media: "The raid on Ben Gardane was the beginning of an all-out war against Tunisia." IS singled out Tunisian soldiers, calling on them to repent before it was too late. IS also called on Tunisians to overthrow their government and created several new hashtags, including "#terrify the tyrants of Tunisia." IS compared the battle of Ben Gardane to the 9/11 attacks against the United States.

The government of Tunisia stated that IS was defeated in its attempt to create a new IS "wilayet" (province of the caliphate) on Tunisian soil. Prime Minister Essid claimed that the battle of Ben Gardane "boosted the morale of the army and security forces." He added, "we won a battle, but the war against terrorism… [continues]." Despite the "victory," the deputy head of the province that includes Ben Gardane was fired on March 10.

Because Tunisia failed to prevent the attack on Ben Gardane, the incident could be viewed as a tactical success for the government but a strategic defeat. Above all, it was an intelligence failure, especially for the Ministry of Interior (MOI). IS "won" because it made good on an early 2015 promise to continue its campaign in Tunisia—and it did so with unprecedented numbers and audacity. This was IS's first large-scale raid on Tunisian soil; it embarrassed the government and could enhance IS recruitment.

What's Next?

The pattern of previous attacks suggests that IS might strike Tunisia again in the near term. Given that major European travel agencies have canceled holidays to Tunisia through November 2016, IS may focus on military and security facilities, possibly including hit-and-run attacks against military and police outside of their garrisons. A second, though less likely, course of action would be suicide attacks against leadership targets, including high-ranking civilian or military figures. Another large-scale operation similar to that undertaken in Ben Gardane is not out of the question.

IS represents a long-term threat to Tunisia's fragile democracy. Help from Western intelligence partners is key, but not enough. Without improved intelligence and counterintelligence at the local level, it will be difficult for the Tunisian government to be successful in its battle against IS. The fact that no one came forward to report the anomalous activities in and around the mosque in Ben Gardane highlights the existing intelligence gap. Securing the cooperation of the public in an improved human-source intelligence effort will be difficult, however, especially in light of IS's brutal and well-publicized reprisals against those it accuses of aiding the government. Nevertheless, that should be a high priority for the Tunisian government.

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Background: Elections in Kenya

While Kenya has a long history of violent elections and political conflict centered along ethnic lines, the country's electoral crisis and ensuing communal violence in 2007–2008 were the most severe to date and brought Kenya to the edge of collapse. Over 1,200 were killed and more than 600,000 displaced. A power-sharing agreement brokered by Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, restored stability after months of violence. A unity government, headed by former President Mwai Kibaki and Odinga, who served as prime minister, was stood up in March 2008. After decades of delays, the adoption of a new constitution in 2010 was a major accomplishment of the power-sharing government. The unity government remained in office until fresh elections were held in 2013. While far from perfect, the tight 2013 elections, narrowly won by Kenyatta and Ruto (both of whom at that time faced ICC charges of crimes against humanity) were much less violent than the previous election cycle.

Run-up to 2017 Elections

Once in office, cracks began to show within the Kenyatta and Ruto camps of the Jubilee Alliance. The two were strange bedfellows from the outset. Kenyatta, the son of Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, comes from the Kikuyu ethnic group, and Ruto, formerly aligned with Odinga's ODM party, is from the Kalenjin group. Clashes between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin communities accounted for most of the communal post-election violence in 2008, and the ICC accused Kenyatta and Ruto of helping to orchestrate this violence from opposite sides of the conflict. After the Kenyatta administration frustrated the ICC at every turn, in December 2014 the court dropped charges against Kenyatta but proceeded with its case against Ruto.

With the ICC charges still hanging over Ruto, some observers during the past year viewed him as a lame duck and predicted that Kenyatta would drop him before the next election. Others worried about renewed violence between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities if Ruto was convicted. With the ICC charges now vacated against Ruto, it appears that the Kenyatta-Ruto alliance will remain intact for now. Kenyatta applauded this week's ruling by the ICC: "I welcome the aforementioned [April 5] decision, which reaffirms my strong conviction from the beginning about the innocence of my Deputy President." On the opposition side, CORD leader Odinga also congratulated Ruto: "It has always been our position that ODM, to which Hon Ruto was a key member in 2007, planned no violence against other Kenyans."

CORD's efforts to amend the constitution allowed Odinga and the opposition to essentially begin campaigning for the 2017 elections ahead of schedule. They gathered nearly a million signatures in support of changing the constitution to allow increased funding to local governments. Other demands included land sector reforms and the elevation of the anti-corruption agency to the level of a constitutional commission (corruption remains a major problem and salient issue

in Kenya, as [highlighted](#) in the November 19, 2015 issue of *Africa Watch*). Despite its efforts, last month CORD [lost](#) its major push to amend the country's constitution.

Odinga is [likely](#) to again be the leading opposition candidate in the 2017 polls, even though he has lost three of the last four presidential elections in Kenya, and despite current [tensions](#) within CORD over who will eventually lead the ticket. On April 2, Odinga brought on a slew of new prominent [advisors](#) to help guide him during the coming campaign season.

Conclusion

Do Odinga and the CORD opposition stand a chance of unseating Kenyatta and the Jubilee Alliance in 2017? Evidence on the power of incumbency in Africa suggests this will be an uphill battle. As argued by scholar Nic Cheeseman, "since the reintroduction of multi-party elections in Africa, sitting [presidents](#) have won 85 percent of the elections they have contested." Repressive legislation passed by the Kenyatta administration that [cracks](#) down on the media and civil society groups will further hurt the opposition's chances. Despite a new constitution and other institutional reforms achieved during the period of power-sharing, the possibility of an election [rigged](#) by the government exists. In spite of these obstacles, Cheeseman [argues](#) that Odinga may be able to prevail at the polls if CORD is able to maintain support in the coastal region and capitalize on his party's incumbency advantage at the local level to help mobilize supporters. At the local level, ODM holds 16 governorships, double the number of Kenyatta's party, and the highest number of county assembly members, with 377.

There is no question that this week's ICC ruling in favor of Ruto strengthens the Jubilee Alliance. Kenyatta would struggle to win the Rift Valley's Kalenjin vote without Ruto, so this development increases the prospects of a second term for Kenyatta. In the short term, the ICC ruling decreases the chances of large-scale election violence in 2017 between the Kikuyi and Kalenjin, as seen in 2008. At the same time, however, the ruling helps to perpetuate the long-standing culture of impunity in Kenya, which may ultimately threaten the long-term stability of the country.

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

THE ISLAMIC STATE IN ALGERIA: LIMITED SUCCESS—FOR NOW

By Richard J. Pera

In November 2014, the Islamic State (IS) leader and self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, declared that IS had annexed Algeria as a "wilayat" (province). Despite efforts to fund, recruit, and inspire would-be followers, IS has enjoyed little success in Algeria, especially compared with Libya, where it occupies a large swath of territory, and Tunisia, where it has recruited thousands and conducted high-profile attacks. How has IS operated in Algeria, what circumstances and actions have limited its success, and what can we expect going forward? *more...*

During a gathering in front of the Paris Grand Mosque, Friday Sept. 26, 2014, Muslims hold a sign paying homage to French mountaineer Hervé Gourdel, who was beheaded by Islamist militants in Algeria. (Source: AP Photo/Remy de la Mauviniere.)
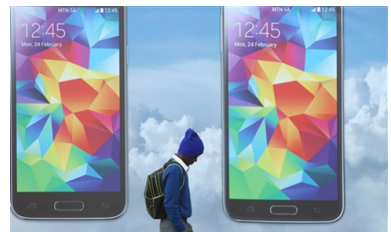
Richard J. Pera is a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN AFRICA—A GATHERING FORCE

By George F. Ward

The number of Africans who regularly use social media is expanding rapidly. For example, 100 million Africans were using Facebook each month in 2014. By the end of 2015, that number had jumped to 120 million. Several factors are contributing to the rise of social media on the continent. As the availability of social media spreads, Africans are networking in interesting ways, which is having an impact on politics and governance. *more...*

A schoolboy walks beneath a mobile phone advertising billboard in Johannesburg Wednesday, September 3, 2014. The mobile phone industry in South Africa is a booming one, with the demand for smartphones increasing significantly since 2010 as more products enter the market in the country. (Source: AP Photo/Denis Farrell.)

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IS in Algeria

In September 2014, the jihadist group, Jund al Khalifah (JaK; Soldiers of the Caliphate), merged with another jihadist group—the al Huda Battalion. The combined group then split from al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and pledged allegiance to IS. Later that month, JaK drew international condemnation when it kidnapped and beheaded a French national, Hervé Gourdel, and posted the execution video online. JaK likely had been inspired by an IS video message that instructed followers: "If you can kill an American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French…slaughter him with a knife." The Algerian government responded forcefully, killing several JaK members, including its leader, Abdelmalek Gouri, called the "Emir of Daesh-IS in Algeria" (Daesh is an acronym for IS). Months later, the Algerian Army killed Gouri's successor, further weakening JaK.

Other shadowy Algerian jihadist groups have announced their split from AQIM and allegiance to IS since 2015. They include the al Ghuraba Brigade, Dhamat Houmet Daawa Salafiya (DHDS), and part of the al Ansar Battalion. The total strength of IS in Algeria is unknown. IS-aligned groups in Algeria remain largely in the mountainous northeast portion of the country, near the cities of Skikda and Constantine. IS fighters also operate in the vast desert region of eastern Algeria, near the Libyan border.

The defection of these organizations from AQIM has intensified the rivalry between IS and al Qaida, especially for recruits and funding. AQIM assaulted a European-run natural gas facility 750 miles south of Algiers on March 18, 2016—a high-profile attack demonstrating that AQIM remained relevant.

IS in Algeria has not attracted much publicity since Hervé Gourdel's murder. Audio and video messages from Raqaa, Syria, continue to encourage followers in Algeria to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight for IS there; however, only 170 Algerians have done so through May 2015, compared with 6,000 Tunisians.

Since December 2015, IS has claimed only three attacks against the Algerian Army and police, two of which employed improvised explosive devices. IS has been unable to execute a large-scale attack in Algeria as it did in the southern Tunisian city of Ben Gardane in March 2016. Likewise, IS has not been able to carry out an attack in the capital of Algiers, compared with two major attacks it carried out in Tunisia's capital, Tunis.

Since September 2015, Algerian forces have broken up recruitment cells; killed numerous IS fighters; and confiscated weapons, explosives, equipment, and money. In addition, the Army has deployed soldiers to patrol the 620-mile-long, closed border with Libya, where it discovered at least one "Daesh tunnel."

Reasons for Limited Success in Algeria

IS's lack of success is directly related to Algeria's recent civil war and resulting governmental policies and actions:

- Desire for Order and Stability—Algeria's decade-long civil war (1991–2002) against Salafi jihadist groups claimed over 150,000 lives and "resulted in a mass trauma that is still evident in Algerians' yearning for order and stability." During his successful 2014 reelection campaign, Algerian President Bouteflika emphasized stability and continuity, warning that Algeria could become chaotic once again, like Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. This national "trauma" has made it difficult for IS to recruit Algerians to fight at home and in Syria and Iraq. Simply put, Algerians are tired of war.

- Security Trumps Freedom—The Algerian government exercises great control over civil society, which may facilitate the fight against terrorism. Constitutional guarantees are often modified or ignored for security reasons, and arbitrary arrests and detentions are common. Most Algerians accept the need for such stringent security.

- Limits on Internet and Social Media—Limited access and government control over the nation's communications capabilities have made it difficult for IS to recruit Algerian youth. According to a 2016 study of Arab youth, the Internet is available to 27 percent of Algerians, and social media is available to 18 percent. By contrast, Tunisia has a 48 percent Internet rate and a 42 percent social media rate. Algerian security forces intervene rapidly when threats are detected on the Internet and social media.

- Algeria Pays for Stability—Algeria has been economically stable, largely because of oil and gas revenues, which account for 30 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 60 percent of government revenues. This has enabled Algeria to finance its large security apparatus and subsidize potentially disgruntled groups like unions, civil service employees, and unemployed youth. Since 2014, however, falling energy prices have presented serious challenges. In response, Algeria's 2016 budget included a 9 percent spending cut—the first in several years—tax increases on income and property, and public sector hiring freezes. For now, the government appears comfortable with running substantial budget deficits to ensure that security and welfare systems are adequately funded.

- Large and Capable Military—Algeria has well over 200,000 police officers, more than France's "Police Nationale." Algeria's People's National Army (ANP) consists of about 500,000 active troops, the world's eighth largest (in percent of GDP). These forces, along with intelligence professionals, are well trained, equipped, and experienced in counterterrorism. Algerian services—a "tight, merciless, security mechanism"—are notoriously aggressive. Further, Algeria has vigorously pursued international cooperation in counterterrorism, and earlier this year, the country inaugurated the international organization—African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL)—in Algiers.

Future Considerations

What potential changes could weaken the Algerian government and benefit IS? If the current Algerian model proves to be unsustainable or flawed, IS could be an attractive choice for Algerians who feel betrayed and abandoned. For example, in the long term, as fewer people recall the "bad old days" of the 1990s, Algerians may be less willing to trade personal and political freedom for ubiquitous and aggressive security. Also, if economic pressures continue to mount and Algeria cuts government expenditures more severely, this could negatively affect favored segments of society like the military and decrease welfare benefits to disenfranchised groups like unemployed youth, with potentially destabilizing consequences. Another possibility is that expectations regarding economic opportunity and open access to modern communications, especially among young Algerians, might grow, further challenging the government's current policies.

There is one external consideration: Western intervention against IS in Libya, which Algiers has opposed, could result in large numbers of Libyan refugees crossing into Algeria, ultimately enhancing IS recruitment.

Despite setbacks, IS is unlikely to give up on Algeria—the largest country on the African continent and the second most populated Arab nation. IS likely will continue to provide inspirational, financial, and material support to Algerian followers, taking advantage of its firm presence in neighboring Libya. Finally, harkening back to the eighth century Islamic conquest of southern Spain, IS views subjugation of Algeria as a necessary step in the expansion of the caliphate: "If the war spreads in the land of Algeria, we will definitely head to Andalusia."

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Cables, Networks and Smart Phones

The introduction of cellular telephony in the 1990s started a telecommunications revolution in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Ogilvy and Mather. Africa's mobile phone penetration stands at 67 percent. Cell phones, which are as common in Nigeria and South Africa as they are in the United States, are providing not only voice communications, but also access to financial, health, and government services. In the early years of Africa's information and communications technology (ICT) revolution, lack of bandwidth was a limiting factor. The merit of M-pesa, a financial services app that originated in Kenya, was that it works with basic cell phones, requiring little bandwidth.

Even though cell phones use radio technology, virtually all ICTs ultimately depend upon terrestrial and undersea fiber-optic cables. Because sub-Saharan Africa was left out of the early boom in undersea cable building, until recently the availability of bandwidth was low. Until 2009, the west coast of Africa was served by a single undersea cable. From 2007 to 2012, more than $3 billion flowed into the construction of undersea cable networks around Africa. Seven new undersea cables were placed in service from 2009 to 2012. In the same period, African demand for bandwidth grew at an annual rate exceeding 100 percent. One estimate predicts that African demand for bandwidth will grow at a compound annual rate of 51 percent through 2019.

Without terrestrial networks, undersea cables would be of little use to Africans. Many countries have completed or are building national fiber-optic networks. Tanzania, for example, set up a national network in 2012 that connects 34 cities to adjacent countries and an undersea cable. Google has built metropolitan fiber-optic networks in Kampala, Uganda, and in the Ghanaian cities of Accra, Tema, and Kumasi. A relatively current bandwidth map of Africa can be viewed at http://www.africabandwidthmaps.com/?page_id=27.

The spread of Internet technology is impeded because most Africans rely on basic cell phones. Although smartphones and so-called featurephones that have some Internet capability are becoming more common, most Africans will continue to rely on basic phones at least for the short term. In response to this reality, content providers are adapting their services to the African communications environment. For example, Facebook has introduced in Africa a news feed that is adapted for use with slow Internet connections. In Kenya and Ghana, telecommunications companies and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter partner to offer free mobile data usage for the networks.

Social Media Boom

As a result of the developments discussed above, a boom in social media is occurring in Africa. Services adapted to low bandwidth such as Twitter and WhatsApp led the way, but higher bandwidth services such as Facebook and YouTube

are also proliferating. Social media are almost universally being accessed through mobile phones, rather than through computers or tablets. In Nigeria, 16 million people now visit Facebook every month, with virtually 100 percent doing so through mobile devices. As of September 2015, 95 percent of Kenya's 4.5 million Facebook users accessed the service through mobile devices.

What Are Africans Doing on Social Media?

The sort of African imagination and creativity that produced a financial services system for basic cell phones is now being applied to Internet-capable mobile phones, and it is driving growth in the ICT industry sector. In 2014, for example, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics reported that the ICT industry contributed 8.4 percent to the country's gross domestic product. The World Bank estimates that in emerging markets such as Africa, every 10 percent increase in broadband penetration accelerates economic growth by 1.38 percent.

Africans are using social media to discuss politics, shop for purchases, educate themselves, access healthcare, and do business, as well as, of course, play videogames and update their Facebook pages. Many of these uses are relevant to governance and, potentially, to social stability on the continent. These applications are often devised and implemented at the local level. In Kenya, Chief Francis Kariuki, head of the 29,000-strong Lanet-Umoja community, provides a running Twitter feed that disseminates news; transmits guidance (e.g., fill holes in your fields so that animals are not hurt); and helps people find lost children, animals, and personal possessions. During the 2015 election year in Nigeria, nongovernmental and civil society organizations arranged Tweetchats, Hangouts, and virtual conferences to facilitate political debate. Social media platforms served as platforms for citizens' expressions.

Recently, Portland Communications produced a report titled "How Africa Tweets." The most interesting finding of the report is that Africans are increasingly using Twitter to talk about politics. In fact, discussions about politics account for 10 percent of their tweets. That is much more than in the United States or United Kingdom, where political conversations comprise 1–2 percent of hashtags. The report also revealed that there were 1.6 billion geolocated tweets in Africa in 2015, which is a 34-fold increase from Portland's initial report in 2012. The report also included a number of short case studies that illustrate the range of uses of Twitter in Africa. A few highlights of the case studies follow:

- Politics and the Twitter Revolution—The use of Twitter was prominent in three major African elections in 2015—Nigeria, Burundi, and Tanzania. Muhammadu Buhari, the successful candidate in Nigeria, had 500,000 Twitter followers. The losing candidate, Chief Jonathan, had only 20,000 Twitter followers. The winning candidate in Tanzania, John Magufuli, had 117,000 followers. In both these elections, Twitter was seen as contributing to the winner's success. That was not true in Burundi, where hashtags critical of President Nkurunziza were very popular. Nevertheless, Nkurunziza won the election.

- The Spread of #FeesMustFall—The #FeesMustFall movement began as an effort by university students in South Africa to achieve decreased school fees and increased wages for university laborers. The hashtag surprisingly spread widely across the continent, gaining more geolocated Tweets in Egypt than in South Africa, and with Ghanaians using the hashtag in equal proportion as South Africans. This instance could be seen as a symptom of a pan-African collective interest in social issues, one unconstrained by borders.

- Anatomy of an ISIS Twitter Campaign—As part of its effort to woo Somalia's al-Shabaab terrorist group away from al-Qaeda, ISIS launched a Twitter campaign using the insulting hashtag #The_Jews_of_Jihad_in_Somalia. That hashtag appeared on its launch day at around 6:00 PM. Within an hour, 725 Tweets appeared. That exploded to almost 10,000 Tweets within 24 hours. Efforts by Twitter to take down offensive Tweets succeeded in eliminating only 142 of them, a drop in the bucket. This episode illustrates the potential reach of a terrorist group using social media.

- Foreign Affairs Chat in Africa—Surprisingly, foreign affairs issues make up around 1.5 percent of the most popular conversations in Africa on Twitter. The closest to this proportion was 1 percent in France. In Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, none of the top hashtags referenced foreign affairs themes. This trend probably illustrates a growing realization on the part of Africans that their lives are affected by international developments.

Conclusion

The ICT revolution in Africa is continuing with unabated force. On a continent in which other media such as newspapers and television have relatively low penetration, social media are becoming the vehicles of choice for social and political discourse. Most of the disruptive consequences of this sea change are likely still to be seen.
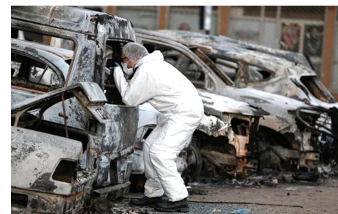

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TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA: IS GHANA NEXT?

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

Over the past several years, transnational Islamic terrorist networks have been slowly expanding their reach in sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas a few years ago they operated primarily in countries bordering the Sahel such as Mali, Niger, and Mauritania, in recent attacks they have demonstrated their ability to penetrate further into West Africa. Over the past few months, countries that historically have had little to no exposure to terrorism, such as Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, have become targets. A leaked security memo has some arguing that Ghana could be the next target. How credible a threat is a terrorist attack in Ghana? *more...*

Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses. Her book, Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Causes and Consequences, is out now.

Forensic workers wear protective gear and examine burnt out cars outside the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016. The overnight seizure of a luxury hotel in Burkina Faso's capital by al-Qaida-linked extremists ended Saturday when Burkina Faso and French security forces killed four jihadist attackers and freed more than 126 people, the West African nation's president said. (Source: AP Photo/Sunday Alamba.)

THE ISLAMIC STATE (IS) VS. MOROCCO: PROACTIVE POLICIES LIMIT IS SUCCESS

By Richard J. Pera

On February 19, 2016, Moroccan authorities raided an Islamic State (IS) cell, confiscating substances probably intended to produce biological or chemical weapons. Though alarming, this event reflected the continued success of Moroccan security forces in preempting IS attacks in the Kingdom. How has IS operated in Morocco, what circumstances and actions have limited its success, and what can we expect going forward? *more...*

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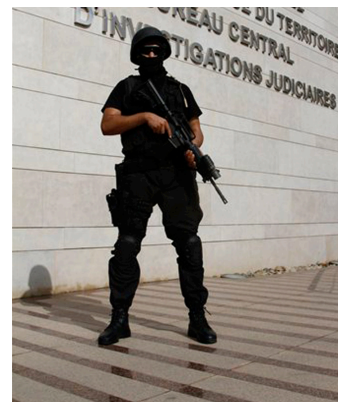
A commando from Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations stands guard on Monday Sept. 14, 2015, in Sale, Morocco. Morocco's counterterrorism unit has announced the dismantling of a militant cell based in the southern city of Essaouira that was in contact with the Islamic State group. (Source: AP Photo/Paul Schemm.)

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TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA: IS GHANA NEXT?

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

Over the past several years, transnational Islamic terrorist networks have been slowly expanding their reach in sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas a few years ago they operated primarily in countries bordering the Sahel such as Mali, Niger, and Mauritania, in recent attacks they have demonstrated their ability to penetrate further into West Africa. Over the past few months, countries that historically have had little to no exposure to terrorism, such as Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, have become targets. A leaked security memo has some arguing that Ghana could be the next target. How credible a threat is a terrorist attack in Ghana?

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Terrorism in West Africa: A New Scourge

In addition to the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria and its extension to other countries in the Lake Chad Basin, since January 2016 two major terrorist attacks have fundamentally shaken the security landscape in West Africa, underscoring terrorism as an emerging threat to the region. In January, gunmen stormed the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, taking hostages and holding the hotel for several hours. Security forces were ultimately able to successfully free hundreds of hostages, but not before 29 were killed and approximately 50 injured in the attack. In early March, a similar attack took place in the resort town of Grand-Bassam in Cote d'Ivoire, as gunmen stormed three separate hotels, killing approximately 20 and injuring scores of others.

These attacks are similar in nature to the November 2015 attack that took place in Bamako, Mali, at a Radisson Blu hotel. Gunmen stormed the hotel lobby and held more than 100 guests hostage for several hours. Approximately 21 were killed. The hotel was hosting an international delegation that was working with the Malian government on a peace process to help end the insurgency that has been raging since 2012. Attacks in all three countries focused on locations popular with Western and diplomatic communities.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has claimed responsibility for all these attacks, stating that they were in response to the French-led intervention in Mali. Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire both currently contribute troops to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, called MINUSMA. Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire have also provided significant logistical and military support to Operation Barkhane, France's counterterrorism mission in the Sahel.

The attack in Mali was tragic but unsurprising, given that the country has been in direct conflict with Islamist groups. The attacks in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, however, were jarring. Neither country had ever experienced a terrorist attack until 2016. Many analysts insist that these attacks demonstrate a more sophisticated terrorist capability, as well as the ability and desire to extend the terrorist threat to new countries.

Ghana Next?

In mid-March, less than a week after the Grand-Bassam attack, Ghana's National Security Council, chaired by President John Dramani Mahama, met to discuss the growing threat of terrorism in West Africa. After the meeting, the government declared there to be a credible terrorist threat across the subregion and urged Ghanaian citizens to be vigilant.

In mid-April, a leaked internal security memo put many in Ghana on edge. According to the memo—originally meant for the country's immigration service—based on intelligence obtained from attackers implicated in the Grand-Bassam incident, Ghana and Togo were believed to be next on AQIM's target list. Ghana in particular has been chosen so as to

destroy the belief that AQIM could or would only target Francophone countries. The memo recommended enhanced border security, especially at the northern border with Burkina Faso, and profiling of those coming from Mali, Libya, and Niger. President Mahama was quick to address the memo, urging citizens not to panic.

Until recently, Ghana has had little experience with terrorism. In August 2015, a few university-level students traveled to Syria to join the Islamic State. Beyond this development, there is little to currently suggest that Ghana has any domestic or homegrown terrorism threat yet, although some have expressed concern over the potential allure of radicalism for Ghana's frustrated (and unemployed) youth. Nonetheless, the country's porous borders and sizable tourism sector suggest that a terrorist attack is not out of the realm of possibility.

Unfortunately, this may be the new reality that many countries in West Africa will begin to grapple with. Ghana, Togo, Benin, and others may find themselves unwitting targets as terrorist groups continue to expand their sphere of influence and impact. Immediate steps that countries in the region can take to combat the spread of terrorism include improved border control and management and increased intelligence-sharing and regional cooperation. These recent attacks have shown that addressing transnational threats requires a concerted group effort.

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On February 19, 2016, Moroccan authorities raided an Islamic State (IS) cell, confiscating substances probably intended to produce biological or chemical weapons. Though alarming, this event reflected the continued success of Moroccan security forces in preempting IS attacks in the Kingdom. How has IS operated in Morocco, what circumstances and actions have limited its success, and what can we expect going forward?

IS in Morocco

The number of IS fighters in Morocco is unknown. Through December 2015, about 1,200 Moroccans had left to fight for IS in Syria and Iraq, compared to 170 Algerians and 6,000 Tunisians. Some have returned to Morocco. These figures do not include IS-pledged Moroccans who emigrated to Europe; one of the November 2015 Paris suicide bombers was a Moroccan citizen.

In Morocco, IS fighters are found among groups of disenfranchised youths in urban areas such as Casablanca, Fez, and Marrakesh. They are also encountered in rural areas, near the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta, and Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara. The Morocco-Algeria and Algeria-Libya borders have been closed for some time, but that does not seem to have impeded movement of personnel and equipment between Morocco and Libya, where IS is entrenched.

A commando from Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations stands guard on Monday Sept. 14, 2015, in Sale, Morocco. Morocco's counterterrorism unit has announced the dismantling of a militant cell based in the southern city of Essaouira that was in contact with the Islamic State group. (Source: AP Photo/Paul Schemm.)

Unlike in Algeria, IS has few affiliates in Morocco. Several Algerian groups have defected to IS from al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) since 2014. There have been no such defections in Morocco, where AQIM continues pose a threat. In fact, the last major terrorist attack in the Kingdom was the bombing of Djema al Fna Square in Marrakesh in April 2011; AQIM was blamed for the attack.

IS has supported its followers in Morocco via an aggressive Internet and social media campaign. IS has called on fighters "to oust the apostate… government of… Morocco and replace [it] with an Islamic regime based on Sharia law." IS videos regularly attack Morocco's king, government, and religious leaders.

In the February 2016 raid, police arrested 10 IS fighters, including a 16-year-old, possibly an intended suicide bomber, and confiscated computers, communications equipment, foreign passports, uniforms, automatic weapons, ammunition, and substances that suggest the group may have been planning to release chemical and biological agents during an attack. The group's target list included the Sofitel resort hotel in Essaouira, Morocco Mall in Casablanca, and the parliament building in Rabat. The planned attack was described as a "commando" operation—the "most dangerous ever."

The Moroccan Government—Proactive and Effective

Rabat claimed to have dismantled at least 31 IS-linked cells since 2013. In fact, the only successful IS attack against Morocco took place outside the country: in April 2015, IS detonated a bomb outside the Moroccan Embassy in Tripoli, Libya, causing minor damage.

Besides the raid described above, in April 2015, Moroccan police broke up an IS cell near Melilla, arresting six members. In July 2015, authorities arrested eight trained fighters, tasked by IS leaders to establish a "task force… to execute terrorist activities." In January 2016, security forces arrested seven fighters near Casablanca, and in March 2016, authorities broke up an IS cell that was based in Marrakesh and Smara (Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara).

Unique circumstances and government actions have made Morocco effective, limiting IS's success in the country:

- Geography—Morocco does not share a border with Libya. Therefore, IS personnel who travel to and from Libya normally cross Tunisia and Algeria, which also oppose IS. Algiers has been particularly effective against IS, and Morocco has benefited.

- High Military Investment—Morocco ranks 14th worldwide in military expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). By comparison, Algeria ranks eighth. This is a major investment, given that Morocco does not enjoy significant oil and gas revenues like Algeria.

- Well-Integrated Counterterrorism Bureaucracy—In March 2015, Morocco established the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations (BCIJ), which empowered a single office to conduct terrorism investigations. In May 2015, King Muhammad VI appointed Abdellatif Hammouchi, already Director General of Territorial Surveillance (DGST; head of domestic intelligence), to be Director General of National Safety (DGSN; i.e., head of the national police). These decisions contributed to an integrated counterterrorism effort: a single Ministry of the Interior (MOI) official—Hammouchi—now oversees domestic intelligence, police operations, and investigations. Of note, the United Nations described Moroccan intelligence as the "most powerful" in the Middle East.

- Effective International Cooperation—Morocco has redoubled cooperation with Western services. The State Department described Morocco's counterterrorism efforts and cooperation as "highly effective." After the November 2015 Paris bombings, Morocco provided critical intelligence that allowed French police to locate the Belgian-born Moroccan terrorist who planned the attacks.

- Economic Opportunities—Areas with abject poverty have been breeding grounds for IS recruiters who promise salaries and benefits for fighters. A series of ambitious economic policies in Morocco have reduced poverty to 9 percent from 16 percent by 2010. In a country of 33 million, 1.7 million Moroccans were lifted above the poverty threshold.

- Positive Democratic Developments—Morocco avoided violence in the 2011 "Arab Spring" in part because the king responded quickly to protestors' demands. The widely accepted constitution of 2011 ensured power-sharing between the king and parliament and guaranteed human rights. Indeed, the king is not an absolute monarch like his father, King Hassan II. Today, Morocco is a relatively open nation compared with its neighbors; for example, its Internet penetration rate stands at 58 percent, far higher than Algeria's (27) and Tunisia's (48).

- Religious Policies—Morocco has implemented religious policies aimed at countering extremist ideology. The king, who traces his lineage to the Prophet, controls the nation's mosques and religious instruction; the government has emphasized Morocco's *Maliki rite* of Islam, which espouses moderation and tolerance. In 2015, the king founded the "Institute for the Training of Imams" and the "Foundation for African Ulemas" (Islamic theologians) to help guide religious leaders.

Future Considerations

The Times described Morocco as the "last safe haven in North Africa," and the British Foreign Office indicated that Morocco has a lower risk of terrorist attacks than France and Spain. Indeed, Morocco's counterterrorism approach against IS has been exemplary. Morocco has emphasized human rights and economic, political, and cultural development. Its security forces have managed to strike a delicate balance: "They want to demonstrate capacity to apprehend suspects without scaring away potential tourists" (tourism totals over 18 percent of GDP).

Morocco's laudable record against IS likely will come to an end at some point. The worst case scenario would be an attack against a major tourist facility, a major urban economic or cultural center, or government facilities or senior officials in the capital. If such an attack occurs, the king likely will be well positioned to rally the nation and move forward.

In the long term, to help thwart IS recruitment, Morocco should strive to address youth unemployment, which has been climbing and currently stands at 20 percent. Likewise, the government should take steps to mitigate corruption. Finally, Rabat must remain vigilant as IS is unlikely to give up its vision of extending the caliphate across North Africa to Europe.

Richard J. Pera is a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

KENYA MOVES TO CLOSE WORLD'S LARGEST REFUGEE CAMP

By Alexander Noyes

On May 6, 2016, Kenya announced that it would close Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp, located in the northeast of the country, within one year. Dadaab is home to at least 330,000 refugees, mostly from Somalia. The government, led by President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee Alliance, maintains that the camp is overrun by the al-Shabaab terrorist group and poses a severe security threat to the country. Kenya's principal secretary for the Ministry of the Interior, Karanja Kibicho, alleged, "some of the largest terrorist attacks, such as the 2013 Westgate atrocity, have been planned and executed from Dadaab." Will Kenya follow through and close Dadaab? If so, could closing the camp backfire and actually make Kenya more vulnerable to the threat of violent extremism? *more...*

Somali refugees herd their goats at the Ifo refugee camp outside Dadaab, eastern Kenya, 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the Somali border. (Source: AP Photo/Jerome Delay, File)

Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

ISIS AND WMD: GROWING HAND IN HAND IN KENYA?

By Dr. Ashley N. Bybee

Kenyan authorities recently uncovered a cell of extremist medics linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that they suspected was plotting a biological attack on civilian targets in Kenya. Three Kenyans were arrested, including a medical intern who authorities fear could have accessed anthrax through his affiliation with a Kenyan hospital. A new ISIS foothold represents a significant new development on the East African terrorist scene. The intended use of a biological agent is also a concerning development, since weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Africa have not posed a significant threat to date. The Government of Kenya (GOK), fortunately, has recognized the entrepreneurial and unconventional nature of today's terrorists and has been preparing its first and secondary responders accordingly. The swift arrest of the three individuals suggests that the Kenyan law enforcement and intelligence communities are alert to the new danger. *more..*

Nuseiba Mohammed Haji stands in the dock at the Kenya Milimani Law Courts, in Nairobi, Tuesday, May 10, 2016. The wife of a Kenyan medic police accused of plotting a biological attack has been extradited to Kenya from Uganda. Police allege Nuseiba Mohammed Haji, a medical student in Uganda and wife of medical intern Mohammed Ali Abdi, is an accomplice in a foiled plan to launch an anthrax attack in Kenya late April by a cell of extremist medics.

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such as the 2013 Westgate atrocity, have been planned and executed from Dadaab." Will Kenya follow through and close Dadaab? If so, could closing the camp backfire and actually make Kenya more vulnerable to the threat of violent extremism?

Background

Dadaab was established in 1992 to house 90,000 refugees from neighboring Somalia, which was then in the midst of a civil war. Over the past two decades, Dadaab's population more than tripled; today, it is the third largest settlement in Kenya. The United Nations (UN) estimates the population of Dadaab at 330,000, but many believe the population is closer to half a million. Most of its population hails from Somalia, but the camp is also home to refugees from Ethiopia, Sudan, Congo, and Uganda. The camp, which is overseen by the UN and the Kenyan government, is replete with all the hallmarks of a city—among them a market economy and systems of governance, including municipal elections. There are 52 schools and 11 police stations in Dadaab. Many refugees have lived in the sprawling camp their entire lives. In the wake of al-Shabaab's Westgate mall attack in 2013 and the massacre in Garissa in 2015, which together left hundreds dead, Kenya alleged that there was a connection between the attacks and the camp. Over the past few years, the government of Kenya has frequently threatened to shut down Dadaab, but has thus far not followed through.

Closure Plans and Pushback

Earlier this month, Joseph Nkaissery, Kenya's interior minister, announced the government's latest plans to close the camp: "For reasons of pressing national security that speak to the safety of Kenyans in a context of terrorist and criminal activities, the government of the Republic of Kenya has commenced the exercise of closing Dadaab refugee complex . . . The refugees will be repatriated to their countries of origin or to third-party countries for resettlement." Backing up the announcement, the government dissolved its Department of Refugee Affairs; contributed $10 million to the effort; and said the first group of refugees would leave in November, with the camp fully closed by next May. In explaining its rationale for closing the camp, the Kenyan government said that al-Shabaab used the refugee camp to smuggle weapons and again alleged a direct connection between previous al-Shabaab attacks and Dadaab. As Mwenda Njoka, the spokesperson for the Interior Ministry, said, "I will tell you for a fact . . . the people who carried out the terror attacks at Westgate, several of them were traced either through phone calls or through various contacts—intelligence—to refugee camps in Dadaab."

International condemnation for the plan was swift. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned of "devastating consequences" for Kenya's refugees if the government followed through on the closure. UNHCR called on Kenya to "reconsider its decision and to avoid taking any action that might be at odds with its international obligations towards people needing sanctuary from danger and persecution." The United States also condemned the decision, saying, "We strongly urge the Government of Kenya to maintain its longstanding leadership role in protecting and sheltering victims of violence and trauma, consistent with its international obligations. We call on Kenya to uphold these international

obligations and not forcibly repatriate refugees." Somalia expressed its strong opposition, noting its "grave reservation" to the plan.

Conclusion

There is no question that al-Shabaab remains an acute threat to Kenya and the region. That said, despite several incidents in 2011 and 2012 in Dadaab that were linked to al-Shabaab, some researchers have criticized the government for not providing much convincing evidence for its allegations that Dadaab was connected to the Westgate and Garissa attacks. For example, Gerry Simpson of Human Rights Watch denies any connection: "There's not a single shred of evidence that any registered Somali refugees in Kenya have been behind any attacks in Kenya." Ben Rawlence, who wrote a book on Dadaab, asserts that Kenya has "relentlessly scapegoated refugees for terrorism, undeterred by the lack of any evidence linking the camps to attacks." Moreover, it remains an open question exactly where all of Kenya's refugees would go. Somalia remains in the midst of an active conflict with al-Shabaab, and Kenya's neighbors are unlikely to agree to such a large influx of refugees.

Worse, Kenya's decision to close Dadaab may in fact do the opposite of what the plan is purported to accomplish. Akin to Kenya's previous heavy-handed and misguided counterterrorism policies, the closure of Dadaab might fuel recruitment for al-Shabaab. As highlighted in the April 16, 2015, edition of Africa Watch, research by Anneli Botha of the Institute for Security Studies revealed that the "single most important factor that drove respondents to join al-Shabaab, according to 65% of respondents, was government's counterterrorism strategy." Therefore, as noted by Somalia's ministry of Foreign Affairs, the decision to close Dadaab is likely to "make the threat of terrorism worse, not better, given the volatile situation this sudden decision and the proposed subsequent actions will cause." Instead of hastily closing Dadaab, Kenya should be encouraged to rethink its counterterrorism policies with an eye toward gaining the trust of the ethnic Somali community, rather than further alienating them. Also, international actors could increase funding for refugee efforts in Kenya. This may ultimately be Kenya's goal in threatening closure, for last year, only 38.9 percent of UNHCR's funding request for Kenya was actually allocated.

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ISIS: Giving al-Shabaab a Run for Its Members

The primary suspect in the latest plot, Mohammed Ali Abdi, was a medical intern at Wote Hospital, located approximately halfway between Nairobi and Mombasa. Kenyan authorities have asserted that Ali and at least two others, including his wife, who had been based in Uganda, are members of an ISIS-affiliated network of "extremist medics" with access to anthrax. This network has reportedly recruited Kenyan youths and facilitated their movement to Libya and Syria. Further ISIS expansion in East Africa would represent a significant departure from the traditional terrorist threat in Kenya, which has been from the Somali group al-Shabaab. Moreover, ISIS appears to be attracting members previously loyal to al-Shabaab, heralding yet another fracture in the Somali jihadi group.

One source reports that defectors from al-Shabaab to ISIS are mainly younger members who are dissatisfied with the status quo, namely the financial reward offered by al-Shabaab to its members, which has dropped because of the costs of its current operations. ISIS may also be more effective than al-Shabaab in the use of modern technology to disseminate propaganda and appeal to new members. Other sources suggest that al-Shabaab's current leadership is harsh on its members, alienating foreign fighters who might otherwise be amenable to a more moderate leadership style.

WMD: Sophisticated Tactics

WMDs have not traditionally posed a major threat in Africa, even in countries like Kenya with a relatively advanced scientific infrastructure. The planned use of anthrax, therefore, represents a noteworthy aspect of this foiled terrorist plot. Terrorists in Africa have most often been associated with poor, marginalized populations with limited access to education and resources. They have relied on suicide bombers and crude IEDs to make their mark. Had the alleged anthrax plan succeeded, it would have been the first use by terrorists of a biological agent in Africa. Experts doubt, however, that Ali and his colleagues could have successfully weaponized their supply to conduct widespread attacks, which would require sophisticated expertise and equipment.

Wisely Preparing for Disaster

Kenya is not a source of weaponized chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) materials, nor is it a state interested in obtaining WMDs. It is, however, located in a volatile region where it could serve as a transit hub for chemical and biological materials, given the large volume of legitimate trade that passes through the port of Mombasa. The GOK recognizes that the proliferation of terrorism in the region, coupled with its porous borders, inadequately secured scientific infrastructure, and underdeveloped interdiction capabilities, constitutes a recipe for disaster. National laboratories and universities are sources of dangerous materials and technical experts who, if recruited as terrorists, could threaten Kenya's national security. It is reassuring, therefore, that the GOK is working with partners such as the United States to train its first and secondary responders to effectively contain a WMD attack and mitigate its damage. A recent mass-casualty exercise outside Mombasa also focused on interagency coordination and the roles played by private agencies in such an attack.

It is also heartening to see that the GOK has taken steps to improve its own capacity to respond to terrorist attacks. The National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC), which has traditionally focused on droughts, floods, landslides, and epidemics, has in recent years expanded its planning to include human-induced disasters, such as terrorist events. The National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU), an interagency organization established more recently in response to the increase in terrorism in the region, is focused on preparation and inter-ministerial coordination and communication. Between operational-level training and major institutional-level reform, Kenya is giving priority to disaster response, planning, and preparation for the next terrorist attack.

Looking Ahead

The recent arrests illustrate two concerning developments on the terrorist scene in Kenya: the rise of ISIS and the desired use of biological weapons. While the timing suggests they may be related, each will need to be handled in a different way. The GOK's recent reforms in its disaster-response community demonstrate it is bracing for such attacks and is committed to an effective response.

Dr. Ashley Bybee is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

NIGER DELTA AVENGERS: WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY WANT?

By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

In February, a group calling itself the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) began attacking Nigeria's pipelines and oil infrastructure. The NDA, which is demanding a larger share of the country's oil wealth, has been so successful in its brief campaign that at one point it had reduced Nigeria's daily oil production by nearly 50 percent. This is not the first movement to make such demands of the Nigerian government. What lessons can be learned from Nigeria's previous experience with similar groups? *more...*
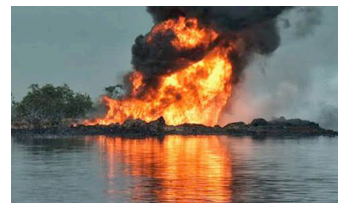

Photo from Niger Delta Avengers website, "Clough Creek Tebidaba Agip Pipeline Manifold Blown Up," http://www.nigerdeltaavengers.org /2016/02/clough-creek-tebidaba-agip-pipeline. html, February 22, 2016.

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ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY—THE BEGINNING OF HOPE?

By George F. Ward

Recent decades have not been kind to the economy of Zimbabwe, the Southern African country ruled since 1980 with an iron hand by Robert Mugabe. Its once-thriving agricultural sector has been ravaged, first by the misguided policy of forced expropriation of commercial farmers and more recently by severe drought connected with the current El Niño event. Economic mismanagement by the government culminated in record-setting hyperinflation that was tamed in 2009 only when Zimbabwe scrapped its own currency and adopted a multicurrency system in which the U.S. dollar has predominated. Perhaps surprisingly, bits of good news have recently begun to creep into this bleak narrative. Engagement by Zimbabwe with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (ADB) has been productive and has resulted in the outline of a path that could restore Zimbabwe's access to multilateral financial assistance.

In this photo taken on Tuesday, May, 3, 2016, Zimbabweans wait in a long line to withdraw cash in Harare. Severe shortages of U.S dollars that are used as local currency have forced many residents into becoming cash hunter-gatherers. Long lines are frequent outside banks where tellers limit daily withdrawals to $200. (Source: AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi.)

Nevertheless, many uncertainties remain, including the possibility that Zimbabwe's hard currency regime might erode. *more...*

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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Oil and Development in the Niger Delta

The vast majority of Nigeria's oil reserves are located in an area of southern Nigeria commonly referred to as the Niger Delta. First discovered in 1956, oil today makes up virtually all of Nigeria's export earnings (95 percent) and funds the vast majority of the government's revenue (58 percent in 2014). Despite this seeming boon for the Niger Delta, the discovery of oil has had a relatively negative impact on the region. There are myriad environmental concerns related to oil spills, water pollution, and soil degradation; indigenous people have been displaced in large numbers to make way for oil infrastructure; and conflict between and within oil-producing communities has been all too common, especially over the past 30 years.

As the size and power of the federal government has grown over time, the share of revenue that oil-producing states keep has steadily declined. In the 1960s, oil-producing regions in Nigeria split revenue evenly with the federal government: 50 percent went to the state/region of origin and 50 percent to the government to redistribute. Under military rule in the late 1970s, revenue sharing arrangements changed significantly. By the early 1980s (and after the re-division of Nigeria into 36 states), oil-producing states received only 1.5 percent of oil revenue. After the resumption of multiparty politics in 1999, there was a great deal of wrangling over the allocation formula, with oil-producing states demanding a much larger guaranteed share of oil revenue than they had been receiving. The current formula, decided upon in 1999, distributes government revenue as follows: 56 percent to the federal government, 24 percent to state governments, and 20 percent to local governments with a 13 percent minimum guarantee for oil-producing states.

Presidential Amnesty Program

During the 1990s and 2000s, several groups emerged to challenge the federal government's authority over the Niger Delta and its share of oil revenues. In 2006, the government finally responded to these attacks with military force. In 2009, after three years of intermittent fighting between a military joint task force and a multitude of armed militant groups, former President Umaru Yar'Adua attempted a new approach to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta. He introduced the Presidential Amnesty Program (PAP), a 5-year initiative that provided stipends to former militants and promised vocational training for those who traded in their weapons. The program cost an estimated $23 million per year but proved to be little more than an officially sanctioned bribe. Militia leaders created pipeline security consulting groups and, in turn, were paid to protect the same pipelines they were previously attacking. Leaders also reportedly received stipends in bulk and were responsible for distributing them to their members, but with no oversight by the government to ensure equitable distribution processes.

When President Muhamadu Buhari came to power in 2015, he vowed to fight corruption and wasteful government spending. One of his campaign promises was to cut spending for the PAP, which opponents viewed as merely a temporary and very expensive solution to militancy in the Niger Delta. It was argued that as soon as the payments stopped, the conflict would resume. President Buhari began a gradual phasing out of PAP by reducing funding for the program by 70 percent in the 2016 budget.

Enter the NDA

In February 2016, the NDA launched its first attack. It operates mostly in Delta and Bayelsa states and thus far it has focused its attacks on pipelines and other elements of the oil infrastructure. In May it was estimated that militant attacks were responsible for a reduction of nearly 800,000 barrels of oil per day.

The NDA's origins are murky. Some have said that the group is made up of many of the long-time militants from the region. The NDA, however, appears to want to distance itself from militant groups of the region's past, and it has cautioned former members of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the largest of the pre-existing militant groups, against seeking to speak on NDA's behalf. Others allege that NDA is composed of people who were left out of the previous amnesty program, but this does not explain why they would begin their attacks *after* funding for PAP was cut. In fact, the NDA has criticized the PAP as a way to buy off former militants and allow them to share in the region's largesse without any benefit to the people of the Niger Delta. Still others are accusing the Delta's political elites, including former president Goodluck Jonathan, of supporting NDA to discredit the Buhari regime.

The NDA says it is fighting for development of the Niger Delta. The group accuses the government of exploiting the region's resources, allowing multinational oil companies to pollute their water and land. They claim that successive Nigerian governments have used intimidation, terror, and violence to keep the population quiet and continue producing oil at any cost. The group is demanding, among other things, that the government provide clean drinking water, electricity, roads, education, and employment for all of the Niger Delta. The NDA also claim that it is not engaging in deliberate provocations of the military and is attempting to avoid casualties. The NDA is attacking oil infrastructure only to call attention to their cause. The group has not yet been accused of many of the tactics familiar to previous groups such as kidnapping, ransoming, or oil bunkering (theft).

Conclusion

The initial government response to the NDA's attacks was, true to form, a military one. The army was deployed to the Niger Delta to hunt down NDA members. Recent events, however, suggest that the government has reconsidered this approach and is pursuing dialogue. The government announced a cease-fire with the NDA, although the group denies it has any such agreement. Nonetheless, NDA attacks have stopped for the time being.

There are lessons that can be gleaned from more than 20 years of recurrent conflict in the Niger Delta— and Nigeria more generally. First, although the Niger Delta desperately needs additional security, any military response must be careful and measured. The Nigerian military is a traditionally trained force that struggles with counterinsurgency operations. In addition, because the NDA enjoys some tacit community support, a large-scale military response could further alienate an already aggrieved population in the Niger Delta. The PAP, while innovative in theory, was poorly managed and poorly executed. Money was disbursed with little or no accountability. There was no long-term approach to development and, despite the program's stated goal of training and development, nothing sustainable materialized. The Nigerian government should consider a good-faith effort to address the feelings of injustice and inequality that have plagued the Niger Delta for decades.

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ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY—THE BEGINNING OF HOPE?

By George F. Ward

Recent decades have not been kind to the economy of Zimbabwe, the Southern African country ruled since 1980 with an iron hand by Robert Mugabe. Its once-thriving agricultural sector has been ravaged, first by the misguided policy of forced expropriation of commercial farmers and more recently by severe drought connected with the current El Niño event. Economic mismanagement by the government culminated in record-setting hyperinflation that was tamed in 2009 only when Zimbabwe scrapped its own currency and adopted a multicurrency system in which the U.S. dollar has predominated. Perhaps surprisingly, bits of good news have recently begun to creep into this bleak narrative. Engagement by Zimbabwe with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (ADB) has been productive and has resulted in the outline of a path that could restore Zimbabwe's access to multilateral financial assistance. Nevertheless, many uncertainties remain, including the possibility that Zimbabwe's hard currency regime might erode.

In this photo taken on Tuesday, May, 3, 2016, Zimbabweans wait in a long line to withdraw cash in Harare. Severe shortages of U.S dollars that are used as local currency have forced many residents into becoming cash hunter-gatherers. Long lines are frequent outside banks where tellers limit daily withdrawals to $200. (Source: AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi.)

A Difficult Economic Legacy

As the *Financial Times* has reported, at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, Robert Mugabe was seen as a visionary leader who could create an African success story. For several years, he seemed intent on just that, implementing progressive social policies and attempting reconciliation with the former white ruling majority. After that promising start, however, Zimbabwe descended into political repression and an economic abyss from which it has not emerged. Beginning in 2000, Zimbabwe's government seized thousands of farms without properly compensating their owners, who were mostly white farmers. Predictably, agricultural production plummeted. According to the Commercial Farmers' Union, Zimbabwe's agricultural output declined 69 percent in volume and 70 percent in value from 2000 to 2009. Unwise monetary policy compounded the problem. Issuance of massive amounts of currency led to hyperinflation, which reached a historically high rate of 500 billion percent in 2008. The decision in 2009 to scrap the Zimbabwe dollar in favor of the U.S. dollar and other hard currencies stopped inflation, but also deprived the government of the capacity to manage the economy through monetary policy.

Current Outlook is Grim

Today, Zimbabwe is again mired in an economic morass. Industrial capacity utilization fell from 57 percent in 2011 to 34 percent in 2015. Only 6 percent of the working population are employees of either large companies or the government and have taxable income. According to some sources, government wage costs exceed 80 percent of all government spending. The IMF reports that external debt is estimated at 76 percent of GDP, and it summarizes the current situation as follows: "Zimbabwe's economic difficulties have deepened. Drought, erratic rains, and increasing temperatures, have reduced agricultural output and disrupted hydropower production and water supplies. Economic activity is severely constrained by tight liquidity conditions resulting from limited external inflows and lower commodity prices." Without international food aid, there would be severe hunger in Zimbabwe. Most recently, the government has failed to pay its employees, delaying wage payments for the military until the end of June and for civil servants until mid-July.

Yet There May Be Reason for Hope

With its back to the wall, the government of Zimbabwe has begun to address its economic problems. Although Zimbabwe's voting rights at the IMF and its ability to use the resources of the Fund have been suspended since 2001, the country has engaged with the IMF at the staff level. The so-called Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) included an in-depth

assessment of Zimbabwe's political and economic situation and an evaluation of the government's effort to come to grips with economic problems. The SMP concluded in December 2015. In the report on the SMP, the IMF stated that the Zimbabwean authorities had demonstrated strong commitment to implementing a program of macroeconomic and structural reforms. The report noted indications of fiscal discipline and the beginning of efforts to rationalize public expenditures and reduce public employment costs. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe was commended for restoring confidence in the financial system and strengthening that sector.

Although none of the reforms undertaken to date will have decisive effect, they have laid the groundwork for more meaningful efforts to clear Zimbabwe's arrears to the international financial institutions (IFIs). Currently, Zimbabwe owes $1.8 billion to the ADB, the IMF, and the World Bank. According to *Africa Confidential*, representatives of Zimbabwe and of the IFIs have met on the margins of IMF and World Bank meetings in Lima, Peru, and at a special meeting of the ADB in Lusaka, Zambia, to agree on a roadmap for Zimbabwe's return to the international system. According to the report, the Zimbabwean Finance Minister will discuss a schedule for resolving arrears in talks with the Paris Club of official creditors on June 30, 2016. If the meeting in Paris proves successful, the next step would be for the government to negotiate with the IMF on a medium-term program of restructuring.

But Significant Hurdles Remain

Even though a tentative effort to address the country's economic problems has begun, great uncertainties and challenges for Zimbabwe remain:

- Who will extend the financing needed for Zimbabwe to clear its arrears? Rumors of various bilateral deals have circulated, but none have become concrete. The European Union is supportive of Zimbabwe's economic reform program, but would likely make any lending dependent on political reforms. The United States, which would likely push even harder on governance issues, is constrained by U.S. law—the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Reform Act of 2001—which obliges the United States to vote against loans for Zimbabwe except to provide for basic needs and good governance.

- Will the government be able to exert fiscal discipline without risking turmoil within the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and social unrest? Some within the ZANU-PF are already rejecting cuts to the public sector payroll. It is easy to imagine that using scarce government revenues to provide compensation for farms that were taken over, as the government has pledged, would be widely unpopular in the ZANU-PF. Especially as elections in 2018 approach, leaders within the ruling party may well prioritize political survival over economic reform.

- How will Zimbabweans manage in the short term, even with the prospect of medium-term help? The latest problem for Zimbabwean consumers is a shortage of U.S. dollar currency. The scarcity of dollars is making small transactions difficult, inflicting additional damage on the retail sector. The government has announced its intention to issue "bond notes" that would be pegged to the U.S. dollar. Some are concerned that this move could amount to the reintroduction of the Zimbabwean currency, and the IMF has stated that it is "currently assessing the implications of the measures on the economy, including the more recently announced issuance of bond notes."

These are significant problems, but at least the government of Zimbabwe is seeking to find solutions to them in concert with its international partners. With goodwill on all sides—and with needed progress on governance issues—we may be seeing the beginning of the beginning of real progress on Zimbabwe's deep economic problems.

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS IN KENYA: A SIGN OF ERODING RULE OF LAW?

By Sarah Graveline

On July 1, 2016, the bodies of Willie Kimani, a Kenyan human rights lawyer; his client, Josephat Mwenda; and his taxi driver, Joseph Muiruri, were discovered in a river in Ol-Donyo Sabuk, outside Nairobi. The three men, who were last seen entering the Syokumau Administration Police camp on June 23, had purportedly been tortured and killed. Their murders have sparked a national conversation about the police's role in extrajudicial killings and the degradation of rule of law in Kenya. *more...*

Sarah Graveline is a Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.
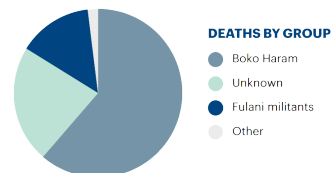

Kenyans, including human rights activists, lawyers, and taxi operators, hold a peaceful protest in Nairobi, Kenya, against alleged pervasive killings and disappearances linked to police. Slain Kenyan human rights lawyer Willie Kimani and a taxi driver were buried in their hometowns on Saturday, July 9, amid calls for top officials to resign over police-linked extrajudicial killings. (Source: AP Photo/Khalil Senosi, File.)

FULANI MILITANTS IN NIGERIA: MISCHARACTERIZATION OBSCURES THREAT AND IMPEDES RESPONSE

By Hilary Matfess

The 2015 Global Terrorism Index classified "Fulani militants" in Nigeria as the fourth most deadly terrorist group in the world, attributing more than 1,200 deaths to Fulani militias over the course of a single year. Recent outbreaks of violence have thrust the Fulani into the media spotlight again, most recently on July 5, 2016, when a community chairman in Adamawa State in northeast Nigeria, speaking on behalf of 13 villages in the state, endorsed the formation of self-defense militias "to take drastic measures to defend ourselves" against Fulani attacks. Although the phrases "Fulani herdsmen" and "Fulani militias" appear frequently in the media coverage of Nigeria's volatile Middle Belt states, the nature of this conflict is poorly understood and the drivers of violence are frequently mischaracterized. Often portrayed as having a single source, this violence involves diverse group of actors united under the banner of "Fulani herdsmen." In addition, even though many assert that the violence is driven by ethnic and religious grievances, closer examination reveals that the drivers are diverse, including factors such as climate change, criminality, and insecure land tenure. *more...*

Hilary Matfess is a Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

DEATHS BY GROUP
- Boko Haram
- Unknown
- Fulani militants
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This graph plots deaths by group in 2014 for Nigeria. Boko Haram killed 6,118 people in Nigeria through terrorist attacks, up from 1595 the year before. Fulani militants killed 1,229 people, up from 63 the year before. As a result of the Fulani increase, the percentage of killings attributed to Boko Haram actually declined. (Source: adapted from Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, IEP Report 36, Institute for Economics and Peace, November 2015, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf.)

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The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

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IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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Lawyer's Murder Sparks Protests

Kimani's death seems tied to Kenya's Administration Police (AP). On the day of his murder, Kimani represented Mwenda at trial in a harassment complaint against a police officer. The lawyer and client left the courtroom around noon and were next spotted at 4:30 p.m. locked in a container on an AP base, where Mwenda passed a note to a passerby saying, "Call my wife. I'm in danger." Observers have surmised that they were detained by AP officers when leaving court.

After their disappearance, protests against extrajudicial killings have spread across the country, organizing online under the hashtag #stopextrajudicialkilling. During the first week of July, hundreds of Kenyan lawyers brought traffic to a standstill across Nairobi in a series of protest marches; on July 5 and 6, Kenyan lawyers in Nakuru, Embu, and Bungoma held corresponding marches calling for the resignation of Joseph Boinnet, the Inspector General of Police, and Joseph Ole Nkaissery, Cabinet Secretary for Interior. The protests escalated on July 6, when protestors set fire to the Syokumau camp where the three victims had been held.

A Long History of Extrajudicial Killings

The ferocity of the protests reflects Kenyans' increasing concern with the prevalence of extrajudicial killings. As protesters have pointed out, Kenya has a long history of extrajudicial killings. Kenya's 2013 Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission recorded that Kenyan security forces had been responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians in northeastern Kenya during the 1963–67 Shifta War and in a series of mass killings in the early 1980s. In 2008, human rights groups accused Kenyan security forces of extrajudicial killings during operations in the Mandera triangle region, and in the same year, police involvement in post-election violence was widely documented. More recently, the Mombasa-based NGO Muslims for Human Rights has accused the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) of a series of disappearances and extrajudicial killings of Muslims along the Kenyan coast.

Although Kenyans are familiar with these killings, activists have largely folded protests against them into the broader context of discrimination against minority groups in Kenya. But it is increasingly clear that police brutality is a persistent problem nationwide. The Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU), a Nairobi-based advocacy group that tracks extrajudicial killings, claimed that 97 Kenyans were summarily executed by police in 2015.

Kenya's National Police Service has also been accused of brutality in responding to protests. In May, police officers' violent response to a protest made international headlines. In early June, at least five people were killed by police at a protest led by the opposition party Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD). Incidents like this may recur if the run-up to the 2017 elections produces increasingly heated rhetoric at protests and rallies nationwide.

Inadequate Reforms

Kenyan police have undergone a series of reforms following the adoption of the new 2010 constitution, including the creation of the office of the Inspector General of Police and the formation of the Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) to process complaints against the National Police Service. But in 2015, the U.S. Department of State reported that only 27 cases of extrajudicial killings were reported to a regulatory body, and only nine resulted in prosecution. Referrals to these offices lag far behind the alleged number of violations, which suggests that overall trust in the efficacy of these regulatory bodies is low.
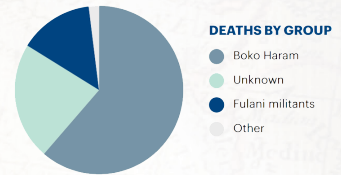
This trust was further challenged in January, when changes to the Judicial Services Act and the Miscellaneous Amendments Act gave President Uhuru Kenyatta greater control over the appointments of the Chief Justice and within the Office of the Inspector General of Police. Rule of law advocates see these changes as a sign that hard-won efforts to depoliticize Kenya's police are being eroded. By demonstrating sensitivity to these critiques and seeking to empower existing regulatory bodies, the Kenyan government could begin to combat police impunity for extrajudicial killings.

Sarah Graveline is a Research Associate in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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The 2015 Global Terrorism Index classified "Fulani militants" in Nigeria as the fourth most deadly terrorist group in the world, attributing more than 1,200 deaths to Fulani militias over the course of a single year. Recent outbreaks of violence have thrust the Fulani into the media spotlight again, most recently on July 5, 2016, when a community chairman in Adamawa State in northeast Nigeria, speaking on behalf of 13 villages in the state, endorsed the formation of self-defense militias "to take drastic measures to defend ourselves" against Fulani attacks. Although the phrases "Fulani herdsmen" and "Fulani militias" appear frequently in the media coverage of Nigeria's volatile Middle Belt states, the nature of this conflict is poorly understood and the drivers of violence are frequently mischaracterized. Often portrayed as having a single source, this violence involves diverse group of actors united under the banner of "Fulani herdsmen." In addition, even though many assert that the violence is driven by ethnic and religious grievances, closer examination reveals that the drivers are diverse, including factors such as climate change, criminality, and insecure land tenure.

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Misunderstanding the Conflict

The classification of Fulani militants as a newly emerging terrorist group is misleading. The Fulani are an amalgam of ethnic groups, rather than an organization. They have neither a central political agenda nor a centralized command structure. In fact, the "Fulani," often described as the "world's largest semi-nomadic ethnic group," are a mixture of Peul, Fulbe, and Fula ethnic groups. Their movements are dictated by the availability of grazing land for their vast holdings of livestock. Furthermore, violence between farmers and herders has been an issue in Nigeria for many years. The Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) considers the group to be a "Separatist/New Regime Nationalist/Ethnic Nationalist" movement, characterized as seeking "to secede from their ruling government and establish a new territory in which they can form their own laws, but separatism can also result from the desire to be economically, socially, or religiously separated within the governing structure." Others have characterized the violence as religious, with Muslim herdsmen persecuting Christian farmers. More recently, some high-ranking military officials in Nigeria have suggested that the herdsmen have ties to Boko Haram, even though pastoralist communities have been targeted by that insurgency for their cattle wealth.

In truth, the conflict between pastoralist Fulani and settled communities is a feature of Nigerian life that has been aggravated by developments affecting rainfall patterns, grazing rights for livestock, and increased criminality stemming from the wide availability of weapons.

Understanding the Drivers and Flashpoints

Although the conflict between farmers and herders is a persistent one in Nigeria, it is of relatively recent origin. In the past, a symbiotic relationship between the pastoralists and settled agriculturalists allowed for the groups to live peacefully among each other, as pastoralists' cattle would fertilize the farmers' land in exchange for grazing rights on reserved land.

In recent decades, however, developments have placed additional strain on both these groups, inflaming tensions. Climate change and desertification in the Sahel have made the seasonal rains less predictable, reduced the amount of arable land, and placed tension on already-scarce water resources. The seasonal migrations of pastoralists began to be seen as

encroaching on the resources and rights of settled agriculturalists. This perception was aggravated by insecure land-tenure policies in Nigeria, which provide neither security for farmers nor resources to pastoralist groups. Some of these shortcomings are a result of confusion regarding the rights and responsibilities of the Nigerian Federal Government and its 36 states. A 2012 National Grazing Route and Reserve Bill failed to pass the Nigerian Senate because of disagreement over whether or not the Federal Government had the right to designate such routes.

The violence, which can perhaps best be understood as wrangling over scarce resources in the context of uncertain rule of law, has become so lethal in part because of the increased availability of weapons throughout sub-Saharan Africa since 2011, following the breakdown of the political order in Libya. Not only has the availability of these weapons made confrontations more deadly, it has also been thought to increase the rates of cattle theft pastoralists experience, which in turn produce retributive raids and cycles of violence.

In addition to the human toll that farmer-herder conflicts produce, there is also a tangible economic toll from these conflicts. Mercy Corps estimates that over the course of three years, Nigeria lost more than $14 billion to this insecurity.

Conclusion

Nigeria's struggles with Fulani herdsmen may well be a harbinger of regional instability, given that so many countries across the Sahel are feeling the impact of climate change and also struggle with issues of land tenure and general criminality. Rising tensions in Niger, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso between pastoralists and settled communities all suggest that the Sahel itself may be experience a surge in farmer-herder violence in coming years. Recent outbreaks of such violence as far south as the Central African Republic demonstrate the destructive potential of such attacks. Just as there is certainly a risk of contagion, as conflicts involving pastoralist communities spread across borders, there are also significant economic gains to be made if the drivers of conflict can be addressed through regional cooperation and country-by-country interventions to manage domestically produced sources of insecurity. Technical support from the international community, particularly in managing scarce resources and stemming the flow of weapons throughout the region, could be useful in this endeavor.

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