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HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

ANALYSES • CONTEXT • CONNECTIONS

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South Sudan

The peace that never was

Prior to mid-December 2013, South Sudan was thought by most observers to be a "post-conflict" country firmly on the (internationally mandated) statebuilding path. Since then, observers and South Sudanese alike have been surprised and horrified by the speed and severity of the disintegration of the nascent state. Yet, such a breakdown was not entirely unexpected, and indeed had been the subject of dire predictions, particularly following President Salva Kiir's sudden dismissal of his entire cabinet in July 2013.

At that time, many in the region nervously agreed with Rift Valley Institute researcher Aly Verjee's warning that "the real political drama is still to come: the next meeting of the SPLM political bureau and, eventually, the party convention."[1] These events were to determine the SPLM's chairperson and presidential nominee going into national elections set for 2015.[2] A number of senior party officials, including several of those dismissed in July, were believed to be planning to run against President Kiir for the chairperson position and presumptive presidency, setting the stage for open challenge to Kiir's authority on a level previously unseen.

As it turned out, things came to a head even sooner than expected. Quite a bit of space on news websites, blogs, Twitter, and other media has been devoted to the cascade of events beginning on 15 December 2013 that ultimately led to the current state of crisis; that analysis won't be rehashed here.[3] Suffice it to say that the initial showdown has exploded into a violent and deadly mix of political rivalries and grudges, frustration and agitation among armed actors (many of whom were nominally part of – but never fully incorporated into – the Sudan People's Liberation Army), cycles of violence and revenge between families and communities, and overall power struggles from the ground level to the highest echelons of national government.

Over 200,000 people were displaced by the conflict by early January 2014;[4] by late March, that number had increased five-fold, including an estimated 803,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 255,000 refugees fleeing to neighbouring

countries.[5] The size, scope, and severity of the crisis have led the UN to declare it a "Level 3" humanitarian emergency, parallel to (most recently) Syria and post-cyclone Philippines, and to issue strongly-worded predictions that the levels of displacement and livelihoods devastation combined with the impending rainy season could very well lead to famine by the end of this year.

The millions of South Sudanese citizens who have invested their lives and dreams of a better future along with the donors who have invested millions of dollars in South Sudan's "post-conflict" development are now watching their hopes slip away. There is debate among international observers about whether this situation constitutes a reigniting of civil war for South Sudan, similar to the conflict that preceded the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and subsequent independence in 2011, and how that could have happened under the noses of so many (supposedly) influential actors (at least nominally) committed to preventing exactly that kind of disintegration. Regardless of that debate, the far more important question is how South Sudan can pull itself back from the brink of further unravelling, and how international actors can best encourage and sustain realistic steps toward lasting stability.

There are no easy answers here, not least because underneath the vexation about this sudden and supposedly unforeseen return to conflict lies another complex and challenging question: prior to December 2013, was South Sudan ever really at peace?

Understanding Jonglei beyond ethnicity

That question is couched in more than a desire to further complicate an already extraordinarily "wicked" problem[6]. The Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) South Sudan programme, part of a six-year study funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Irish Aid looking at livelihoods, state capacity, and state legitimacy in seven conflict-affected countries, has been working since 2012 to better understand livelihoods and governance in Jonglei state in eastern South Sudan. Jonglei is geographically the largest, and often said to be the most remote and least developed, state in the country; it has also been perhaps the most restive, with ongoing violence stemming from cattle raiding, non-state organized armed groups, military operations of various kinds, and conflict between ethnic groups.[7]

Partly because of its remoteness and lack of infrastructure, Jonglei remains relatively under-studied and poorly understood, yet it has always been something of a bellwether of South Sudan's development and stability (or lack thereof). The South Sudanese government must demonstrate to its citizens as well as donors that it has the ability to respond effectively to ongoing conflict within its borders. More broadly, it must be able to address the drivers of those conflicts such that there are better options available to would-be violent actors than to perpetuate the cycles of violence that continue to decimate life and livelihoods across large swaths of the country. Such violence in Jonglei and elsewhere is driven by a complex web of actors, relationships, and dynamics which are not well understood either inside or outside of South Sudan. Yet the events in Jonglei, Juba and elsewhere in the past few months have only further confirmed that the government's capacity to respond to these complex threats is still severely lacking, and that the need for greater comprehension of the underlying issues and potential responses to them is ever more urgent.[8]

Jonglei has long been home to shifting internal dynamics, relationships and loyalties among ethnic groups and political actors, which have made its conflict and development trajectories quite difficult to chart, much less to predict and stabilise.[9] The three largest ethnic groups in the state – Dinka, Nuer, and Murle – have historically engaged in periodic violence and raids against one another, largely for the purpose of cattle theft and the establishment of (young male) raiders' dominance, wealth, and social status within their own groups, as well as vengeance for previous attacks.

The local populations we have interviewed for SLRC project thus far noted, as have scholars and observers, that the nature, frequency and intensity of such violence have shifted in recent decades, and are continuing to evolve as new influences and conflict drivers have emerged from the civil war and its aftermath since 2005. One of many challenges to making sense of conflict in Jonglei and other states is that it is often described simply as ethnic[10] or 'tribal', yet such descriptors capture only part – if any – of the forces at work. The dynamics and purposes of cattle raiding vary according to group norms not only within ethnic groups but also within subgroups such as clans and age-sets, and have also shifted markedly over time as traditional authorities have lost influence and militarised mindsets, tactics and weaponry rooted in the war have continued to pervade 'peace' time. As a result, extreme and indiscriminate violence has become more commonplace since the CPA, and made 'traditional' raiding attacks more difficult to differentiate from other types of social and political conflict.

Ethnic group loyalties are often said to explain the underpinnings of national power struggles, as well. While they may indeed influence support for government figures such as President Salva Kiir (Dinka from Warrap State) and former Vice President Riek Machar (Nuer from Unity State), as well as other actors, including rebel leaders such as David Yau Yau (Murle from Pibor County in southern Jonglei), group membership is certainly not the only determinant of political loyalty, and such explanations of South Sudan's highly complex political dynamics are oversimplifications at best. This is even, if not especially, true of the current (2013-14) crisis.

This crisis has been widely represented as ethnically motivated, and has obvious ethnic dimensions, yet was largely triggered by a political challenge to the authority of President Kiir led by a coalition of prominent political actors from various ethnic groups, including Kiir's own. Conflict in Jonglei and throughout the country is driven and clouded by historical and current perceptions of discrimination and marginalisation, as well as by stereotypes and biases between and among groups, ethnic or otherwise. Ethnicity must not be understood as the central or only issue.[11]

A failure of governance

Conflict is also driven by numerous factors related to governance and the state's capacity and willingness (or lack thereof) to intercede against and mitigate violence and its drivers. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GoSS) has not yet established law and order or functional security and justice sectors. It focused, instead, on numerous other complex issues: the transition of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A) from decades of being a rebel movement with a strict militaristic hierarchy – simultaneously rife with internal discord and fragmentation – to being the governing political party and standing national army in a nascent democracy; the absorption of numerous dissident leaders and stakeholders into a ''large tent"[12] of national political unity; ongoing struggle with Sudan over various issues; and a host of other internal challenges, including the temporary shutdown of oil production, and huge gaps in infrastructure, service delivery and institutions.

With these challenges come significant internal contradictions, including a bloated military that often lacks authority over its soldiers but was long unable to shed volume for fear of backlash; violent and ineffective civilian disarmament campaigns; and widespread impunity for violence and corruption. Additionally, there is the fact that the SPLM is essentially a fractious rebel movement which had to relatively quickly reframe itself as a governing political party. While it was perhaps much more internally well-organized for such purposes than many rebel movements going into independence, its basic *raison d'être* was fundamentally different for most of its existence than it has been since the CPA and independence.[13] Old habits are hard to break, and require tremendous political will in addition to know-how

and resources. The international community has eagerly – if perhaps somewhat impatiently – supplied a significant amount of the latter (partly in hopes that it could influence better habits), but it is now all too clear that its influence is far smaller than donors wish. GoSS has remained far – and now only moved further – from surmounting these hurdles in its short history.

A central challenge is that stability is both the desired outcome of current state-building efforts, but it is also the necessary prerequisite. Large-scale infrastructure such as transportation and telecommunications systems, effective state institutions, and the provision of security are – however tautologically – rather essential precursors to their own construction. Some measure of progress can be made without, for example, good roads and transportation access around the country, or effective security, but such progress will almost certainly be much slower and more easily undermined than either South Sudanese or donors desire.

The ambiguous role of donors, international community

Donor response to South Sudan's independence has been substantial, though it must be noted that history is full of examples from around the world demonstrating that aid effectiveness is not necessarily proportional to quantity (and in fact may be more disproportionate than either donors or recipients generally acknowledge). Tens of thousands of international advisors, UN military and civilian personnel, NGO workers, diplomatic and donor agency staff and private contractors, as well as billions of dollars in pledged aid, have poured into South Sudan since 2005.

The UN alone has over 10,000 personnel in South Sudan and a broad mandate that includes the potential use of force to protect civilians, but it faces its own capacity and security challenges that have precluded effective and sustainable conflict intervention. Their general focus is on supporting South Sudan's transformation into a peaceful and effective state, based largely on state-building theory that equates state visibility and service delivery with effective governance and state legitimacy.

These are not, however, neutral actors. Each brings its own set of approaches, relationships, motivations and historical understandings to its dealings with GoSS, local leaders and communities, and with them, particular sets of dynamics and logistics that must be managed by all involved, which is tremendously time-consuming, to say the least. The (large) extent to which it has become a lightning rod for both GoSS and South Sudanese civilian frustration and anger in recent months may demonstrate the weakness of such theory as well as the frailty of the UN's relationship with the state.

In the meantime, other types of external actors with very different motivations, such as the Government of Sudan, have been both passively and actively involved in South Sudan's internal conflicts at various times since 2005, up to and including the present crisis. Ongoing disputes over border demarcation, oil revenues, and contested territories such as Abyei have kept both Sudan's and South Sudan's governments politically occupied and required significant domestic and international diplomatic pressure to resolve – or at least defer – disputes peacefully.

Some regional governments have also intervened militarily, whether by supplying arms and resources to South Sudanese rebels, as Sudan is widely believed to have done,[14] to providing crucial manpower and firepower to GoSS in its current fight against various armed groups that have splintered from the SPLA since late 2013, in the case of Uganda.[15] These many kinds of external forces, both benevolent and oppositional, have generally had minimal physical presence on the ground in Jonglei and other states, but all of them shape South Sudan's political, social and conflict dynamics in numerous – and often-fluctuating, if not contradictory – ways.

It is against this backdrop that the young state of South Sudan is charged with providing effective security for its population, ending armed conflict within its borders and creating the peace and stability that citizens and other stakeholders

demand. The ongoing political crisis of 2013-14 makes it only more pressing that all possible efforts and resources be put toward realising this vision of a peaceful and stable nation, yet it pushes that goal only further beyond the reach of South Sudan's citizenry.

The donors investing in that goal must also invest in understanding the complexity of the situation underlying it as well as potential responses, if any true progress is to be made. While popular narratives reduce Jonglei's and South Sudan's conflict to lack of services, competition for resources or 'tribal' animosities, there is no simple or definitive explanation, or any obvious roadmap for 'rebuilding' a peace that, in reality, many South Sudanese have never known. It is only clear that a different approach than that of the post-CPA and independence period is now urgently needed.

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1 Verjee, Aly. "Thoughts on the Juba reshuffle" (29 July 2013). http://africanarguments.org/2013/07/29/thoughts-on-the-juba-reshuffle-%E2%80%93-by-aly-verjee/

2 Elections are still slated for 2015, though the corollary need for a – currently unplanned and unfunded – national census to be completed in advance of polling makes them extremely unlikely to be carried out on the stated timeline, despite continued government assurances. See Mayai, Augustino, Abucha, Martin, and Jok, Jok Madut. *The 2015 National Census and Elections: An Analysis of President Kiir's Announcements*. Sudd Institute Policy Briefs (1 February 2014). Available at: http://suddinstitute.org/publications/show/the-2015-national-census-and-elections-an-analysis-of-president-kiir-s-announcements/

3 For starters, see https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/nine-questions-about-south-sudan-crisis-guide-confused-observers and https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/south-sudan-crisis-guide-confused-observers-ii, http://thinkafricapress.com/south-sudan/experts-weekly-south-sudan-violent-crisis, coverage from the Sudd Institute and Rift Valley Institute,

4 http://www.usaid.gov/crisis/south-sudan/fy14/fs10

5 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/South_Sudan_Humanitarian_Snapshot_26Mar2014_FINAL.pdf

6 A problem is "wicked" when its complexity, mutability, internal contradictions, and other characteristics make it difficult or impossible to resolve, and often even to recognize and define. The term was first noted by C. West Churchman in a guest editorial in Management Science (Vol. 14, No. 4, December 1967), and attributed to urban planning and design theorist Horst Rittel.

7 Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is also the site of some of the earliest military defections and now seemingly uncontainable violence and armed opposition to the government following the political crisis of December 2013.

8 Our recent working paper, "In the eye of the storm: an analysis of internal conflict in South Sudan's Jonglei State", attempts to help fill that gap.

9 Mayai, Augustino Ting and Jok, Jok Madut. *Managing Violence in Jonglei*. Sudd Institute Policy Brief (9 November 2013). Available at http://suddinstitute.org/publications/show/managing-violence-in-jonglei-a-test-of-legitimacy-and-credibility-in-juba/

10 We use the term "ethnic group" rather than "tribe," according to prevailing norms. We also note that any such terminology is problematic, yet inescapable in attempts to describe South Sudan's complex social fabric. Group affiliation is neither static nor neutral, as has become terribly clear in the past several months.

11 For excellent discussion of these and related dynamics, see http://www.riftvalley.net/event/south-sudan-peace-possible

12 Matthew, LeRiche, and Matthew Arnold, "South Sudan From Revolution to Independence" (London: Hurst and Company, 2012) p245.

13 Blanchard, Lauren (2014). *The Crisis in South Sudan*. Congressional Research Service (9 January 2014). Available at: https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43344.pdf

14 Small Arms Survey (2012) 'My Neighbor, My Enemy: Intertribal Violence in Jonglei'. Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, Sudan Issue Brief 21. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. Available at: http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB21-Inter-tribal_violence_in_Jonglei.pdf

15 http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article50289

Youth radicalisation in Kenya
Security versus communal approach

In April 2014, the Kenyan security forces carried out a sweeping operation in Nairobi and other parts of the country arresting thousands of 'suspects', mainly Somalis. The operation was ostensibly aimed at combating the threat posed by radical outfits. This article argues that this security-centred approach to countering radicalization is counterproductive. It analyzes the radicalization of youth in Kenya; mainly in Mombasa, by focusing on understanding the operations of radical movements. It argues for adopting a viable contextualised strategy to deal with the menace of radicalization through comprehensive and integrated approach, rather than a security-centred approach, which ultimately undermines the safety and security of society at large.

Increasing violence – and response

Since 2010, there has been an increase in violent attacks in various parts of Kenya, with Christian places of worship being one of the key targets. It is believed that Muslim youth, who have allegedly been indoctrinated with a religious ideology associated with terrorism, are behind these attacks. But how do youth get radicalized?

As a strategy, terrorism engages in a long process of recruitment and indoctrination. The process begins with identification of sources of resentment in society that are used to develop a radical narrative to sustain violent activities. In many cases the narrative is based on a lived reality being experienced by the group that is being targeted, in this case the Muslim youth population. The narrative endures because of politicization of religion and use of religious symbolism. Once individuals have been recruited into a radical movement, they are prepared to carry out violence and are prepared for the consequences. This means in carrying out the operation, they are aware of the risks involved, including loss of their own life.

Thus far, the Kenyan government has used 'security approaches' to deal with the terrorism-related violence, leaving out an integrated communal approach that has the capacity to be effective and sustainable. After a violent attack, the public is emotive as the media display ghastly images and strong political and public pronouncements are made. In many instances violence continues for days as a result of post-attack security operations. Subsequently, there is usually an outcry from families who are not able to trace the whereabouts of their relatives (mainly sons) who were rounded up in security operations. Court injunctions for police to produce missing persons alleged to be in their custody usually follow.

On the other hand, Christian religious leaders at one time demanded that they be allowed to carry guns to protect churches from attacks. Recently, a government official stated that they will adopt a shoot-to-kill policy to deal with 'terrorists.' In addition to being draconian, this approach has various other risks; first, it will lead to the profiling of a group of people reinforcing the narrative and, secondly, it will alienate an important segment of the population, i.e. Muslim communities that can help in dealing with the menace of radicalisation.

Radicalization processes

Radicalization is a process used by groups that employ terrorism as a strategy to achieve political ends through violence targeted against non-combatants. In order to carry out violence they utilize social structures and recruit individuals who are influenced to adopt the group-thinking through a process of radicalization.[1] Individuals who join these groups and conform to their philosophy are part of the wider society and undergo emotional and psychological preparation before committing acts of violence.[2]

The process of radicalization includes information-gathering which enables the group to identify a crisis in which to develop and sustain a radical narrative. Common narrative strands include issues of marginalization and injustice disseminated

through communal structures. Public narration creates room for consciousness-raising and recruitment. The grievances are packaged and disseminated gradually; disenfranchised youth identify with the narrative and act when an opportunity to engage arises. Affiliation with the ideology prepares for execution, carrying out the activities, which are usually catastrophic especially if the plan goes undetected. All this process takes place in the community; the process is secretive and utilizes existing social structures making it easy to go unnoticed.

Religious structures have been identified as centres of radicalization. For example, Masjid Musa (now Masjid Shuhadaa) in Mombasa has been singled out as one of the centres used for recruitment and radicalization. While this may be true, not all worshipers in the mosque are supporters or even aware of such activities. Mosques are centres of worship that are open to anyone who professes the Islamic faith. Thus, conducting a violent security operation when religious sessions are taking place proves counterproductive as it will also target innocent worshippers whose support in de-radicalization is essential.

Community's role in de-radicalization

It is important to reinforce the role of the community in de-radicalization through a proactive, inclusive and sustainable method that will have the support and confidence of the population. A collective approach is preferable to a reactive approach that has negative consequences. A collective approach would enable security personnel, political leaders, community and religious leaders to have a critical and much-needed dialogue of this issue. The dialogue should include presenting the issues that make it possible for the youth to be recruited, including structural issues that need to be dealt with at the policy level.

Different sectors of state and society engaging in stand-alone activities lead to flawed decision making and action which fails. The method of shooting or arresting profiled individuals deals only with the consequences of radicalization, whereas radical groups have a long-term agenda and adopt strategies which keep shifting to enable them to carry out their missions. Their actions revolve around an ideological narrative which is used to alter the behaviour of youth and gain their allegiance.

Therefore, a multi-stakeholders' forum that brings together the various societal actors and state agencies is essential.[3] (For example, dialogue and collective action by religious leaders from all faith groups, together or in isolation, can help identify the real issues and how to combat them). The use of force tends to strengthen the narrative of the radical groups. Especially when there is no progress in identifying and arresting the perpetrators of an attack, this generalized approach leads to racial and religious profiling. The dominant assumption that has informed security operations after every attack – and which has been used to conduct security operations – is based on religion, racial and ethnic affiliation. After a violent attack, security agencies carry out swoops in search of the perpetrators and end up arresting mainly Muslim youth.

If the operation is in Nairobi it is the Somali or Arab-like features that are used to identify suspects. Having names that suggest that a person is likely to be a Muslim leads to extra security attention and the result is profiling of members of the Muslim community. This stance, adopted by security forces, that anyone who fits a Muslim character is guilty until proven innocent, has become the norm.

This process of 'proving the innocence' leads to human rights violations and humiliation. In some instances, individuals have been confined to police custody and subjected to torture. Some have even disappeared with families unaware of their whereabouts months after such a security operation. Profiling leads to sectarianism among the masses. This situation causes tension and even loss of support from a critical segment – the general Muslim public – who can help the security forces with information that can reduce violence attacks.

As the youth from the Muslim population are the focus of radical movements, the community needs to get involved in de-radicalization. However, the efforts of the Muslim community need to be reinforced by addressing historical grievances and injustices that create an environment conducive to radicalisation. This includes dealing with structural issues that promote inequality, lack of opportunities for economic livelihood and socio-political exclusion. These are governance issues. With the current devolution form of governance, this also means involving different levels of society in a coordinated process.

Integrated and comprehensive de-radicalization

A sustainable and effective approach to dealing with radicalization of youth in Mombasa is to work with religious institutions. In order to effectively address radicalization, collective efforts at different levels of society are essential to counteract the process. It requires a centralized approach that is carried out at different levels of society by different groups. Community structures, both formal and informal, have a higher potential to curb radicalization; hence reducing the violence perpetrated as a result of this phenomenon. This means concerted efforts by the government, religious leaders of all faith groups and Muslim community leaders. It will also entail addressing the issues that create an environment for radicalization to take place and this means dealing with structural issues which are the bedrock of the radicalization process. Deconstructing the radical narrative will require a concerted effort by the following institutions and societal leaders:

The Government of Kenya should establish a national structure to deal with peace and security issues. This should be integrated into the national development agenda to make it possible to deal with structural issues that cause insecurity and conflict. This means not only dealing with insecurity from a national security perspective but also having a policy and functional structures at national, regional and local/community levels which will be centrally coordinated.

The security agencies should adopt a comprehensive approach of dealing with radicalism. The prevailing methods used by security agencies are pathological which identify a problem and try to eliminate it by using security approaches only. What is needed is a combination of approaches including a security-oriented approach but not just security-centred. Several security units are in place to enforce law and order. It is essential that their actions are proactive and not reactive. In this case, there is a need to avoid intimidation and instead work in collaboration with other stakeholders, both formally and informally. For instance, there is a need to include both Muslim and Christian leaders in ensuring the safety and security of one another's community members, as has been the case in the North Eastern town of Garissa where Muslims came out to protect their Christian neighbours.

Religious leaders: The problem of terrorism and radicalization has a religious aspect which makes it essential to include a religious component in de-radicalisation plans. This approach enables religious leaders to prevent hostility among followers of different faiths who reside in the same environs. The coming together of different religious leaders will also reinforce social cohesion on matters other than security that will in the long term contribute to collective communal development and counter the environment that facilitates radicalization.

In addition, local *Muslim communities* are best placed to know and understand the challenges the community faces and this local knowledge is essential to develop a holistic and sustainable approach for de-radicalization and terrorism. These efforts should go beyond verbal condemnation to action on how to address structural issues that make it possible to recruit the youth. The process will require intra and inter-group efforts and engagement. The Muslim community needs to engage internally; the different ethnic communities who profess the Islamic faith as well as the differ-

ent schools of thought need to collectively identify strategies that will contribute to security and safety. The fact that religion and specifically Islam and Muslims identity is prominent in the current radicalization, then it is Muslims and their leaders who should be at the forefront in dealing with the issue.

Conclusion

While a security response is inevitable after acts of violence, it cannot be ignored that the wider society also has a contribution to make in securing the peace. This means a more conducive environment needs to be created in order to allow for a genuine collaboration between all stakeholders in preventing violence.

Radicalism is a social issue that requires collective social action. Adopting a single solution that is flawed will have a backlash effect, both in the short and long term. The efforts to deal with radicalism should be inclusive, comprehensive and firmly grounded on principles that can be generalized. This means developing a method that can be utilized and sustained to prevent not just Muslim youth radicalization but also any other forms of radicalization that may crop up in society. This approach will succeed through inclusion and consultation and will address the core issues that create an enabling environment for radicalism to prosper.

The key message, however, is that an integrated approach is the best way to handle radicalization while there is also a need to uphold the rights of all those arrested and to treat them in a humane and non-discriminatory manner. In order to comprehensively deal with youth involvement in violence and radicalization the Muslim communities have to be a key stakeholder in the effort.

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1 See for example Donna Della Porta, "Terror Against the State," in Kate Nash and Alan Scott, eds., The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001) 215 – 216.

2 Clark R. McCauley and Mary E. Segal, "Social Psychology of Terrorist Groups," in Clyde Hendrick, ed., Group Processes and Inter-group Relations (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987), 232.

3 Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force: First Report of the Working Group on Radicalization that Leads to Terrorism, Inventory of States Programmes, http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/pdfs/radicalization.pdf

Policy watch

Layers of conflict in Somalia

The ultimate objective of the regional and international community's diplomatic and military engagement in south-central Somalia is to weaken and defeat al-Shabab. Almost all Somali religious and political factions and clan militias that oppose al-Shabab are part of the UN-mediated political roadmap process that envisages a general election in 2016. Sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council and major western powers, for the last seven years an African Union military mission, AMISOM, has been deployed in the country for the purpose of creating conditions peaceful and stable enough to realise that goal. The EU pledged last year a $2.4 billion 'New Deal' compact mainly to stabilise those parts of south-central Somalia that AMISOM, in collaboration with local Somali government and clan-affiliated regional forces, has recovered from al-Shabab.

This strategy is based on two assumptions – arguably flawed – that, first, a combination of AMISOM and non-Shabab Somali militias can neutralise and reduce

al-Shabab's threat to a manageable level and, if and when that happens, Somalia as a polity and society will be ready to pursue a political course leading to statehood. As the following discussion suggests, neither assumption seems to be grounded in a dispassionate analysis of the situation on the ground.

Underestimating al-Shabab

In military terms, the war against al-Shabab in Somalia seems to have reached a stalemate. By April 2014, seven years after its inception, AMISOM and local Somali allies had recovered ten towns, most importantly Mogadishu and Kismayo, spread over a wide geographic area across south-central regions.[1] Al-Shabab, on the other hand, maintains control over much of the hinterland as well as most of the small towns (see map). Even in areas not in its direct control, al-Shabab continues to pose a serious security threat. Skirmishes resulting in towns and villages changing hands are frequent.

Speaking at the United States Institute of Peace on 15 April, the UN special representative to Somalia, Nicholas Kay, warned that al-Shabab attacks that cause "significant losses" would likely force international officials to leave or downsize their missions in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. "I am deeply conscious that if we make a mistake in our security presence and posture, and suffer a significant attack, particularly on the UN, this is likely to mean us withdrawing from Somalia," Kay was reported to have said.[2] Barely a week later, though, he clarified that the UN had no intention to withdraw from Somalia. "Quite the opposite, we are expanding our presence on the ground … we have more UN people and more UN agencies present in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia. I fully expect that that expansion of presence will continue. Our resolve is very, very strong."[3]

Against this background, it is hard to see an imminent military solution to the al-Shabab problem, especially when the heavy presence of non-Somali armies stokes Somali nationalist sentiments and enhances the appeal of al-Shabab's narrative. The weakness of the Somali Federal Government is also evident from its reliance on AMISOM troops and failure to put together a credible, broad-based Somali National Army which remains fractious and prone to infighting.[4] But, despite all evidence to the contrary, using an assortment of regional national armies to support a range of disunited Somali militias seems to be the only option being pursued by the international community.

A post-Shabab Somalia

In a hypothetical scenario where al-Shabab has been roundly defeated and subdued by 2016, Somalia would still be far from gaining political stability or peace. Somali clans had fought one another for 15 years before the rise of al-Shabab and internationalisation of the Somali civil war. Those clan conflicts are still simmering and, with or without al-Shabab, remain the main hurdle in the way of establishing order and building viable national state institutions. The new constitution, which provides for federating states made up of two or more regions, has led to fresh conflicts as rival clan factions vie for recognition as regional administrations in the would-be federal state of Somalia. Reconciliation and a political agreement over which territories and cities belong to – or shared by – which clans never took place. Access to natural resources as well as international humanitarian and development aid fuels is another cause of clan competition. That is why almost every new aspiring regional administration – be it Jubaland, Hiran, the South-west Somali State – is mired in disputes that often turn violent with fighting along clan lines.

Also, a post-Shabab Somalia is unlikely to be less Islamist or free of extremist ideologies. The role of religion has been firmly entrenched in the Somali politics and the political landscape is dominated by Islamists of different shades and hue. Differences over how to implement the Islamic clauses of the new constitution pledging to enforce Sharia are already a source of tension between different faith-based political

groups. For example, whilst Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a promotes traditional Somali religious practices and customs, modernist Islamists, especially those in the federal government, have a different version of an Islamic society. Most other regional states and administrations also display Islamist credentials. In fact, the al-Shabab factor tends to hide the latent sectarianism that marks the relationship between Somalia's many Islamist groups.

This mix of religious disputes and clan and interest based politics would continue to undermine prospects of a relatively stable central state in Somalia even if al-Shabab as an organisation were to disappear from the scene. Unfortunately, rather than countering these two trends, the political plan for the future of Somalia drawn by the international community – based as it is on a formula of clan-based representation and encouraging further politicisation of religion – fosters and encourages both. This roadmap for Somalia appears to have as much of a chance of success as all the previous failed attempts since 1991 to stabilise the country

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September 2013 map of Somalia, courtesy of the BBC at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15336689

1 Source: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47632#.U13j5fmSyIU, accessed on 24 April 2014

2 See, for example, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/4/22/un-somalia-shabab.html

3 Source: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47632#.U13j5fmSyIU

4 See, for example, http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia-12-killed-in-Federal-Govt-troops-infighting-in-Lower-Shabelle.shtml

Growing inequality

State of East Africa Report 2013, published by Society for International Development and Trademark East Africa, November 2013

The inequality gap in East Africa mars the gains made over the decade in terms of regional cooperation and integration. According to this report by the Society for International Development (SID) and Trademark East Africa, half of the East African population, or about 71 million people, live on $1.6 a day, whereas 14 million are living on $5.8 a day. But the poorest 56 million people (40%) people live in absolute poverty on $0.63 a day. The report argues that unless drastic readjustments are made to reduce inequality, efforts to improve the region's economy will not benefit the majority population.

Follow this link *http://www.sidint.net/content/state-east-africa-2013-out-now*

Creating an enabling peacebuilding environment: How can external actors contribute to resilience?

This briefing paper by the Cape Town-based African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) discusses different conditions that support the creation of an enabling environment for peacebuilding. "The highly dynamic nature of peacebuilding means that investing in such an environment needs to be based on a long-term approach, where planning recognises the complexity and non-linearity of crises and dynamics."

It notes that peacebuilding theory and practice has evolved over 20 years in response to highly complex and fluid factors and contexts. "Over this period, peacebuilding has developed several salient features, including its reliance on implementation in the long term, the interdependence of various actors and the multidimensional nature of processes." The report states in order for it to be sustainable peacebuilding work must be innovative, flexible and responsive to the requirements of local actors and contexts, while remaining sensitive to the potential for unintended consequences and doing harm. The paper challenges the premise that the creation of an enabling peacebuilding environment cannot be achieved through application of standardised prescriptions.

The paper is available at *http://www.accord.org.za/images/downloads/brief/ACCORD-policy-practice-brief-28.pdf*

Eritrea: From triumph to tragedy

Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, *Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope*, Strategic Book Publishing, February 2014

In this book Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, a former Eritrean freedom fighter now in exile, reviews Eritrea's history as a prototype postcolonial African state. The country's record in nation building, state construction and economic development has been situated in the postcolonial African setting. The book analyses the fragility, and failure to deliver, of the prototype African state and "traces Eritrea's distressing slide from triumph to tragedy." The future can be rescued, the author argues, but only if the past is understood, and the present confronted by Eritreans acting with support of the international community.

The book can be ordered at *http://sbprabooks.com/AndebrhanWeldeGiorgis*

New country, old war

'South Sudan: A civil war by any other name', International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 217, 10 April 2014

The independence of South Sudan in 2011 was greeted by donors and the international community with much optimism and euphoria. However, as this new report observes, "the nation's closest allies did little to mediate leadership divisions within the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement's (SPLM). The SPLM and its army (SPLA) quickly split along divisions largely unaddressed from the independence war". In December 2013 a civil war broke out and peace efforts over the last few months have been unsuccessful.

"To prevent further catastrophe," this report recommends, "the country's leaders and its international partners need to consider a radical restructuring of the state. Propping up the government in Juba and polishing its legitimacy with a dose of political dialogue and a dash of power sharing will not end the conflict. New constituencies have to be admitted to a national dialogue and their perspectives respected, including armed groups and disaffected communities that go beyond the contending forces within the SPLM/A, as well as women and civil society more generally."

Read the report at *http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/south%20sudan/217-south-sudan-a-civil-war-by-any-other-name.pdf*

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The electronic base of HAB is LPI and the editor for this issue is Najum Mushtaq (najum.mushtaq@life-peace.org).

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For a link to HAB and more information see *www.life-peace.org*

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The Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) is an international newsletter, compiling analyses, news and resources primarily in the Horn of Africa region. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily represent the views of the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) or the cooperating partners, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Writers and sources are normally referred to, although in exceptional cases, the editors of the HAB may choose not to reveal the real identity of a writer or publish the source.