



Committee: Security Council

Issue: Terrorism in the Sub-Saharan Area

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I) Introduction

Terrorism is not new in Africa. In the last 50 years, African countries have experienced relatively high levels of terrorism. However countries such as Algeria, Burundi, Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Rwanda, and others have seen an increase in terrorist acts in recent years.

II) The question of Terrorism in the Sub-Saharan Area

Since the late 1980s, sub-state terrorist activity in countries such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Sudan have resulted in the loss of almost a million lives and significant destruction of physical property. For example, between 1974 and 2008, a total of 4,993 terrorism incidents took place in sub-Saharan Africa, of which only 261 groups claimed responsibility. Indeed, a recent study reveals that most lethal effective perpetrators groups from 2009 to 2012 are based in Africa.

On the one hand, fortunately in 2017 the number of fatalities dropped. On the other hand, unfortunately, in terms of activity, the number of violent events linked to militant Islamist groups in Africa rose in 2017 (to 2,769 events from 2,317 in 2016).

Certainly, no one can really determine the reason for this attacks, as many argue that they are initiated by economic reasons. Others discuss that poverty has nothing to do with it, and instead consider how religion, ethnicity, colonial legacy, and rational choice explain why some individuals and groups in Africa employ terrorist acts as an approach to justify their mission and objective.

In addition, the origins of the crisis can be attributed to a lack of industrialization, caused by geographical and climatic issues frequent on the region. Nearly all crises in the region are related with destructive climatic patterns.



III) Key Nations and UN organizations

United States of America

The United States of America has historically been inconsistent in its support and interest in the Sahel region. In 2017, the United States of America “has promised \$60 million to support the Group of Five Sahel States (G5 Sahel) Joint Force’s counter-terrorism efforts” (Campos and Ross). The force will eventually consist of nearly 5,000 troop units from Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania to counter the growing jihadist threat in the Sahel region.

France

France has an active military presence across Africa relative to other European nations, which is justified by the existence of French colonies such as Chad and Mali within the Sahel region.

ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States)

The Economic Community of West African States, “a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integrations in all fields of activity of the constituting countries” (ECOWAS). Most importantly, ECOWAS serves as a peacekeeping force in West Africa, and surprisingly, it is one of the only organizations which is not a UN agency, meaning it is self sufficient and supported just by African countries.

Last year, ECOWAS helped remove Gambia’s president Yahya Jammeh from power if he did not agree to leave peacefully.

UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

UNODC has a global presence in the fight against drug trafficking and international crime. The UNODC Sahel Program “supports the development of accessible, efficient and accountable criminal justice systems to combat illicit trafficking drug trafficking, organized crime, terrorism and corruption in the region” (UNODC). This program has been developed within the framework of the UN Regional Integrated Strategy for the Sahel 2014-2019.

V) Previous attempts to solve the issue



- Security Council Resolution 1373, 28 September 2001 (S/RES/1373(2001))
- Security Council Resolution 1566, 8 October 2004 (S/RES/1566)
- Security Council Resolution 1970, 26 February 2011 (S/RES/1970)
- Security Council Resolution 2100, 25 April 2013 (S/RES/2100)
- European Parliament Resolution of 22 October 2013
- Security Council Resolution 2295, 29 June 2016 (S/RES/2295)

VI) Possible Solutions

- Reducing access to dangerous weapons by the implementation of firearm laws within the country or area
- Improving border controls and the exchange of information between countries
- Blocking foreign terrorist fighters
- Activities on educating the society of reporting suspicious situations
- Activities on preventing and responding to attacks by means of weapons of mass destruction
- Activities on combating the financing of terrorism
- Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism
- Eradicate radical Islamist thoughts by a religious debate among the different representatives of the Islamic interpretations of the Quran
- Ensure the collaboration between the UN and the African Union in order for social improvements to happen. Improvements such as but not limited to:
 - Implement basic health care, health centers
 - Supply of basic food and provision of clean water
 - Establish basic teaching focusing on primary and secondary education, most importantly on women



VII) Key terms or useful link

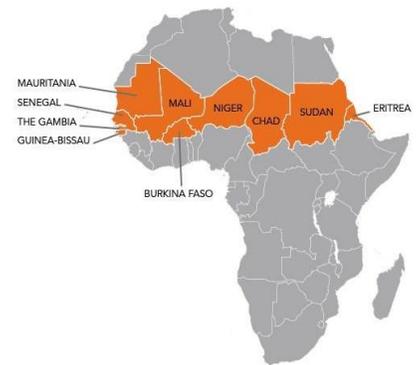
Sub-saharan Africa

According to the United Nations, the Sub-Saharan countries are those lying to the south of the Sahara. Not to get confused with the Sahel Region.



Sahel Region

The Sahel Region is the ecoclimatic and biogeographic zone of transition in Northern Africa separating the Saharan desert to the north to the Sudanese Savannah on the south. The Sahel region is located across the south-central latitudes of Northern Africa, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea.



Terrorist vs. Freedom fighter

Note: No universal agreement on the definition of terrorism exists.

However it could be described as a person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

While a freedom fighter is a person who takes part in a revolutionary struggle to achieve a political goal, usually in order to overthrow their government.

VIII) Terrorist or freedom fighter?

As mentioned before, a terrorist is “a person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims. While a freedom fighter is a person who takes part in a revolutionary struggle to achieve a political goal, usually in order to overthrow their government?”. However, who are this attacks in Africa considered coming from? Terrorist or freedom fighters?



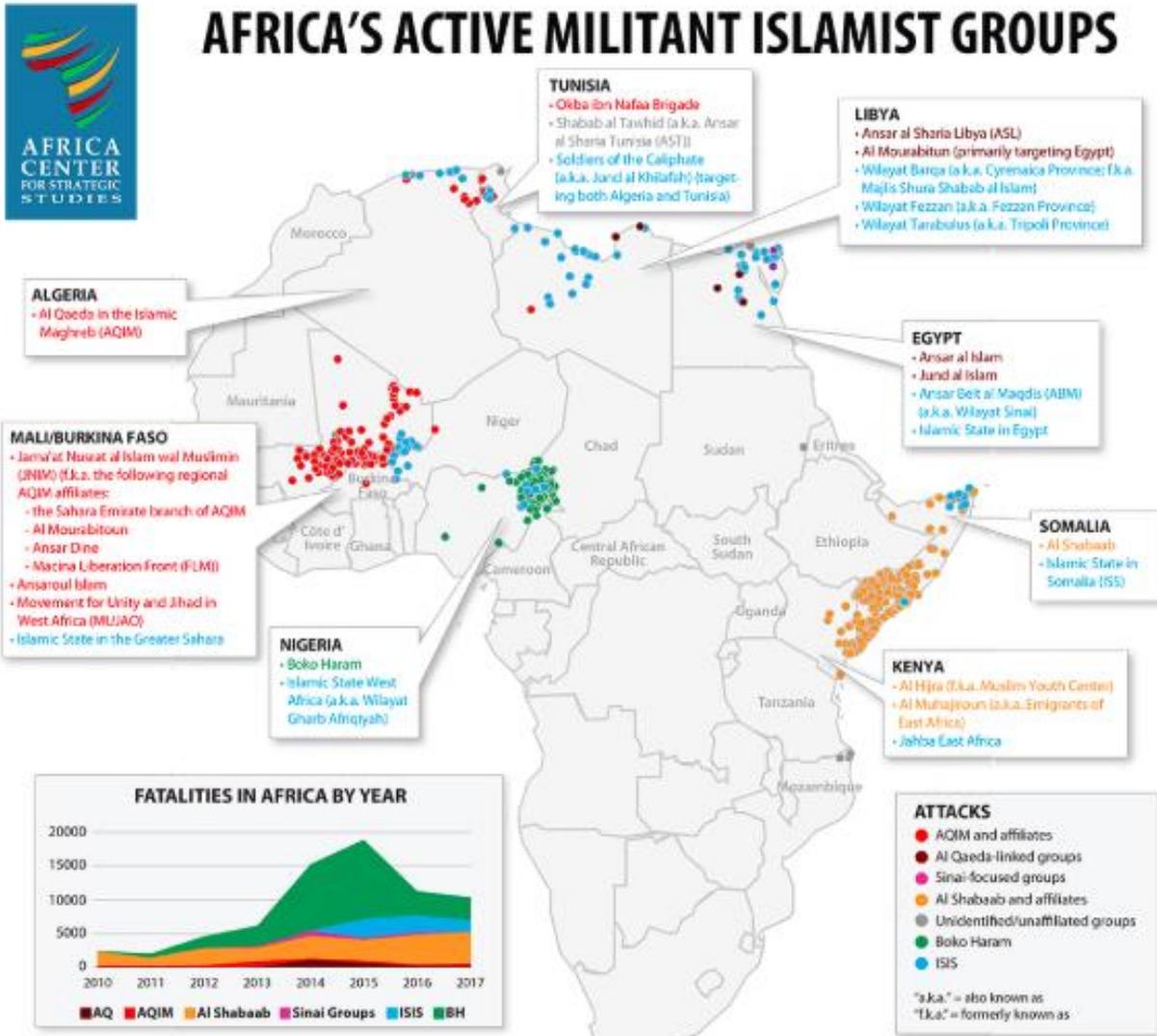
What for some civilians may be a terrorist, for others is a freedom fighter, and both are correct in some way or another. It is true that if a group has attacked a public event, killing many, a part of the population, within the country, may see it as a terrorist attack, as it has killed innocent people for apparently asking for their own rights and privileges.

However, from the point of view of the community with the same ideology as the group that has attacked, may see them as freedom fighters, as those who have caused the physical assault were fighting for their own rights.

In this discussion one cannot be right or wrong. The delegate must make their own decision taking into consideration both, and the point of view of both, their country and the group which has attacked. Some countries may see the attack as harmless and totally necessary, while others are strongly against it. So, while coming across a possible decision, the delegate must be sure of assembling all of their country's creed to be as close as possible to their real point of view.

IX) Africa's active militant islamist groups

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-militant-islamist-groups-again-on-the-rise/>





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