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Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Combating terrorism in the Central African Region

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has always been a disorienting threat to a country's or community's social, political and economic stability. The absence of an internationally accepted definition for terrorism, which makes it more complicated and at times impossible to successfully prosecute suspects of all ethnical backgrounds, makes the battle against terrorism harder to win. Furthermore, the often inadequate organization of the countries in which the terrorist attacks take place and the general instability that characterizes their economic structuring, along with the fact that a country's culture and religion may affect the way in which a community views the terrorists, have also contributed to the problem.

Nowadays, the humanitarian crisis that has risen due to the terrorist attacks in the Central African countries, bears the threat to turn the danger from national to regional. Adding to this threat is the fact that cooperation between terrorist groups is possible. In the meantime, some of the terrorist groups that are active in Africa, such as Boko Haram are starting to expand further, as recent attacks in western Chad and Niger underline. Furthermore, continuous terrorist attacks have a great deteriorating effect on national economy and infrastructure and therefore the region's social development and economic growth is falling back. Along with the threat of terrorism, governments in Central Africa have to face illicit economic activities and illegal arms trade and small weapons trafficking, due to the attackers' dependence on ammunition and weaponry, which fuels such activities.

Therefore, examining the environment in which each terrorist group is formed is imperative, in order for us to understand the actual conditions which were present at the time and fostered their creation. As a result we will be able to reach a solid conclusion on how to battle terrorism, minimize its impact and eventually eradicate this phenomenon in the Central African region.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Central African Region

The Central African Region is surrounding the Equator and constitutes of the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, the Central African Republic and due to their historical relation with the region we include, Rwanda, Burundi, Chad and the Island Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Notably, other countries surrounding the region like Nigeria, South Sudan or Uganda contribute to the destabilization of the region and the proliferation of terrorist groups.

Terrorism

The fact is that there is no internationally accepted definition for this term, meaning that there is no common legal term under which all governments agree, makes it difficult to legally label an act terrorist. We can, however describe this phenomenon using known and mostly accepted conditions which foster the establishment and proliferation of terrorist, for some, groups, as well as the consequences of their actions. Usually, terrorism uses violence as a means to achieve a goal through the means of intimidation of the masses and on the victims themselves. While each terrorist group is created for different reasons and with different aims most of them adopt a similar course of action entailing kidnappings, bombings, airplane hijackings etc. The consequences following terrorist attacks usually affect the country's population in the form of human casualties, increased anxiety levels, destruction of infrastructure, and generally creating great financial burden.

Coup (coup d'état)

A coup or coup d'état is the replacement of a country's government by a relatively small group of people, usually who can control part or the whole of the armed forces, the police and generally military elements. It is important to distinguish it from a revolution in which a large number of people fight for change. History has shown that a coup most often brings no notable change to the country's established policies or power distribution. 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A common misunderstanding concerning terrorism is that it does not actually always stem from religion-based violence or that it is not always root cause. While religious fanaticism is an indispensable characteristic of such attacks, there are many other extremists

¹ "Coup D'etat | Political Intervention." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 29 July 2015. http://www.britannica.com/topic/coup-detat.

that do not use violence in such a context. Therefore, it is clear that for such a complicated phenomenon there are most often several conditions which led a group to the belief that using violence against the general public was preferable or necessary.

Early years to Decolonization

Human occupation in Central Africa is phenomenon that can be traced back to 3000 B.C.E., with Egyptians, Dravidians, Sumerians and many other occupants settling in the region, establishing several small kingdoms. Later on in the 1470s a Portuguese colony was created in Sao Tome, while the most prominent European force in the Continent was France occupying the Congo area. By the seventeenth century Dutch colonies were formed in Africa. After the prime of the slave and ivory trade, the prospects of huge gains fueled the beginning of formal colonial rule of the continent, with France still having a hegemonic role, especially in the 'Congo Free State'. During the period between 1885 and 1908 it was estimated that half of Congo's population had died to exploitation and diseases. International pressure led to the adoption of the Congo Free State as a Belgian colony. Along with the French, in French Equatorial Africa, and Belgian rule, Germany had also formed colonies in the Central African region, including Rwanda, Burundi and Cameroon but Germany's rule in Central Africa was relatively short as its defeat in World War I resulted in the country losing all its colonies.

However, the unbearable conditions in which the local communities were forced to live in led the Central African populations to seek their independence. After the Second World War the revolution was organized in nationalist movements and while the whole of Central Africa became independent by 1960, national sovereignty became much more difficult to achieve due to problems that many newly-independent countries faced, such as political instability and uprisings. Many of those problems are still faced today by several Central African countries due to lack of efficient resource management and lack of political competence. It is important to understand that the first governments in the region were mostly unable to meet the needs of their people due to the weak nature of the colonial states, leading to dissatisfaction and unrest concerning the political situation. Secondly, adopting democratic social practices and values can be quite hard when colonial states where ruled undemocratically. Moreover, when political leaders were faced with opposition, often due to their lack of ability to meet their country's needs, it was likely for them to use the former colonial leaders' undemocratic and often brutal methods. Lastly, ethnic conflict has always been a problem for the Central African countries and can be attributed to resource scarcity, while it is often traced back to the colonial ages, where European leaders

used the "divide and rule" tactic, which was implemented in order to gain control of an area by turning two nations against each other.

Séléka and Anti-balaka

The Central African Republic (CAR) first gained its independence in 1960 and from then onwards the country has experienced turbulent political scene, with several coups and frequent interventions from foreign troops. After 33 years since the beginning of its independence the first multiparty elections were held in the CAR in 1993, in which Ange Patassé was elected as president. However, instability soon resurfaced and with military help and support from Chad, Army General François Bozizé of the CAR overthrew President Patasse's government and came into power in 2003. However, regardless of the stability that lasted for several years and Bozizé's election in 2011, part of the population started to consider his leadership as autocratic and by 2012 northern and northeastern rebel groups created an alliance, which was called Séléka.

This alliance, whose members primarily come from the North, used the frustration of civilians over the power that Bozizé and his family had managed to take in their hands, as well as the underdevelopment of northern CAR as motives for the recruitment of supporters. In 2013, Séléka's leader, Michel Djotodia, took the place of Bozizé with the help of fighters from Chad and Sudan, becoming the first Muslim to attain such a position. Bozizé was forced to flee the country and was later indicted for crimes against humanity. Throughout Djotodia's reign, Séléka members used violence against civilians, while French troops were sent in CAR's capital, Bangui, to stabilize the situation following a UN resolution. However, after Djotodia's resignation after continuous pressure from regional governments and the establishment of a transitional one, more violent episodes were noted beyond the capital, while great numbers of Muslims were fleeing the country. This kind of insecurity was triggered by the actions of the Anti-balaka group, mostly Christian fighters, who sought revenge for the brutal acts of Séléka and targeted Muslims, regarding all Muslims as Séléka supporters. Some may justify that view by the fact that within Séléka forces were fighters coming from Chad and Sudan, in which the majority of the population is Muslim.

Some of the outcomes of the country's political situation and the rebel groups' actions seem to be religious-based violence and displacement. However, it is important to understand that religion was mostly the pretext for the conflicts, since the alliances' objectives were mainly political and economic.

Boko Haram

Although Nigeria doesn't officially belong to Central Africa two terrorist groups, Boko Haram and Ansaru, which are based in the country, have posed an escalating threat for peace in the surrounding region in the past few years, conducting operations in Nigeria, but also Niger, Cameroon and Chad.

Boko Haram's history can be traced back to 2003, when a group of Islamists following a preacher known as Mohammed Yusuf, clashed with authorities in Kanamma, northeastern Nigeria. It is unclear whether Mohammed Yusuf had any involvement in the group's early violent acts, since he denied any accusations, while he claimed that he had only studied the Qur'an together with the group. He had a fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an and believed that a western and un-Islamic influence was established in the population's everyday life due to the country's creation by British colonialists. Therefore, the name Boko Haram has been translated to "Western education is forbidden", while other, wider meanings are also acceptable and the group has also stated that it wants to be defined by a phrase that means "People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad". From then on Boko Haram repeatedly clashed with authorities and continued with even more brutal and violent attacks, conducting bombings, assassinations and kidnappings of foreigners and school children.

In general, Boko Haram was formed in Nigeria, one of Africa's most developed and populated countries. However, Nigeria is also characterized by extremely high levels of corruption and underdevelopment. In fact, the divided nature of Nigeria in a Muslim dominated north and Christian dominated south, with a more adequate educational system and concentrated wealth can offer insight on the conditions in which the group was created. Furthermore, it is important to note that actual organization exists only at the top levels of the group, while cells may act based on their own different reasons and recruiting members themselves. Generally, Boko Haram's goals have focused on the release of the organization's prisoners and creating an Islamic state.

The terrorist group Ansaru is a splinter group from Boko Haram. In its short existence since 2012 it has expanded its activities notably, it has been linked to Al-Qaeda and adopts an objective of protecting and recovering the dignity of Muslims in black Africa, while condemning the tactics of Boko Haram and deeming them inhuman.

Rwanda and DR Congo

In Rwanda continuous disparities between the Tutsi minority and Hutus majority has repeatedly led to fatal conflicts and instability.

Even though in year 1959 thousands of Tutsis fled the country to seek shelter in Burundi, in 1994 the country experienced one of the worst genocides in modern history, when Hutu leaders, after the successful assassination on Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, carried out a mass extermination of the Tutsi minority. In the approximately 100 days of the genocide approximately 800,000-1,000,000 Rwandans were massacred. This in turn led to a military campaign by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which later came into power in Rwanda after massacres affecting both sides. Numerous Hutus fled to DR Congo, then known as Zaire, where some of them targeted Tutsis in the region with the help of Zairean forces. This led to an invasion by Rwandan forces in 1997, while in 2002 following a peace deal with Kinshasa, Rwanda agreed to retrieve its forces from DR Congo.

However, tensions continue to exist with Rwanda blaming DR Congo for presumably supporting Hutu rebels in the East, while in 2012 accusations against Rwanda by the UN for assisting rebel troops in eastern DRC led the US, Britain and the Netherlands to withhold aid to the country.

Regional effects of Rwanda genocide

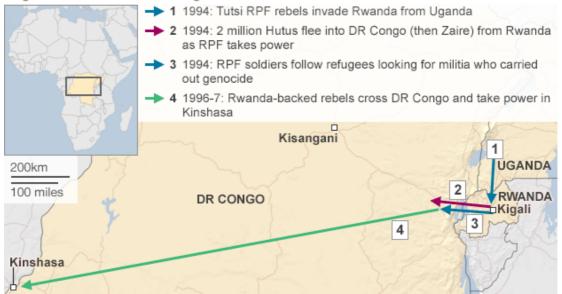


Figure 1.1: Regional effects of the Rwanda genocide

(Source: http://ichef-1.bbci.co.uk/news/624/media/images/7 4037000/gif/_74037163_rwanda_genoc ide_624map.gif)

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Central African Republic

A ceasefire deal was signed in Kenya between the two rivaling groups, while the reception of the deal by the groups' members is hard to predict since their views aren't necessarily dependent on the views of their leaders. Moreover, in early 2014 Catherine Samba-Panza was elected as president and head of the transitional government of CAR, while the fact that the government is not involved in the agreement jeopardizes its accuracy. Furthermore, the continuous conflicts in the divided country have traumatized the majority of the children of the Republic, while there are still thousands of displaced people (approximately 508,000) and the majority of its population is in need of humanitarian aid.

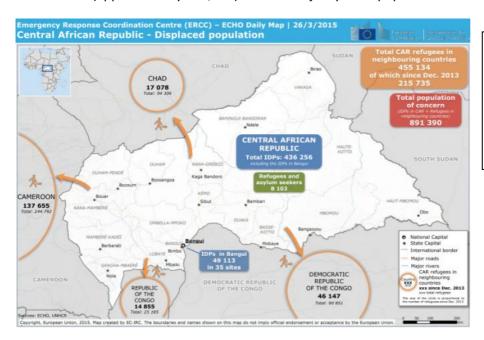


Figure 2.1: Population Displacement of the Central African Republic in March 2015

(Source:

http://img.static.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb .int/files/styles/attachment-

large/public/resources-pdf-previews/319456-ECDM_20150326_CAR.png?itok=p15E6ONI)

Burundi

After the coup attempt that took place on the 13th of May 2015 there has been ongoing mobilization against the president due to his announcement to run for a third term. International requests to postpone the elections in order for the violence to subside were ignored based on the belief that more time would only fuel further violence and the elections were held following a night of violent attacks and destructions of polling stations.

Rwanda

Even though Rwanda isn't immediately threatened by known terrorist groups fighting among its borders has caused disability in the region. However, despite the lack of a proper counter-terrorism strategy, counter-terrorism practices haven't been renewed since

the establishment of the 2008 legislation against terrorism and the 2012 expansion and further definition of terrorism offenses.

DR Congo

Since the 1997 Rwandan intervention in DR Congo the country has experienced coup attempts and numerous conflicts and rebellions in which neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe were sometimes involved. In 2008 sparse attacks and instability led to extreme violence in eastern DR Congo with conflicts between Hutu rebel fighters and the authorities. Despite the government's and UN peacekeeping forces' attempts to control the situation fighting continued and in 2009 DR Congo launched a joint operation with Rwanda against the Hutu rebels in the region. With the help of Rwandan troops the operation led to the arrest of their main rival, Gen Nkunda. In 2013 a regional agreement was secured by the UN which targeted the M23 group's rebellion and was followed by the surrender of the organization's alleged founder to the International Crime Court (ICC).

UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

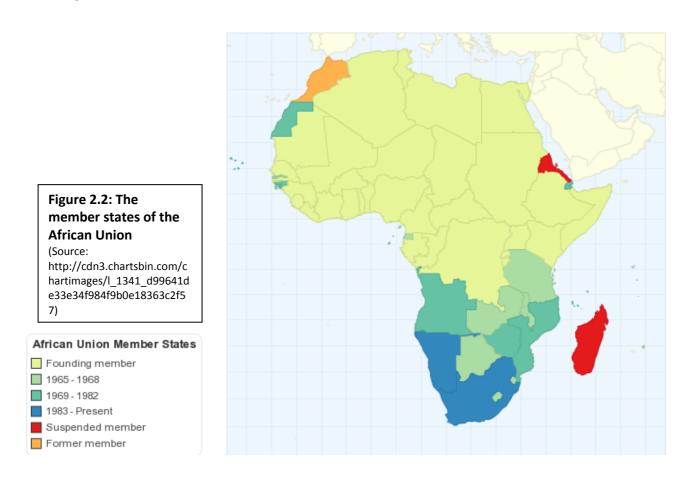
The UN Counter-Terrorism Task Force was founded in 2005 by the UN's Secretary General and consists of 36 international entities. Its goal is to ensure and coordinate the creation and implementation of effective counter-terrorism strategies by the UN. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, served as the endorsement of the CTITF by the UN General Assembly. It is frequently reviewed by the UN in order for the Global Strategy to be in tune with each Member State's values and priorities on the matter, thus making it plausible for them to adequately implement it.

United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) was established on 2nd March 2011 after the request of the countries of this region for such an office. The organization aims to assist member states and other organizations active in this region in maintaining peace and preventing conflicts and violence. Its priorities include providing technical assistance to organizations such as the Economic community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), aid negotiations and tackle instability issues such as youth unemployment, while also coordinating the UN effort to battle border disputes.

African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) was founded on 25 May 1963 with the initial cooperation of 32 governments. The organization's objectives can be summarized to the establishment and preservation of peace, security, stability and development in the member states. Therefore, the organization has on several occasions taken measures to combat terrorism in the area through resolutions, conventions and codes.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
25 May 1963	The African Union (AU) is founded as Organization of African Unity
	(OAU).
July 1994	The Rwandan Patriotic Front took over control of the country.
1997	Rwanda attacks refugee camps housing Hutu militiamen.
2003	Boko Haram is founded consisting of a group of like-minded Islamists.
2003	A group of Islamists, now Boko Haram, used violence against the
	authorities in Kanamma.
2005	The UN Counter-terrorism Task Force is founded by the UN Secretary
	General.
2008	Rwanda creates counterterrorism law condemning terrorism and
	deeming terrorist actions prosecutable.
2 March 2011	The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is
	established.
2012	Séléka forces are starting to form.
January 2014	The three-day UNOCA workshop on terrorism and arms in Central
	Africa concluded with the adoption of a series of counter-terrorism
	measures.
10 April 2014	MINUSCA, a UN peacekeeping operation in CAR was launched.
January 2015	The CAR government rejects a Kenya peace agreement between two
	rebel groups due to its lack of involvement in the negotiations.
16 February 2015	The Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Council for
	Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) results in a unanimous
	decision by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic
	Community of Central African States (ECCAS) for a special fund that
	will be used for the combating of Boko Haram.
13 May 2015	A coup attempt is executed in Burundi.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

A/RES/68/119: "Measures to eliminate international terrorism"

A/RES/68/187: "Technical assistance in implementing international conventions and protocols on the fight against terrorism"

A/RES/66/282: "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review"

A/RES/66/50: "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction"

"International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 17 December 1979"

"International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 15 December 1997"

"Expert Workshop on the Fight Against Terrorist Financing and Money Laundering for Central African States, Libreville, Gabon, 19-21 May 2015".

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Many countries and organizations have made continuous attempts to resolve the proliferation of terrorism in Central Africa both regional and international.

Starting in 1999 with the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism the OAU has tried to convince the African states to cooperate and implement common measures in order to properly prosecute and eradicate terrorist acts. With the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism the organization addressed the situation in the continent's security, police, border and judicial areas, while also forming the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and laying the foundation for the creation of the African Model Law on Counter-Terrorism.

Furthermore, in the February 2015 "Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)" on the topic of the Boko Haram terrorist group at the Yaounde Conference Centre it was decided that a fund would be created in order to assist in the fight against Boko Haram, while Niger and Chad have sent troops to northeastern Nigeria.

The UN along with other member states and countries has also authorized peacekeeping missions in the region. In April 2014 the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was established,

while MONUSCO succeeded the United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 2010 aiming at providing civilians in DR Congo with peace and security.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Understanding the circumstances that benefit and reinforce the development and expansion of terrorist groups and individuals is mandatory when trying to fight such a phenomenon.

In the Central African Region terrorist alliances and groups recruit members and supporters based on their current needs and beliefs. This makes it easier for people who are in need of financial support and believe that they could benefit economically from their participation in such activities to get involved with terrorism. Therefore, the lack of political and social stability as well as an inadequate educational system can make a country more susceptible to terrorist activity. Moreover, when terrorist groups associate with extremist religious behavior people who share the same views are most likely to support such groups. Therefore, providing the public with basic training and ensuring they are informed about the dangers of associating with terrorist organizations can help discourage the public from making rash decisions.

However, it is also important to recognize that terrorist groups often rely on illicit practices in order to obtain weapons for their violent attacks and thus focusing on the proliferation of arms in Central Africa, the illegal arms trade and small weapons trafficking could also provide insight on how to control terrorist attacks.

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