

Counter-Terrorism and the National Security of African States: Points of Convergence and Departure

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Abstract

Africa's recognition of the threat of terrorism to the continent has culminated in the galvanisation of national, regional and international efforts towards counter-terrorism. By addressing the safety of citizens, protection of territorial integrity and preservation of the primacy of states, these efforts converge with the classical demands of the national security of African states. However, certain practical fallouts from the implementation of these measures - such as human rights abuses - diverge from the overarching purpose of national security of states and undermine national cohesion and democratic principles. This article juxtaposes post-9/11 counter-terrorism efforts in Africa and the national security of African states arguing that more effective implementation strategies supporting counter-terrorism initiatives in Africa will not only help rid the continent of terrorist activities and associated threats but also help combat other criminal aspects of African society and security threats. However, if the drivers of Africa's counter-terrorism agenda do not steer initiatives clear of parochial politics and religion, the security of African states will be undermined by counter-terrorism.

Introduction

“African countries have long espoused the imperative need to combat and eradicate the phenomenon of terrorism In their collective resolve and

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determination to deal with a common threat, Member States of the Union have adopted instruments and decisions creating a common framework for the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa.”

– Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the AU Commission.²

“Internationally, we are seeing an increasing use of what I call the “T-word” – terrorism to demonize political opponents, to throttle freedom of speech and the press, and to delegitimize legitimate political grievances ...”

- Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan.³

Mindful of the threat terrorism poses to Africa, African states even before the 9/11 attacks had made commendable strides towards preventing and combating terrorism on the continent. This is starkly evidenced by the 1999 Algiers Convention which represents a common continental framework for the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa. Notwithstanding the framework, post-9/11 security realities and the resultant demands of the United Nations (UN) Resolution 1373, revitalised the continent's efforts and harnessed international support for counter-terrorism initiatives on the continent.

The renewed African efforts and international support have culminated in the (1) designing of legal instruments to facilitate action against terrorism, and (2) the institution of operational measures to prevent, deter and combat terrorist activities on the continent. Countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, Gambia and South Africa have subsequently succeeded in enacting counter-terrorism legislation, whilst others such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco have argued that their existing criminal codes can sufficiently deal with the situation.⁴ In addition, operational measures aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and eliminating threats of terrorism through border surveillance and control, prevention of money laundering, and the prevention of falsification of travel documents have become mainstream elements of various national, regional and continental counter-terrorism approaches. In this direction many African countries including Algeria, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa have taken steps to standardise the application requirements and safety features of national identity documents such as passports, national identity cards as a way of preventing falsification and forgery.⁵

In addition to these efforts, many internationally-supported programmes such as the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI); Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI); the Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (JTFHOA); the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI); and the African Union's

² . Introductory message posted on the AU's website on “Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa”, <<http://www.africa-union.org/Terrorism/terrorism2.htm>> accessed 27/08/2007.

³ . See statement of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the 20 January Security Council ministerial meeting on terrorism. United Nations, Press Release SG/SM/8583 SC/7639: “Menace of Terrorism Requires Global Response, Says Secretary-General,” January 20, 2003, <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm8583.doc.htm>> p. 2 of 2, accessed 25/08/2007,

⁴ . Kegoro, G., 2007. “The Effects of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Human Rights” in *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: In Search for an African Voice*, Wafula Okumu and Anneli Botha (eds), Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, pp. 51-53.

⁵ . Goredema, C. and Botha, A., 2004. “African Commitment to Combating Crime and Terrorism: A Review of eight NEAD Countries,” *African Human Security Initiative*, AHSI Paper 3, July 3, 2004, p.8.

(AU) terrorism prevention initiatives coordinated by its Terrorism Prevention Branch have all been implemented on the continent.⁶

These initiatives, though diverse, fundamentally aim at denying terrorists of havens, eradicating sources of terrorist financing, reducing state vulnerability, and enhancing emergency preparedness and response capabilities with the ultimate goal of preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state, and ensuring the safety of citizens.⁷ In this pursuit, counter-terrorism initiatives glaringly converge with the broader goal of national security policy of African states. Nevertheless, practical fallouts in the execution of counter-terrorism in Africa give ample evidence of politicisation and ‘religionisation’ by parochial political entities for settling political scores. In many cases, this has resulted in wanton human right abuses under the guise of fighting terrorists and national saboteurs which are undoubtedly at variance with the overarching purpose of national security policy.

Against the background of these two sides to the counter-terrorism agenda in Africa, this paper juxtaposes counter-terrorism and the national security of states in Africa. The paper will also highlight the areas of convergence and divergence in order to underscore the importance of effective counter-terrorism initiatives in post-9/11 national security policy of African states. As a security threat, terrorism obviously falls within the domains of national security considerations. However, given its contemporary importance within global security discourse, this paper treats it as a stand alone conceptualisation in exploring its relationship with national security policy. The paper argues that an appreciation of the relationship between counter-terrorism and national security has implications on (1) the allocation of national, regional and international resources towards the prevention and combating of terrorism and also (2) the stimulation of the idea of African ownership of counter-terrorism initiatives on the continent. Both points are important to the African counter-terrorism agenda which requires a shift in ownership and leadership from being principally Western-driven to a practically domesticated African-led agenda in attempts to sustain counter-terrorism efforts on the continent.

Points of Convergence of Counter-terrorism with National Security.

Ongoing counter-terrorism efforts in Africa have two important points of convergence with the national security interests of states. First, the implementation of counter-terrorism initiatives inadvertently provides responses to other forms of criminality. Second, the emergence of cooperation as an indispensable philosophy underlying counter-terrorism efforts assists with the entrenchment of the collective security notion which is indispensable in efforts to combat contemporary threats to international peace and security. The ensuing sub-sections discuss these two points.

Counter-Terrorism - a magic bullet?

⁶ . Dempsey, T., “Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and potential Solutions” , p.22 <<http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/>> accessed 20/08/2007; See also Cofer, B., “Foreign Assistance and International Terrorism”, testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Washington, DC, April 21, 2004, <<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/31672.htm>> accessed 9/03/2007.

⁷ . See a detailed treatment of these factors in *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism*, 2003 (US: White House).

Many analysts have observed an increased level of sophistication of terrorist *modus operandi* resulting from their ability to exploit the benefits of information, finance, and ideas which flow via the internet and also from their extensive transnational criminal networks. Part of the emerging sophistication manifests in a symbiotic overlap of terrorist activities with transnational criminalities such as money laundering, human trafficking, resource exploitation and drug trafficking.⁸ Since 1994, this complexity has been a critical issue in the United Nations (UN) leading to the expression of apprehension by the global body about the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups and drug traffickers and their paramilitary gangs.⁹ This is particularly the case regarding the tendency of the connection between terrorism and the other crimes to lead to a mutual or symbiotic reinforcement of each other and most especially terrorism by:

- Providing financial resources;
- Aiding the ability of networks to thrive without state sponsorship and support thereby enhancing their ability to relocate;
- Access to specialist skills such as the forging of travel documents and money laundering; and,
- The emergence of wider and hardened terrorist recruits from existing transnational criminals.

Practical cases of the connection between terrorist networks and transnational crimes are rife in Africa. The al-Qaeda network, for example, is known to have been very active in the African diamond trade.¹⁰ In West Africa, it is alleged that the network took diamonds from the mines of eastern Sierra Leone and traded them for cash as a fungible alternative to bank accounts which could have easily been tracked and frozen.¹¹ Currently in Nigeria, it is estimated that approximately \$4 billion worth of oil is illegally siphoned from pipelines and shipped abroad by international smuggling gangs each year (about 60,000 to 100,000 barrels of oil a day). The profits are then used to finance the arms race between criminal gangs and tribal militia who exploit terror and kidnappings as tactics¹² for registering their demands. The role of the international smuggling gangs thus goes a long way to inspire or fuel the violence and acts of terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria through their supply of weapons and funds required to plan and execute attacks.¹³

⁸ . Shelley, I. Louise, "The Nexus of Organized International Criminals and Terrorism" http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive_Index/The_Nexus_of_Organized_International_Criminals_and_Terrorism.html, accessed September, 2006.

⁹ . See the UN Resolution 1373; See also Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/60 of the 84th Plenary Meeting, 9 December, 1994.

¹⁰ . "There is strong evidence of Al Qaeda's ties to the African diamond trade, despite the reluctance of some in the US intelligence community to acknowledge the link" – Douglas Farah, author of *Blood from Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror*, testifying before the US House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Committee on Financial Services, Hearing of Terrorist Financing, February 16, 2005.

¹¹ David M. Crane, op. cit., pp. 2ff.

¹² I refer to such groups as terrorists on the basis of their *modus operandi* (use of terror as a tactic) – Exploiting "terror" as a "tactic" to registering their demands and to coerce governments to do or not to do a set agenda.

¹³ Shell loses between 50,000 and 100,000 barrels per day. Assuming the criminals are able to sell the contraband crude at a modest \$20 per barrel, they may be pocketing between \$1 million and \$2 million per day from tapping into Shell's pipes. See Mortished, C., 2003. "Shell loses \$2m a day to Nigerian oil thieves" The Times Online, May 1, 2003, p. 1 of 3 < <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/article874086.ece> > accessed 27/08/2007

Recent reports on West Africa indicate that the sub-region is increasingly becoming a drug trans-shipment zone for drug cartels. Drugs, particularly cocaine, are shipped to various countries along the Gulf of Guinea for subsequent deliveries to Europe.¹⁴ Similarly, active cross-border child-trafficking networks operate across at least thirteen West African countries and recruit thousands of children from their homes each year to other places to exploit them sexually and/or labour-wise.¹⁵

Against the background that terrorism and these transnational criminalities thrive on the same vulnerabilities and utilize similar actors, effective counter-terrorism measures thus have the tendency of combating not only the threat of terrorism but also other transnational threats to national security. Appropriately crafted counter-terrorism measures which deal with fundamental vulnerabilities such as economic distress, ethnic and religious fault-lines, fragile governance, weak state structures and rampant human rights abuses effectively deprive terrorists of havens and recruiting grounds; strengthen the ability of the state to ensure the safety of its citizens and also preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The strengthening of border security as a counter-terrorism measure in West Africa, for example, will thus serve to dissuade various forms of border-related crimes in the sub-region and their effects elsewhere. Similarly, the trial of terror suspects with existing anti-terrorism legislation will, apart from eliminating terrorists from states, also deter individuals who might attempt to exploit perceived weak national judiciary systems for criminal purposes.

In this regard, the successful implementation of appropriate counter-terrorism measures in African states – despite not being the ‘magic bullet’ to all the continent’s security problems - has the tendency of cutting off the mutually-reinforcing and symbiotic relationships that exist or may emerge between terrorism and other transnational security threats in line with national security policy.

Giving Cooperation and Collective Security a jolt?

The 9/11 attacks highlighted the mutual vulnerability of both weak and strong states to the threat of terrorism. The realization has since highlighted the importance of all states in the global quest for security and accentuated the dependence of the counter-terrorism agenda on the ability of states to cooperate on a wide range of security issues such as tracking and blocking the finances and communication networks of terrorist organisations.¹⁶ According to Lord Robertson, former NATO Secretary General:

Outdated Cold War habits and capacities do us no good against 21st century threats unless we adapt them to meet these new challenges. We need a global, integrated response, with deep cooperation between states, international organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental

¹⁴ . United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2007*, Vienna, UNODC, p. 75.

¹⁵ . Human Rights Watch <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/togo0403/togo0303.htm#P103_4323> accessed 27/08/2007.

¹⁶ . Lebl, L. S., op. cit. See “Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001,” http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/140.en.pdf accessed July 20, 2006.

organizations - all working together, in new ways, to meet this new network of security threats.¹⁷

Globally, this awareness has renewed emphasis on inter-state cooperation and has assisted states to pool resources towards the prevention and combating of terrorism.¹⁸ In Africa, inter-state cooperation has been fundamental to the effective realization of the counter-terrorism goals of the AU and is for that reason key among the underlying philosophies of the organisation's emerging counter-terrorism regime.

According to the AU Commission Chairperson, Alpha Oumar Konaré, African countries have adopted instruments and decisions towards creating a common framework for the prevention and combating of terrorism in their collective resolve and determination to deal with it as a common threat.¹⁹ The acceptance that all African states equally share the same vulnerabilities and are thus collectively threatened by terrorism and so are committed to acting collectively is an implicit reception of the collective security implications of the threat of terrorism. In other words, African states concede that the threat of terrorism to one state is a threat to all the remaining states on the continent, which is why members of the continental body, the AU, acceded to the provisions of the 1999 Algiers Convention as a guiding principle to their collective quest to prevent and combat terrorism.

By contributing to the projection of the ideals of collective security as a way of pursuing the realization of safety for citizens and the maintenance of territorial integrity of African states from the threat of terrorism, this article argues that counter-terrorism has contributed immensely to the classical demands of national security of African states in the 21st century.

Points of Departure from National Security.

Many African countries have emerged from decades of autocratic and dictatorial regimes during which laws of the state were left at the behest of individuals with political influence. Some of these leaders criminalised politically dissenting views as part of efforts to protect the state from subversive entities and activities. This background - coupled with the lack of a common acceptable definition for terrorism and the absence of strong democratic principles, good governance, rule of law, and independent state structures in many African states - has increased the temptation of exploitation of the post-9/11 counter-terrorism agenda by some political leaders on the continent. Consequently, some political actors have found leeway to suppress political opponents and groups with politically and socially divergent views under the rubric of counter-terrorism. The counter-terrorism agenda is thus being exploited for the achievement of political goals, particularly the settling of political scores and the pursuit of motives which threaten democracy and the rule of law.

In Zimbabwe, for instance, President Robert Mugabe, has variously invoked the "war on terror" to justify his labelling of journalists as "agents of terrorism" or "terrorist sympathizers" and

¹⁷ . Lord Robertson, 2002 . "A New Security Network for the 21st Century" Speech by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson at the Economist Conference, Athens, 17 April 2002, p. 2 Of 6
<<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020417a.htm>> accessed 27/08/2007.

¹⁸ . See a detailed treatment of these factors in *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism*, 2003 (US: White House).

¹⁹ . Introductory message posted on the AU's website on "Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa",
<<http://www.africa-union.org/Terrorism/terrorism2.htm>> accessed 27/08/2007.

harassing them. Zimbabwe passed the Public Order and Security Act in 2002, and it has since been used on numerous occasions to detain journalists who criticize the government. Those who criticise the government have often been labelled “terrorists” and have been detained without any formal charges. In response to one of such situations involving the arrest of six journalists, a spokesman for President Mugabe insisted that it was an “open secret” that such journalists were assisting terrorists and declared categorically that, “as for the correspondents, we would like them to know that we agree with the United States’ President Bush that anyone who in any way finances, harbours or defends terrorists is himself a terrorist. We [...] will not make any difference between terrorists and their friends and supporters.”²⁰

In a similar situation, the Eritrean Ambassador to the US, Girma Asmerom, argued in favour of the September 18, 2001 arrest of journalists who protested the detention of former high-ranking government officials for publicly criticizing President Issayas Afewerki’s leadership.²¹ In the Ambassador’s argument, he cited the roundup of material witnesses and suspected aliens in America after the 9/11 attacks and concluded that the arrests of the journalists were justified.²²

While these events would have previously attracted stern criticism from states that have been known to champion the cause of freedom and human rights, these abuses have within post-9/11 realities gone uncondemned. This is explainable only within the context of the support such African countries provide to the war on terror, which is now the major pre-occupation of western powers. In Nigeria, for instance, an October 2001 massacre by the Nigerian army of at least 200 people in Benue State went uncondemned during President Obasanjo’s visit to the US just a few weeks later to discuss the anti-terrorism campaign.²³

Pursuant to Kenya’s introduction of the Suppression of Terrorism Bill in 2003, certain provisions - including those that sought to make it an offence for one to wear or use items associated with terrorists - was perceived as an attack on the Muslim community and their mode of dressing. Together with provisions that proposed to impose the duty to provide evidence to the contrary once the prosecution had established a certain threshold of evidence that tended to suggest the guilt of the person, many felt that the counter-terrorism agenda of the country sought to promote religious and ethnic prejudices or, at best, was based on religious and ethnic prejudices. This led to stiff opposition from certain elements in Kenya, among which was the Muslim community.²⁴

The State Security Investigations (SSI)²⁵ of Egypt is noted for organising random ‘sweeps’ under the broader goal of counter-terrorism, which sometimes result in the detention of young men, who are then abusively interrogated and tortured into accepting fabricated charges levelled

²⁰ . Jon Peter, 2001. “Zimbabwe Fears ‘Trouble Ahead, as Mugabe Cracks Down,’” *Washington Post*, November 30, 2001; See also Hartnack Michael, 2001. “Critical Foreign Media. Terrorists,” *Hamilton Specter* (Canada), November 24, 2001.

²¹ . Amnesty International, Press Release: “Eritrea: Government Critics and Journalists Held in Incommunicado Detention,” AI Index: AFR 64/010/2002, September 18, 2002.
<<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR640102002?open&of=ENG-ERI>> accessed 25/08/2007.

²² . Fred Hiatt, “Truth-Tellers in a Time of Terror,” *Washington Post*, November 25, 2002.

²³ . Malan, M., “The Post-9/11 Security Agenda and Peacekeeping in Africa” *African Security Review* Vol 11 No 3, 2002 <<http://www.iss.co.za/PUBS/ASR/11No3/Malan.html>>, p. 3 of 10, accessed 25/08/2007.

²⁴ . Kegoro, G., op. cit., p. 52.

²⁵ . State Security Investigations (SSI) is Egypt’s domestic Intelligence agency.

against them. In April 2006, for instance, Egypt's Interior Ministry announced the SSI's arrest of members of an extremist group alleged to have been plotting terrorist attacks on gas pipelines, tourist sites, and Muslim and Christian religious figures in and around Cairo.²⁶ A year later, however, investigations by Human Rights Watch revealed scepticism about the charges levelled against the suspects, treatments given to them whilst in detention, and the legal grounds for the detention. A December 2007 Human Rights Watch report on the issue found that:

Beyond coerced confessions, there appears to be no compelling evidence to support the government's dramatic claims. Indeed, it appears that SSI may have fabricated the allegations made against at least some and possibly all of them. The very name given to the group—"Victorious Sect"—may have been invented by SSI officers. Moreover, whether or not the original arrests were justified, it is clear that there are currently no legal grounds for the continued detention of the 10 men of the 22 who are believed to remain in custody.²⁷

According to some family members of the suspects and attorneys, the suspects may have been targeted because of their religious leanings and fears that they could be radicalised.²⁸

Given the tough actions by some African states and human rights abuses under the guise of fighting terrorism, scepticism has emerged towards African counter-terrorism measures and particularly about the extent to which western interests and conceptualisation is influencing and/or driving its direction and focus. For many, the counter-terrorism agenda has become another avenue where African governments are facing a dilemma in balancing donor agendas, legitimate national security interests, and domestic support for democracy and human rights.²⁹ This perception - coupled with exacerbating poverty levels, and populations over high levels of corruption amongst political leaders who are often also the exploiters of the counter-terrorism agenda - the counter-terrorism agenda is rather becoming a threat to state stability. In the case of the SSI detentions in Egypt, for instance, the efforts are objective rather counter-productive. This is because rather than contribute to the grand goal of reducing violence from terrorism in the country, the arrests and detentions are rather contributing to the emergence of a culture of retaliation owing to the radicalisation of detainees who upon release then find a reason to revenge torture carried out on them whilst in detention. In this context, counter-terrorism initiatives are contributing to the creation of volatile security situations that can escalate into political, religious or politico-religious violence resulting from polarisation in many weak African democracies and fragile states.

Against this background, this paper argues that even though counter-terrorism should ideally serve a national security purpose, at the practical level, it is practically providing a context for human rights abuse, the suppression of political opponents and the deprivation of the rights and freedoms of citizens in some African states – outcomes which are practically divergent from the polemical demands of national security policy.

²⁶ . Human Rights Watch, 2007. "Anatomy of a State Security Case: The 'Victorious Sect' Arrests", *Human Rights Watch Report*, Volume 19, No. 9(E), p. 1.

²⁷ . Ibid., p.2.

²⁸ . Ibid., p.3.

²⁹ . Cillier, J., 2006. "Africa, Root Causes and the 'war on terror'" *Africa Security Review* 15(3), p. 70.

On the other hand, it could be argued that an effective counter-terrorism initiative has the potential of helping to contain other forms of criminalities such as money laundering, human trafficking, resource exploitation and drug trafficking. It can also inspire the African commitment to the notion of fighting a common vulnerability or threat – a conception which is necessary in upholding the centrality of cooperation and collective security in the quest for peace and security on the continent. However, an ineffective implementation of counter-terrorism initiatives on the continent may undermine the cohesion of states and accentuate ethnic, religious, political and politico-religious fault-lines in some states thus providing the basis for instability and insecurity.

Given the fact that the latter case is parallel to the ultimate aim of national security, it is important for African states to be circumspect in their ownership of national security prioritisation on the continent. With the prevailing over-dependence on western-driven initiatives, it may be difficult for many states to fully prioritise their national security needs in a vacuum and without considering external influences. It is thus necessary for the continent to wean itself off western-driven and western-funded approaches for national security to enable states to prioritise national security strategies based on the actual needs of African states devoid of any donor-driven approach. A purely African approach to prioritizing security should also inform regional and continental approaches to prioritizing all threats to national, regional and continental threats, including terrorism. In doing this, however, caution has to be taken to craft national security policy responses according to a range of individual threats (including counter-terrorism responses) but within national realities in a way that they do not undermine the tenets of national security or other national security policy responses. By following a more top-down continentally-driven approach, more specific security policies which flow from national security priorities may achieve better coherence with overarching national security priorities, and not be left to the crafting and influence of the donor community.

It is widely recognized and accepted that many African states emerging from conflict and suffering from state fragility must – in some respects – leave themselves open to external influence at the programmatic level of assistance. However, as more democratic political reforms become introduced, a locally-driven strategic analysis in support of national security must encourage the mergence of the strategic and programme level activities in the medium term. This is important in order to avoid the growth of programme level dependencies which are not in line with basic national security interests and objectives. Failure to undertake the strategic level approach will result in programme-level activities exerting undue influence over the strategic national security agenda. In the post-9/11 era, there is ample evidence of where this has happened with externally-initiated or externally-influenced counter-terrorist programmes across African states.

Addressing this dilemma will be difficult due to the pursuit of foreign policy interests by strong western states with the ability to sustain their pursuit. At the same time, many African states will lack the capacity and skill-sets to move with the political reforms in shaping strategic level priorities and responses, according to – as one author phrases it – “...the world *they* live in.”³⁰ Perhaps the time is ripe to stop under-estimating the levels of knowledge within these states but encourage the promotion of ‘skill-sets’ required to influence strategic national security processes. Success in this area will bode well for the shaping of programmes such as counter-terrorism according to what is best for the country in question.

³⁰ Ann M Fitz-Gerald, “A UK National Security Strategy: Institutional and Cultural Challenges” in *Defence Studie*, Volume , Issue 8, February 2008, pp.s,

Conclusion

The counter-terrorism agenda in Africa after 9/11 converges with the classical demands of national security policy in the provision of safety for citizens, the preservation of territorial wholeness and sovereignty. Notwithstanding this fact, improper implementation and exploitation of counter-terrorism initiatives has resulted in the over-securitisation and politicisation of issues, and the abuse of counter-terrorism for suppression, personal vendettas, prosecution of innocent citizens and the persecution of religious groups. This has manifested in human right abuses and tough actions by states, a situation which practically diverges from the primary demands of national security policy by contributing to insecurity.

To avoid occurrences in which counter-terrorism efforts will counter-productively add to insecurity through the polarisation of society and lead to the escalation of violence, it is incumbent on national, regional and international actors to prosecute and/or oversee the counter-terrorism agenda responsibly as a central part of national security policy. In doing so, and in recognising that strong western donors will continue the strong pursuit of their own foreign policy interests, prioritisation should be given to the development of strategic planning capacity for national security across the African continent.