



**AFRICAN HISTORIES  
AND MODERNITIES**

# **Terrorism and Counter- Terrorism in Modern Sub-Saharan Africa**

Edited by **János Besenyő · Moses B. Khanyile**  
**David Vogel**

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# African Histories and Modernities

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# Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Modern Sub-Saharan Africa

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## PREFACE

Africa, as a continent, has been associated with conflicts and terrorism for many years. Efforts to understand the various aspects of such conflicts and terrorism, including their root causes, personalities, motivations, dynamics, and even external role-players, have been (and continue to be) the primary focus of many academic studies by prominent scholars across the globe. However, with the nature of security threats changing and the associated mechanisms to address such threats becoming even more complex, it became necessary to revisit the prevailing paradigms linked to various forms of violent conflicts in Africa.

This edited volume seeks to shed light on the new shades of terrorism, counter-terrorism and insurgency in Africa. Their definitional nuances, practical application and implications are analysed through various thematic lenses as they unfold in the different parts of Africa. Given the complex nature of terrorism and the associated mechanisms to counter it, this volume seeks to contribute towards a better understanding of these concepts and phenomena without claiming to be comprehensive. One of the critical features of this volume is the simplicity of the analysis, which is characterised by non-technical language and the use of relevant examples. In this regard, it is user-friendly for the general public, scholars and policy-makers.

Budapest, Hungary  
Saldanha, South Africa  
Budapest, Hungary

János Besenyő  
Moses B. Khanyile  
David Vogel

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# Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Modern Sub-Saharan Africa

*David Vogel*

Acts of terrorism and forms of counter-terrorist activities have been present for quite a long time, we have been living with these phenomena for centuries, however, they have become part of our daily lives for only a bit more than two decades. They shape our days, our habits, the events we attend, the way we travel. For these reasons, it is of utmost importance for all of us to understand the root causes, the drives and the motives behind terrorist activities in order to fight them, preferably even before they can materialise. In this challenge, counter-terrorism activities play a crucial role. They minimise the effectiveness and the impacts of terrorist activities on our lives. Since these activities are not limited to any particular geographical region, all continents and impacted countries should receive attention. The aim of this edited volume is to give dedicated attention to the African continent, and to provide analyses in the form of case studies from Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique and the Sahel region dealing with both the topics of terrorism and counter-terrorism,

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and additionally, to offer possible steps for improving the situation. In this regard, with a special focus on technology in some chapters.

Looking at the Annual '*Fragile States Index*' of 2022 published by the think tank Fund for Peace, the colours of the heat map—where hot colours are representing various levels of warnings and alerts in connection with the countries' security, stability, growth and sustainability—the map of Africa looks like the hottest continent of all, by far. The only exception is Botswana with its light green colour, and 123rd place as least fragile state out of the 179 states analysed, landing it in the 'stable' category. The top ten countries include 6 African states, while going through the first 50 worse ranked states, we will find that 35 of them—70 per cent—are from Africa. '*Alert*', '*high alert*' and '*very high alert*' categories were given to countries in the direst situation: 21 out of the 29 are situated in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Although this report is not solely focusing on terrorism itself, the 12 indicator groups are covering several economic, political and social fields, besides the security-focused areas, therefore providing a quite accurate picture about a wider understanding of security in the individual countries.

The volume '*Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Modern Sub-Saharan Africa*' is also going beyond what the title would suggest in itself. After a continent-wide introductory chapter of Moses B. Khanyile ('*Development and Terrorism at Crossroads in Africa*') that outlines the nexus between development and terrorism, as well as the connections between terrorism and transnational organised crime (TOC) with a special attention to arms trafficking, scholars from three continents are focusing on the security challenges in various countries and regions in Africa, shedding light on failed or failing states, where central governments are facing challenges to maintain effective control, stability and peace on their territory.

The first part of the book pays more attention to the root causes, going back to find historical, cultural, religious, ethnic or other, socio-economic reasons behind the emerging hostilities, and insurgencies, seeking to find the driving forces behind the terrorist activities.

For decades, it served as some kind of a role model, a stable country with a government that has been cooperating with the International Monetary Fund to strengthen its economy for more than 30 years: *Cameroon* has definitely been one of the exceptional Central African countries. *Ghana*, the first Sub-Saharan country to gain its independence, with

<sup>1</sup>Nate Haken: *Fragile State Index Annual Report 2022*. The Fund for Peace, Washington, D.C., 2022.

a constantly growing economy, and a strong, institutionalised democratic political system, has been acting as a strong player in both regional and world affairs. Africa's giant: giant by population, giant by languages spoken, or by economy and besides other factors, a giant by natural resources: *Nigeria* has been a stable democracy since the turn of the millennium. Further to the south, *Mozambique*, after decades of internal armed struggle, reached a consensus political settlement and since the first multiparty elections in the mid-1990s has remained a relatively stable country, with a thriving GDP growth that has averaged at yearly 6 per cent since the millennium, and has been ahead of even Nigeria in terms of the net inflows of Foreign Direct Investment for a decade (34.57 bn USD vs. 27.95 bn USD).

Here are four countries with different colonial pasts, different languages, culture, size and strength, though they still share some similarities and some challenges. These countries are analysed in separate papers, where scholars find causal explanations for the somewhat similar obstacles that have been or still are, blocking the way for these states in their development to reach stability, peace and prosperity, such as the domestic disagreements and the secessionist movement of Cameroon's Anglophone region (in David Vogel's *Ambazonia, Yet Another (Security) Challenge for Yaoundé*), religious extremism and terrorist activities in Mozambique (in the chapter entitled *Islamic Insurgency in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique: Socio-economic Causes and Consequences Through a Historical Lens* written by István Rákóczi and Éva Hegedűs) and in Nigeria and their lack in most of Ghana's recent history by Isaac Nunoo and Thomas Ameyaw-Brobbeey (*Countering Insurgency and Terrorism in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Ghana and Nigeria*).

The contributors of the volume have researched both insurgent and terrorist activities, paying attention to the thin red line between the two categories, likewise applying the same approach to counter-terrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN). The chapter done by János Kemény (*Counter-Insurgency vs. Counter-Terrorism and Beyond: What is Suitable for the Sahel?*) deals with this very specific nuance of difference in connection with the conflicts of the Sahel region. The overview of the regional dynamics followed by a special focus on Mali set the frame for a better understanding of the topic, in which the author argues that the development in technology and other fields has changed the structure of the conflict and the political context for using force abroad against non-state armed actors.

Two chapters deal with the topics of terrorism and counter-terrorism, one examining the maritime-related issues and also focusing on good governance that is crucial for counter-terrorism activities. Maritime terrorism might have been a somewhat new phenomenon in the early 1980s, but the decades since then have contributed a lot of information, experience and expertise to a better understanding and better preparedness for this challenge. Though these specific security issues might happen in what are often geographically distant areas or on the territorial waters of certain nations, the effects of maritime terrorism—as Thean Potgieter writes in his chapter ‘*Maritime Counterterrorism in Africa: The Need for Proper Governance*’—are a lot more far-reaching: they impact energy security, critical infrastructures, global trade and supply chains, not to mention its various sociological dimensions, therefore understanding them in order to prepare more successful countermeasures is of great importance.

Far-reaching effects are the major concerns in connection with terrorist attacks on critical infrastructures, as well. Various types and forms of infrastructure represent indispensable parts of our everyday lives, utilities, health care, supply chains, the energy sector and many others play a crucial role; therefore they provide excellent targets for terrorist activities, be they physical attacks, or coming from the cyber domain or as a new phenomenon, in the form of a ‘phygital’ attack. The dimension of terrorist activities against critical infrastructures is analysed by János Besenyő and Gábor Sinkó, more particularly through the attacks of Al-Shabaab in Kenya, identifying the 16 critical infrastructure sectors but with special emphasis on the communications, transportation and energy sectors, in their chapter entitled ‘*Terrorist Organizations’ Activities against Crucial Installations: Al-Shabaab’s Attacks on Critical Infrastructure in Kenya*’.

The second part of the book focuses more on technology and its special connection to terrorism and counter-terrorist activities, more specifically, technological development in medical science, computer and information science as well as the interdisciplinary science of intelligence, is addressed in the last four chapters of the book.

Two studies set the ground for this technology-focused section where the chapter ‘*The New Craft of Intelligence—Information Operations and Cyber Security*’ by Darko Trifunovic deals with the broader topic of Intelligence Information Operations and Cyber Security in which the author is drawing attention to the need for new approaches and more specific education in order to tackle the growing challenges mounted by cyberattacks. While Zoltán Rajnai and Attila Máté Kovács focus on a more

specific issue in their chapter entitled ‘*Threats and Opportunities Related to the Internet of Things (IOT) and Specific African Healthcare Developments and Risks*’, arguing that with the introduction of new platforms and methodologies, new methods of attacking or simply getting personal data have been appearing and will be appearing in the future as well, therefore it is fundamental to establish a level of cyber resilience in the general public, and even more to highlight the responsibilities of organisations for making assessments and action plans for the event of an actual data breach or other cyberattack. Both of these require more, and more specific education and training to achieve a higher (and increasing) level of awareness.

In a more specific study (‘*Countering Terrorism in Nigeria: The Imperative of Geospatial Intelligence and Information Technology*’), by Stephen Ubong Andrew and Odee Princewill Odum Nigeria’s case is used to demonstrate how the government could and should use Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) together with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in a wide, international cooperation to tackle terrorism-related activities on various platforms. With the easy access to more advanced technology, significant, but often overlooked changes have been happening in our lives: changes in habits, daily routines, as well as changes in how many traces we leave while doing our daily activities, not to mention the various ways the internet is offering for different types of communication and information sharing. These changes, of course, affect members of terrorist organisations as well, therefore, this new, more digital environment is an extremely important domain for the authorities and counter-terrorism agencies to look for valuable information in their mission against terrorist organisations.

A separate study (‘*Shots in the Dark: Immunisation in Zones of Armed Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa*’) by Péter Marton and Buyisile Ntaka digs deep into the unique question of the SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on security, more particularly in zones of armed conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, also shedding light on the development in immunisation in general since the Cold War era, arguing whether there has been progress in vaccination and in the eradication of certain diseases in the region. The problematic topic of immunisation worldwide has been on the agenda even more since the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals addressed it as MDG #6—‘*Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*’ that has been turned into UN’s Sustainable Development Goal #3—‘*Good Health and Well-Being*’, but the majority of the papers dealing

with this important issue, lack the focus on the special case of armed conflicts.

Closing this impressive range of chapters in this volume, in the last chapter of the book (*‘Concluding Reflections: The Future Trajectories for Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa’*), the author, Jean-Pierré Scherman aims to look towards the future and what it might hold for the African continent and its roughly 1.5 billion population, with a special focus on population increase, economic decline and the rise of conflicts, regarding this last issue, zooming even a bit more on international and regional peacekeeping operations and with an even closer look vis-à-vis women in African peacekeeping.

The 12 studies of the volume are far from covering the entire African continent, or all its terrorism-related challenges, but the scholars of these selected papers are drawing attention to new, or generally disregarded topics that are key for a better understanding of the current security situation in the particular countries themselves, but in several cases, the lessons learned and identified, indeed all the experiences can be taken and can be implemented in solving problems in other crisis situations as well.

Ho Chi Minh City, 2022

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