



NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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Issue: Addressing the Threat of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa and enhancing Regional Stability

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Committee: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)  
Issue: Addressing the Threat of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa and  
Enhancing Regional Stability  
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## I. Introduction

The history of post-colonial Africa in the last half-century is the history of evolving insecurities and crises that are sometimes contained and sometimes escalated beyond the capability of the individual sovereign states to contain. After the continent had been exploited under foreign colonial rule for over a century, they started gaining their independence from their overlords following the Second World War. However, despite their independence, the newly created states carried the legacy of arbitrary borders that were drawn in Berlin without any care for geographic, ethnic, tribal, and religious boundaries. Toppled with the lack of economic prosperity, millennial ethnic and religious tension, all of these would lay the foundation of a powder keg in the region, which would explode after the end of the Cold War as authoritarian rulers and dictators were abandoned by their international sponsors and were unable to fight local warlords without foreign aid.



Image 1: Congress of Congo, precursor to the Berlin Conference. [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, among others, experienced endemic conflicts beyond the capabilities of respective sovereign states or African intraregional organisations like the Organisation of African Unity could contain or manage. All of this instability would be further fueled by major events such as the successful



Islamic takeover in Afghanistan, the Al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, and the rise of the Islamic Caliphate, which continues to plague the continent to this day.



Image 2: The September 11 attacks, a hijacked airliner approaching the south tower of the World Trade Center. Encyclopedia Britannica.

However, violent extremism is not a new phenomenon on the continent. Since the 19th century, the local rebel leaders have tried to establish religious or ethnic states in the areas that are now Mali, Nigeria, Guinea, and Sudan. Aftermath of the Cold War, due to the power vacuum created by the dwindling support from the leaders of the First and Second World, many African countries suffered from rebellious and secessionist unrest and uprisings. Algeria, for example, has suffered from a decade-long civil war against the Islamist insurgents after the coup d'état in 1992 aimed at preventing the Islamic Salvation Front (also known as FIS) from winning the elections. The war resulted in the deaths of as many as 200,000 people, and events during the war, such as the Air France Flight 8969 in 1994, would become a chilling precursor to 9/11 and sow the seeds of extremist and religious terrorism that would take place across the continent and the world. It is also important to point out that religiously inspired terrorism and extremism in Africa is not limited only to Sunni Islamist groups but also to others as well. For example, one of Africa's oldest active terrorist groups is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Central Africa (operating near Uganda), which is responsible for the death of more than 100,000 people and the abduction of more than 60,000 children.





Image 3: African Terrorist Groups - Infographic. ABC News.

## II. Key Vocabulary

**Berlin Conference:** "a series of negotiations (November 15, 1884–February 26, 1885) at Berlin, in which the major European nations met to decide all questions connected with the Congo River basin in Central Africa" (Britannica)

**cleavage:** "division or disagreement" (Cambridge Dictionary)

**counterterrorism:** "action intended to prevent violence for political purposes" (Cambridge Dictionary)

**coup d'état:** "sudden defeat of a government through illegal force by a small group, often a military one" (Cambridge Dictionary)

**Critical Raw Materials (CRMs):** "natural resources essential for the functioning and developing critical sectors, such as sustainable energy, sustainable transport, health, and digital technologies" (UNECE)

**exploitation:** "the act of using someone or something unfairly for your own advantage" (Cambridge Dictionary)





**extremism:** “the fact of someone having beliefs that most people think are unreasonable and unacceptable” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**marginalization:** “the act of treating someone or something as if they are not important” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**peacekeeping:** “the activity of preventing war and violence, especially using armed forces not involved in a disagreement to prevent fighting” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**polarisation:** “the act of dividing something, especially something that contains different people or opinions, into two completely opposing groups” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**powder keg:** “a situation or a place that could easily become extremely dangerous” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**proxy:** “someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing, or has the same meaning, purpose, etc. as them or it” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**secession:** “the act of becoming independent and no longer part of a country, area, organization, etc.” (Cambridge Dictionary)

**terrorism:** “violent action or threats designed to cause fear among ordinary people, in order to achieve political aims” (Cambridge Dictionary)

### III. Involved Countries and Organizations

#### Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

Established in 1963, the Organisation of African Unity was the first pan-African organisation aimed at fostering unity and fighting colonialism. Throughout the Cold War, the organization would provide the needed diplomatic support and shielding to the independence and anti-apartheid movements on the continent; however, its strict policy of non-intervention and non-interference limited its ability to respond to internal conflicts, human rights abuses, and the rise of terrorism in the post-Cold War era.

#### African Union (AU)

Established in 2002 to replace the Organisation of African Unity, the African Union has become the continent’s primary body promoting unity, cooperation, peace, and security between the African states. Inspired by the European Union, the African Union was established with its own central bank, courts, and a parliament. Be it through bodies like the Peace and Security Council or initiatives such as the African Standby Force, a peacekeeping force numbering around 15,000 soldiers, the African Union aimed to



prevent conflicts, mediate disputes, and lead counterterrorism efforts on the continent. It has played a central role in the peacekeeping missions across the continent, such as in the Somali Civil War, where it led the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) against Al Shabaab. However, the political divisions among its member states reduce their effectiveness in responding swiftly and decisively to crises. Still, its legitimacy in being the continent's intranational organisation and its long-standing ties with the European Union make it an indispensable partner for NATO to collaborate with in preventing extremism and terrorism.

### Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has become an influential actor in the region in recent years. Though Kremlin is not directly involved in the region, its involvement is mainly done through its proxies and private military contractors like the Wagner Group, which have operated in countries like Mali, the Central African Republic, and Sudan. These groups like to frame themselves as an alternative to the West, by emphasizing sovereignty and non-interference, which appeals to governments wary of the conditional support of the West; however, the groups are not as benevolent as they would like to be seen as. They aggravate instability, commit human rights violations, undermine democratic processes, and the sovereignty of the countries they provide their services in. They are also known to exploit Africa's rich gold and mineral resources for their own invasion in Ukraine. Due to these, the Kremlin's boots in Africa is a strategic threat to NATO interests.

### Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States is an African regional organisation established by the Treaty of Lagos on 28 May 1975 to promote commerce, cooperation, and self-reliance. Comprising 15 countries (now 12), the organization aims not only to promote free movement of people, services, and capital between its members but also serves as a peacekeeping force in the region, with member states partaking in multiple joint military operations to keep peace and security. The organization to this day has led seven peacekeeping operations, with the most notable being the interventions in The Gambia in 2017 and Mali in 2013. In recent years, the organisation. Its actions against such as sanctions against the coup d'état leaders in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, show their readiness for protecting democratic norms alongside the security concerns. Due to its regional legitimacy, experience in peacekeeping, rapid-response mechanism, and its alignment and ties to the West, ECOWAS is an indispensable and valuable partner to NATO.



## IV. Focused Overview of the Issue

### Subregional Dynamics

#### 1. East Africa

Terrorism in East Africa has its roots in political instability, colonial legacies, and weak institutions. Colonial rule in countries such as Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda entrenched ethnic and political cleavages that would persist even after independence. The post-colonial era was marked by authoritarian regimes and chronic instability, which, over the years, weakened the state institutions and eroded public trust in the government. One of the most important events that shaped the region was the coordinated bombings by Al-Qaeda in 1998, which struck US embassies in Kenya and Dar es Salaam, killing over 200 people and injuring thousands. These attacks would mark East Africa as a frontline for international terrorist and extremist groups.



Image 4: Burundi Peacekeepers preparing for the African Union Mission to Somalia. Wikimedia Commons.

The instability in Somalia after the Cold War proved to be a fertile ground for extremist groups. The collapse of the central government in 1991 would create a power vacuum, which would be exploited by the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), from which Al Shabaab would stem. The group would come to prominence in 2006-2009, during the Ethiopian intervention in the Somali Civil War, where the group posed itself against the Ethiopian army, which was deemed by locals as foreigners and a threat to their livelihood, as Ethiopia is a majority Christian country compared to Somalia's majority Muslim population. Some of its founding members were also reportedly trained and fought with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, highlighting the connectivity between the radical and extremist organizations. Al Shabaab would inevitably align itself with Al-Qaeda in 2012, proclaiming the Islamic Emirate of Somalia, and become the most prominent and lethal terrorist organization in East Africa. Some of the notable acts of terror from the group include the 2010 Kampala





bombings in Uganda, the 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, and the 2015 Garissa University massacre, and hundreds of other atrocities committed against civilians in their area of control.

## 2. The Maghreb

The French colonial rule in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia left deep social scars and cleavages, particularly between the secular elites and Islamist movements. Following independence, many of the countries in the region, aided by the foreign powers, relied on repression and single-party dominance for power, which eroded trust in political institutions and marginalized opposition groups. This was most evident in Algeria, where the military would take over to cancel the 1991 elections, where FIS was projected to win. With no venue for democratic expression and a religion already supporting the idea of armed conflict, soon a decade-long brutal civil war would begin. This conflict would give rise to groups such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), whose splinter factions would lay the foundation for transnational terrorism in the region.



Image 5: Photo from the 2013 Amenas gas facility siege. British Broadcasting Corporation.

The most significant outcome of this splinter was the emergence of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). Trying to distance itself from the GIA, GSPC would align itself with Al-Qaeda and become the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2007. AQIM would then move on to exploit weak governance in southern Algeria, Mali, and Niger to embed itself in the local smuggling and human trafficking operations to continue its operations across the Sahel. In 2013, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a former AQIM commander, established Al Murabitoun. The group would become infamous for attacks such as the 2013 Amenas gas facility siege in Algeria, assaults on hotels in Bamako in 2015, and Ouagadougou in 2016. While it recently reabsorbed into the AQIM circles, it showcases the dynamic nature of the terrorist cells.



### 3. Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin

The countries of the Sahel are among the world's poorest and face numerous security challenges, including ethnic conflict and separatism, banditry, and organized crime. Most of them also have a history of weak governance, colonial exploitation, and military intervention in politics. Particular conditions in the northeast of Nigeria gave rise to Boko Haram, which is by far the most deadly and infamous terrorist group in Africa. Its ideology is shaped by an extreme interpretation of Shari'a and Qur'an, which not only rejects the Western influence but also its teachings and ideals, such as democracy, constitutionalism, federalism, or other moderate forms of Islam (hence the name "Boko Haram" which means "Western education is forbidden").



Image 6: Fighters from Boko Haram, with the group's then-leader Abubakar Shekau being at the center. CNN.

Key factors in its rise were the tension between both ethnic groups and also the Muslim and Christian cleavages in the Nigerian community. To understand these tensions, one needs to know more about the African sociostructure, as in 1885's Berlin Conference, to the Europeans, they were all African, but the idea of Nigerian or African identity did not exist. Many of the people inhabiting the land saw themselves as members of set tribes, which Nigeria has the most of in Africa. On top of that, the country is located in the Sahel, which is a religious hotspot between the Muslim Arab world and the Christian Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, the country is divided in half, with the north of the country being majority Muslim and the south being majority Christian. There were also socioeconomic problems. The South, being at the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, was much more developed by the British than the North's rural countryside, on which British rule only existed on paper. Because of this, when the country got its independence, the north saw disparities in the application of laws, access to development, jobs, and infrastructure, alongside growing frustration with elite corruption and other state abuses. Boko Haram managed to use this victimization narrative to find supporters in the underdeveloped north. The US State

Department has identified various factors that limited governmental response “including a lack of coordination and cooperation between Nigerian security agencies, security sector corruption, misallocation of resources, limited requisite databases, the slow pace of the judicial system, and lack of sufficient training for prosecutors and judges to implement anti-terrorism laws”.

The shrinking of Lake Chad, one of Africa’s largest lakes, which has been described by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) as an ecological disaster, also contributed to increasing tensions and unrest among the populace. Boko Haram also managed to utilize this to find more recruits and exploit tensions among the cleavages. This highlights that growing environmental concerns play and will continue to play a huge role in the region.

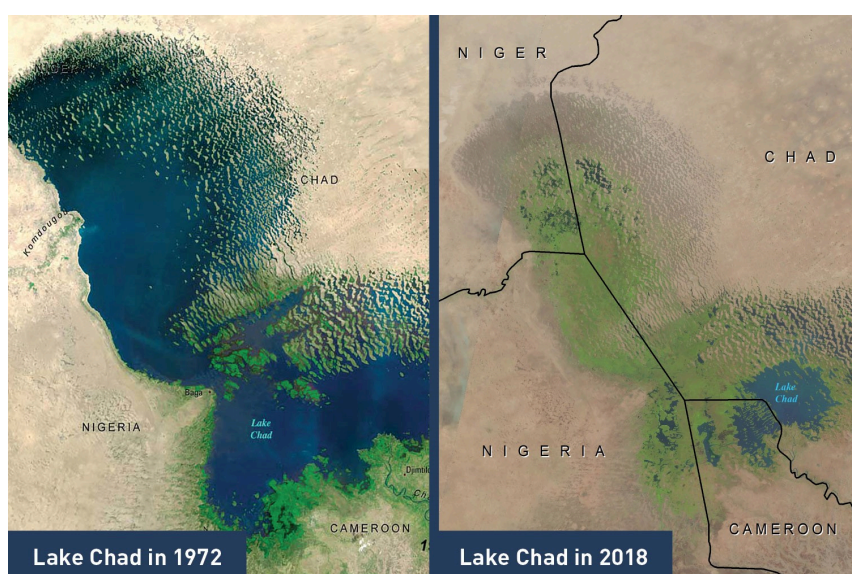


Image 7: A photo depicting the shrinking of Lake Chad. Nicra.

## Drivers of Violent Extremism in Africa

Paths towards radicalization and extremism differ among communities in Africa; however, if there is one thing that is certain, no one takes up arms or goes on suicide missions when nothing is pushing them. Many studies showcase that individual psychological circumstances, socioeconomic factors, and patterns of ethnic, religious, social, and political discrimination are the roots of radicalization of an individual. For example, groups like Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, and Mali’s Ansar al Dine managed to use a victimization narrative based on the perception of disproportionate economic hardships and exclusion due to religious and ethnic identity to recruit and gather public support. Such narratives usually aim to highlight the disparities in the allocation of wealth, access to jobs, government initiatives, and political participation. Most of the soon-to-be recruits are usually motivated by both grievances against the system and the prospects of benefits from membership in the extremist group. A report from the State Department directed at the US





Congress suggests: “Feelings of marginalization, relative deprivation, and frustrated expectations stemming from a lack of job opportunities in many African countries may make some youth more susceptible to extremist recruitment, in addition to boredom, idleness, and thrill-seeking impulses.”

Weak governments are one of the leading enabling factors causing extremism and radicalization. At the macroeconomic level, impoverished states rarely have sufficient state revenues for providing effective security, such as policing and border controls. This lack of means undermines social services and paves the road for corruption. Lack of state control usually causes other non-state actors to act up and fill the vacuum. For example, in Somalia and Mali, extremist and separatist groups flourished in the areas and regions where the state was unable to reach. As a result, people start to lose trust in the system and state, seeking alternatives for protection and livelihood. Which in turn spirals out of control as the state finds it harder to reestablish itself in a region, as armed groups make it impossible for government officials and services to reach out, further isolating the regions and leading them to more poverty that fuels extremism. For some of the locals, the extremist and radical groups are seen as symbols of justice and order, which the central government was unable to provide, increasing their legitimacy for their operations.

Ironically, the Western military response to extremism and terrorism in the region also allows religious and separatist groups to pose themselves as resistance fighters to a foreign threat. For example, Al-Qaeda and Al Shabaab play on this narrative, comparing the Western intervention in Somalia and Iraq to the Crusades of the Middle Ages or the brute colonialization campaigns of the late 19th century, which many in the whole African society still carry the scars of. Some people in the subregions of Africa, such as East Africa, perceive counterterrorism efforts as a ploy by their government or Western powers to persecute Muslims. In the Maghreb region, France’s decades-long counterterrorism campaigns allowed groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al Murabitoun to center their propaganda on anti-France messaging, echoing the post-colonial grievances.



Image 8: A Moor holding a placard saying “Death to France and its allies”. British Broadcasting Corporation.





In some cases, it is the modus operandi or methodology of the local counterterrorism efforts that push people into radicalization. According to the USAID's *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, governments' engagement in human rights violations is a vital driving force of radicalization. For example, abuses and violations by the Nigerian security forces in the northern part of the country fueled the drive for recruitment and legitimacy of Boko Haram by certain communities. Comparably, Al Shabaab also enjoyed support among the Kenyan Muslims, who were indignant due to historic grievances and domestic anti-terrorism campaign filled with grievance human rights abuses. In a survey among the associates of the said group, over 65% of them stated that the Kenyan government's counterterrorism strategy was the most important factor that drove them to the group. In order to sum it all up, the USAID, in one of its reports, stated that "[Conflict] is driven by key actors in society... who actively mobilize people and resources to engage in acts of violence on the basis of grievance, such as a group's perception that it has been excluded from political and economic life. [...] Illegitimate and ineffective institutions can drive dysfunctional patterns of fragility and stress."

In another report from the State Department directed at the US Congress, one official has testified before the Congress that "Violent extremist groups are 'focusing their recruitment efforts where there is a lack of economic opportunity, political and social alienation, poor governance, corruption of elites, and lack of accountability for abuses by security forces,' and are exploiting such weaknesses in their propaganda."

The same report suggests that if these dynamics are to be taken seriously, then major governmental reforms aimed at inclusiveness, responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability are key necessities in tackling the root of extremist recruitment in Africa.

### How does it matter to NATO?

One of the main concerns due to growing extremism in the region is that it is fueling religious conflict and terrorism on the continent. Many foreign fighters were and still are fighting in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Balkans, came and still are coming from Africa, with major hubs being in the Maghreb and some small numbers coming from countries like Somalia, Kenya, and Sudan.

Another concern lies in the fact that Africa contains many of the critical raw materials (CRMs) NATO needs to keep its industry ongoing. Many African states in the Sahel, Maghreb, and the central region near Congo possess vast reserves of uranium, rare earth elements, oil, and natural gas –all essential for the protection of energy security and the production of advanced technology. The presence of extremist groups and foreign assets in proximity to these resources raises the risks of supply disruption, criminal exploitation, and the strengthening of parallel economies that fund terrorism. For NATO members reliant on diversified



access to CRMs, instability in Africa not only represents a regional challenge but also a direct threat to strategic independence and sovereignty.



Image 9: Africa's Most Important Exporters. Deutsche Welle.

NATO's concerns are also heightened by the fact that many of its partners in the region are also plagued by extremist groups. Through cooperative security frameworks like the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperative Initiative, NATO has established partnerships in North Africa and the Middle East. The spread of terrorism and extremist networks in the region threatens what is called the soft belly of Europe and NATO's Southern Flank, as instability in these partner countries creates greater room for terrorist safe havens, arms proliferation, and irregular migration routes in proximity to most of the member states.

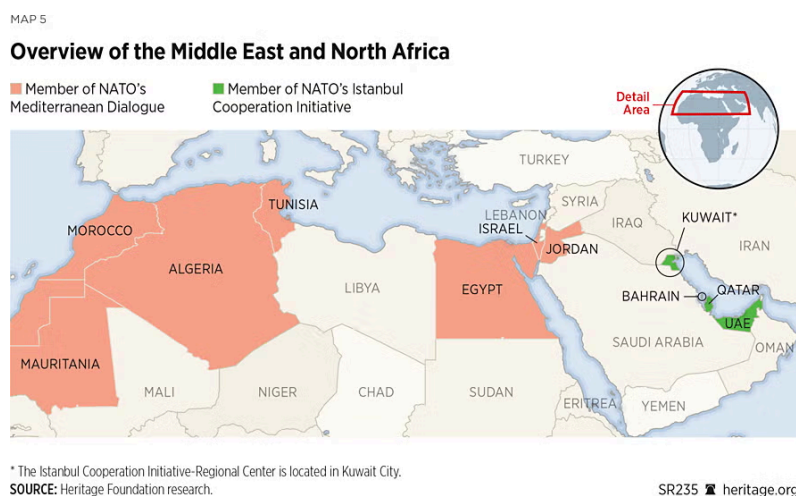


Image 10: The map of NATO Partners in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The Heritage Foundation.



The issue of rising migration is also directly tied to terrorism and instability in Africa. The conflicts and extreme violence have driven millions of people out of their homes, many of whom tried to reach Europe through a perilous journey through the Mediterranean. The rising migration places political, social, and security pressures on NATO member states, strains resources, and fuels political polarization. For example, the November 2015 Paris attacks were caused by the unregulated migration due to the Arab Spring, and they highlight the connectivity between the threat of terrorism and the rise of unregulated migration.



Image 11: A memorial to the victims of the November 2015 Paris attacks. *Sky News*.

On top of all of these challenges, there are also parallel threats of piracy, organised crime, and human trafficking. Most of them thrive in the weakly regulated and governed regions such as the Gulf of Guinea, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel. All of these illegal and criminal activities contribute to the funding of more weaponry and operations of the terrorist activities taking place, and also further threaten the stability in the region. Especially, the case of piracy threatens NATO's supply routes through the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, which is vital for both its energy needs and raw materials required for its industry. For NATO, all of these challenges highlight the necessity of finding a multidimensional consensus that will cover all of these key issues with regard to the circumstances of specific regions.

## V. Important Events & Chronology

| Date (Day/Month/Year) | Event                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1884-1885             | Berlin Conference, where Europe divided up Africa without any concern for the local dynamics |
| 1946-1991             | The Cold War                                                                                 |
| January 1991          | The collapse of the central government in Somalia                                            |



|                     |                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26 December 1991    | A coup d'état prevents the Islamic Salvation Front from winning the Algerian elections, leading to a decade-long civil war |
| 24-26 December 1994 | Air France Flight 8969                                                                                                     |
| 7 August 1998       | Al-Qaeda bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania                                                                 |
| 11 September 2001   | Al-Qaeda attacks the World Trade Center                                                                                    |
| 28 November 2002    | Mombasa Attacks in Kenya, Al-Qaeda attacks on an Israeli-owned hotel and attempts to shoot down an airliner.               |
| 2006-2009           | Al Shabaab rises during the Ethiopian intervention in the Somali Civil War                                                 |
| 17 December 2010    | Arab Spring begins                                                                                                         |
| 2013                | Formation of Al Murabitoun by Mokhtar Belmokhtar                                                                           |
| June 2014           | The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant declares itself a Caliphate in Mosul                                              |
| 13 November 2015    | November 2015 Paris Attacks                                                                                                |

## VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

UN Security Council Resolution 1267, <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267>

UN Security Council Resolution 1373, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/449020>

UN Security Council Resolution 2178, [https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2178%20\(2014\)](https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2178%20(2014))

UN Security Council Resolution 2396, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2396>

The African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism is one of the continent's most comprehensive legal frameworks designed against terrorism. The convention criminalizes acts, financing, and recruitment in the name of terrorism, while promoting cooperation among the member states for extradition, intelligence sharing, and joint prosecution.

The ECOWAS Convention on Combating Terrorism is an attempt to put diverse counterterrorism legislation across the West African member states in order. It established mechanisms for international coordination and preventing member states to support any terrorist groups, declared any terrorist group to be not only a regional or national threat but also a threat to all member states, and created joint intelligence centers to combat extremist groups operating in the region, which lay the foundation for the future peacekeeping operations in the region.





## VII. Failed Solution Attempts

Since the end of the Cold War and the rise of terrorism and extremism in Africa, many interventions aimed at countering terrorism have been tried, with the majority of them having only limited success. One of them that was already discussed in the research paper was the foreign military interventions in the Somali Civil War. While these campaigns managed to disrupt terrorist strongholds temporarily, they also fueled local resentment and provided extremist groups with tools of propaganda, which inevitably strengthened their recruitment and resolve. Similarly, in the Sahel region, multinational operations such as Operation Barkhane from 2014 until 2022, even if initially managed to achieve gains against Al-Qaeda associated groups, failed to establish long-term stability due to issues with poor governance and inadequate support for peacebuilding initiatives. Comparably, in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, repeated military campaigns against Boko Haram have only managed to succeed in reclaiming territory, but failed to prevent attacks by the terrorist group and reduce recruitment. Excessive reliance on heavy-handedness, human rights abuses, and insufficient attention to local grievances undermined the legitimacy of government forces. Even programmes that were just aimed at countering violent extremism through de-radicalization initiatives and community engagement projects have only managed to produce mixed results due to inconsistent funding and poor coordination.

## VIII. Possible Solutions

As the issue still thrives after three decades with multiple attempts already made to resolve it, the question inevitably comes to how to deal with it. For the delegates to start, they are recommended to keep the key issues to be discussed in the report in mind while trying to solve the issue: just as not all problems can be solved by passive condemnation, not all problems can be resolved by sheer brute force. The issue of terrorist strongholds, spillover effects to other countries nearby, the lack of capacity of many African states, collateral damage in dealing with terrorism and extremism, the root causes to every individual conflict, and geopolitical complexities should be resolved if the issue has to be dealt decisively. These should be done with the collaboration of local, state, regional, and international actors, as any previous unilateral action in nation-building has failed so far in the region.

Another goal of the delegates should be countering the foreign meddling by NATO adversaries in the region, which are exploiting the chaos for their own gains. For example, the Wagner Group and other Kremlin-backed groups smuggled more than \$2.5 billion in gold in the 18 months following its invasion of Ukraine. Many of the mercenary groups prevalent in the region act as a major disruption in the attempts for peacebuilding, and dealing with them is a major step in strengthening regional sovereignty.



However, if one thing is clear, it is the fact that any attempt will require a multidimensional approach that combines security, governance, and development. Militarily, strengthening the capacity of the regional organizations and partners is crucial. Here, NATO can either choose to play a complementary role by providing training, intelligence, logistics, or an active role by direct intervention and military aid. Socially and economically, addressing the structural drivers of extremism like poverty, marginalisation, and weak institutions is vital, as many communities join or tolerate extremist groups due to a lack of economic opportunities or protection from the state. To solve this, major reforms aimed at tackling this issue, as named in the report, are essential. Such assistance could help African states to gain an upper hand against extremist groups, while building up a long-term solution and legitimacy.

## IX. Useful Links

[NATO in the 21st Century: Preparing the Alliance for the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow | The Heritage Foundation](#)

[Topic in Focus: Countering Violent Extremism – Africa Center for Strategic Studies](#)

[Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa](#)

[Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa – ACCORD](#)

[NATO - Topic: Countering terrorism](#)

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