

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**THE IMPACT OF FAILED STATES ON THE GROWTH AND SPREAD  
OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM:  
A CASE STUDY OF SOMALIA**

**WAMBUA ALFRED KYALO**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

**NAME: WAMBUA ALFRED KYALO**

**REG. NO. R50/82216/2015**

Sign: ..... Date: .....

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

**DR. KISIANGANI EMMANUEL**

Sign: ..... Date: .....

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research project to Beth Wangui – my wife and love of my life, and our unborn son, Emmanuel. Thank you for your inspiration, encouragement and valuable support.

## **ABSTRACT**

State failure and its effects on international security has been a major issue in global security discourse in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From terms such as ‘fragile states’, ‘failed states’ and ‘failing states’ among others used to denote states that have challenges in functioning as modern sovereign states, state failure has emerged as an issue of concern owing to its threat to international security particularly in the post-9/11 period. In the aftermath of Al Qaeda’s terrorist attacks within the US, the link between failed states and international terrorism has been highlighted. A failed state refers to a political entity which lacks the capacity to meet the fundamental requirements of a nation-state. The most crucial of these requirements is the capacity of a state to guarantee its own security, both internally and externally. This is essentially why a state enjoys the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within its defined territory. Thus, failed states fall short in this aspect as most of them are characterized by a cycle of violent conflict and fail to deliver the political goods expected of them such as security, physical infrastructure, healthcare and education. This creates opportunities for non-state actors such as transnational terrorist groups, organized criminal organizations, guerilla movements and rebel groups to establish themselves within such ungoverned spaces and exploit the conditions therein to spread their networks at national, regional or international levels.

This study thus seeks to establish the impact failed states have had in regard to the growth and spread of international terrorism. An analysis of the emergence and growth of some of the major terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS reveals an inter-linkage between state failure and their growth/spread internationally. The main objective of the study is to provide a critical analysis of the impact of failed states on the growth/spread of terrorism and will use Somalia as a case study. It will seek to establish the link between failed states and the manifestation of international terrorism and analyse how Somalia’s prolonged instability has impacted on the growth and spread of terrorism. The study will also explore some of the challenges in dealing with terrorism in failed states. From the analysis, some of the findings of the study are that there is an inter-linkage between failed states and the growth/spread of international terrorism in that failed states due to weak state capacity are incapable of securing their territories hence serve as attractive sanctuaries for terrorist groups to establish themselves and operate unhindered.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1. Introduction

Terrorism is one of the dominant issues in international discourse given its threat to both state and human security. It is one of the major global security threats facing humanity particularly due to its indiscriminate nature, unpredictability and the evolving nature of methods of attack by its actors. Carried out by sub-national groups, its indiscriminate nature makes its choice of attack targets not to choose between a developed state in the western world and major global financial capitals such as New York on 9/11, Paris attacks in 2016 and in impoverished and lawless states/cities such as Mogadishu (Somalia) and Kabul (Afghanistan).

Getting a generally acceptable definition of terrorism has been a challenge since up to date, the United Nations is yet to come up with an internationally agreed definition.<sup>1</sup> The UN has been working on a draft convention on international terrorism<sup>2</sup> since 2000 but the process has remained deadlocked owing to failure to get consensus from the various actors and stakeholders. There are over a hundred varying definitions of terrorism but the most common points of convergence in most of them is that terrorism constitutes ‘violence’ or the ‘threat of violence’. The Global Terrorism Index defines terrorism as ‘the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation’<sup>3</sup>.

Currently, some of the commonly known international terrorist organizations include the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), commonly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al Qaeda, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (better known as Al Shabaab) and Boko Haram.<sup>4</sup> One key characteristic of these four terror groups is that their origins and growth can be

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<sup>1</sup> Conte, Alex. 2010. *Human Rights in the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism*. London. Springer.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/laws.html> - Accessed on March 8, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2016. <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf> - Accessed on March 8, 2017

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State: Foreign Terrorist Organizations. <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm> - Accessed on March 6, 2017.



linked to the internal political, economic and social conditions of the states in which they emerged from or set up base in. The emergence of ISIS for example can be traced back to the political, economic and social turmoil in Iraq and Syria. The same case applies to Al Qaeda's origins and growth in Afghanistan and Somalia's Al Shabaab. Simply put, state failure was a key factor in creating the conditions that led to the growth of these terror groups.

A failed or failing state can generally be described as a polity which lacks the capacity to meet the fundamental requirements of a modern nation- state<sup>5</sup>. Such fundamental requirements include delivery of political goods including security, physical infrastructure, education and healthcare provision and the civil rights to participate in political decision making among others. The most important element of any state is to guarantee its security, internally and externally. Failure to guarantee security makes it a challenge to deliver on the other political goods expected of a modern sovereign state.

Periodic failed states indexes consistently rank Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Syria in the top tiers of failed states. Notably, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2016 ranked Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Libya, Yemen and Nigeria in the top ten of states most impacted by terrorism<sup>6</sup>. There is thus a clear interrelationship between these failed states and the growth and spread of international terrorism. However, this is not to make a general assumption that the growth and spread of international terrorism is only synonymous with failed states. There is evidence that some terror groups prefer more stable societies to operate from due to logistical and other advantages they can access there as opposed to it in failed states.<sup>7</sup>

What this study aims to demonstrate clearly is that the potential for growth and spread of international terrorism is higher in failed states. This is due to various factors such as presence of a weak or lack of a central government that can effectively secure a state's internal and external security thus creating an enabling environment for terror groups to thrive.

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<sup>5</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2016. <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf> - Accessed on March 8, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Mechling, Andrew D. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

## 1.2. Background to the Research Problem

Following the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the US, the threat posed by terrorist groups to international security gained more global attention. Focus turned to the nexus between failed states and terrorism since it became clear that such states posed a major threat to international order<sup>8</sup>. For example, US policymakers singled out Afghanistan and Somalia as not only ‘safe havens for terrorists’ but also ‘incubators of terrorism’.<sup>9</sup> Al Qaeda had claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks, and US authorities confirmed that the attack was planned and carried out by operatives of the terror group whose origins and growth can be traced to the internal turmoil in Afghanistan in the 1980’s owing to great power politics between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.<sup>10</sup> Afghanistan fits the perfect definition of a failed state, characterized by a weak central government unable to or with limited control of both its internal and external security.

Somalia, on the other hand descended into anarchy from the early 1990’s following the overthrow of Siad Barre’s regime.<sup>11</sup> Clan divisions took centre stage as each group sought to assert political authority giving rise to emergence of warlord-ism.<sup>12</sup> Presence of a weak Transitional Federal Government and the resultant governance vacuum contributed to the rise to power of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) which somehow managed to bring some level of order in the lawless state. However, the UIC’s militant wing, Al Shabaab leaders had their own motives. Most of Al Shabaab’s founder members/leaders such as Ahmed Abdi Godane and Mukhtar Robow were battle hardened militants who had fought in jihadist wars in Afghanistan. They harboured motives of spreading their jihadist ideology beyond Somalia’s borders and establish an Islamic caliphate. The group also included hundreds of foreign jihadists among its rank. This posed a major security threat given that the rise of radical Islam presented the threat of

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<sup>8</sup> Piazza, James. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism*. Oxford. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, No. 3, pp. 469-488.

<sup>9</sup> Piazza, James. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism*. Oxford. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, No. 3, pp. 469-488.

<sup>10</sup> Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. eds. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

<sup>11</sup> Mohamed, Mohamed A. 2009. *U.S. Strategic Interest in Somalia: From Cold War Era to War on Terror*. New York. State University at Buffalo, Master of Arts Thesis.

<sup>12</sup> International Crisis Group. 2008. *Somalia: To Move Beyond The Failed State*. Africa Report No.147.

elevating political Islam as an alternative governance system and as well, radical Somali Islamists directly engaging in terrorism activities.<sup>13</sup>

Ethiopia, owing to the rhetoric and threats against it from the jihadists, opted for a military solution and deployed its troops in Somalia to oust the UIC and its Al Shabaab militant wing. The ouster of UIC had the opposite effect of transforming Al Shabaab into a more potent force, growing into the terrorist outfit it is today. Despite global and regional efforts aimed at finding a lasting solution to the Somali problem, the current national government is inherently weak to effectively govern, secure its internal and external security as well as provide the political goods to its population. In essence, it remains a failed state. Rotberg refers to failed states as those that lack the capacity or are weak in exercising control over their territorial borders.<sup>14</sup> He postulates that in such states, the weakened governing authority's exercise of its official power is mostly constrained either to a capital city or in a region/regions where it is ethnically dominant. Hence, in Somalia's case, the current national government is mainly restricted to the capital, Mogadishu, as Al Shabaab propagates its reign of terror in large swathes of the country's territory. Additionally, Somalia's attractiveness as a safe haven for terror groups is aided by its instability, porous borders, its long and unsecured coastline as well as close proximity to the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, the US' global war on terrorism as well as the Arab Spring had the destabilizing effect of wreaking havoc particularly in Iraq and Syria. The sectarian divisions and violence that took centre stage in Iraq following the US military operation that ousted Saddam Hussein and the subsequent fall of his regime, as well as the civil war in Syria at the height of the Arab Spring created a governance vacuum that aided the emergence of ISIS. The collapse or weakening of the central government in both states, rendering them incapable of guaranteeing their internal and external security, adverse economic effects and civil disorder among other effects plunged them further into the failed states status. ISIS controls large territories in both states, from where they

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<sup>13</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. 2004. *Somalia: State Collapse and Threat of Terrorism*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>15</sup> United States Department of State, "2005 Country Reports on Terrorism", Chapter 5-Country Reports: Africa Overview, p. 6, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65462.pdf> - Accessed on March 10, 2017.

recruit, indoctrinate, train and plan terror attacks targeting various states or cities across the world.

The above cases of Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Syria, serve as good examples of failed states that have had a major impact on the growth and spread of international terrorism. This study endeavours to examine the interrelationship between failed states and the growth and spread of international terrorism with the main focus on Somalia.

### **1.3. Statement of the Research Problem**

Terrorism ranks as one of the major threats to global security particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. International terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab have posed a major threat to both State and Human Security in various states and regions across the world. There is an inter-linkage between the origins and growth of such terror groups and the political, economic and social conditions in the states where they originated from. Afghanistan, Iraq & Syria and Somalia from where Al Qaeda, IS and Al Shabaab respectively can be traced, fall under the failed states category. Periodic failed states indexes rank Somalia on top. Plagued by conflict since the early 1990's following the fall of its last nationally recognized government of Siad Barre, Somalia has served as a fertile ground for international terror groups to use as operational bases.

The widely held views on the causes of terrorism are varied but many tend to associate it with radical Islam that propagates jihad (religious war) against non believers of the Islamic faith. However, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, focus shifted to failed states and their link to international terrorism. A critical analysis of the history of the major international terrorist groups trace their origins and growth to failed states which serve as operational bases for them to recruit, indoctrinate/radicalize, train and plan their attacks from. Thus, the focus of this study will be on the nexus between failed states and the growth and spread of international terrorism.

### **1.4. Objectives of the Research**

The overall objective of the study is to provide a critical analysis of the impact of failed states on the growth and spread of terrorism; with Somalia as a case study.

The study's specific objectives are:

- i. To establish the inter-linkage between failed states and the growth/spread of international terrorism.
- ii. To examine the extent to which Somalia's prolonged instability has contributed to the growth and spread of international terrorism.
- iii. To make suggestions on how to respond to the problem of terrorism in the context of failed states.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

- i. What is the inter-linkage between failed states and the growth/spread of international terrorism?
- ii. To what extent has Somalia's prolonged instability contributed to the growth and spread of international terrorism?
- iii. What are the options in responding to the problem of terrorism in the context of failed states?

### **1.6. Hypotheses**

- i. Failed states enable the growth and spread of international terrorism
- ii. Somalia's prolonged instability has directly contributed to the spread of international terrorism.
- iii. Responding to terrorism in the context of failed states is a more difficult process as there are no effective military or law enforcement authorities to disrupt the operations of terrorist groups.

### **1.7. Justification of the Research Problem**

The main focus of this study is to analyze the link between failed states and international terrorism, with particular emphasis on Somalia. This is necessary to understand what it is about failed states that make them attractive for terrorist organizations' operations. The study aims to demonstrate that as much as some terrorist organizations may prefer more stable societies to operate from owing to the advantages of logistical and other resources available, there is ample evidence proving failed states are more preferable and the origins/growth of the major terrorist organizations can be traced to them.

The study, from the findings and conclusions to be made, will provide a thorough understanding of the concept of failed states, the contributing factors to state failure, what attracts terrorist organizations to failed states or enables them to thrive within them and the contribution of failed states to international terrorism. This will highlight the threat failed states pose to international, state and human security. As such, this will be for the benefit of policy makers, governmental and inter-governmental organizations for example, in policy formulation on combating terrorism, enhancing a state's socio-economic and political development, addressing international security concerns in the region and beyond, among others.

In addition, the study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in academia on the issue of failed states and their link to the growth and spread of international terrorism. More particularly on this, will be on how Somalia's status as a failed state has impacted on the spread of international terrorism. The study will also be an instrumental resource in future related studies on the failed states vis-à-vis international terrorism nexus. It will also help address some of the misunderstandings on the causes/drivers of terrorism.

## **1.8. Literature Review**

### **1.8.1. Conceptualizing failed states**

There seems to be no consensus on the concept of failed states among various scholars and publications. Rotberg states that a failed state is a polity which is unwilling or unable to meet the

fundamental requirements of a modern nation-state.<sup>16</sup> Among the key requirements expected of a modern state include delivering political goods such as security, healthcare, education, physical infrastructure and fundamental rights and freedoms like participation in political decision making, freedom of association among others. Rotberg further describes failed states as those which are deeply immersed in conflict and characterized by warring factions. He observes that in such states, the violence carried out by the factions/parties in conflict is mainly directed towards the regime in power and notes that the demand or quest for power by the insurgents justifies the violence they resort to.

Patrick observes that defining the identity and number of failed states is a challenge given the various other terminologies/classifications made from weak, failing and failed states<sup>17</sup>. This he notes is because in the study of state failure, most scholars simply lump a heterogeneous group of states and generalize them as ‘failed states’ without putting into consideration the histories of states which would enable them categorize some as failed, others failing, poorly performing etc. Other scholars such as Weinstein and Vaishnav simply refer to all the various categories (failed/failing/fragile states) as poorly performing states.<sup>18</sup> To them, these are states exhibiting a mix of deficiency in government institutions and poverty thus raising the possibility of them collapsing into conflict. Brooks, on the other hand argues that even the term ‘failed state’ is in itself illegitimate. According to her, most failed states cannot be regarded to have been successful states ever.<sup>19</sup>

Mechling points out that there is no universally accepted criteria by which a state can be considered as failed by other nation states.<sup>20</sup> However, the main characteristics used to conclude a state as failed include its capacity to provide internal security for its citizens, economic

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<sup>16</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2007. *Failed States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas*. Oxford: Blackwell. *International Studies Review*, Vol. 9, pp. 644-662.

<sup>18</sup> Weinstein, Jeremy M. and Vaishnav, Milan. 2006. *A Mismatch with Consequences: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Security-Development Nexus*. In *Short of the Goal: U.S. Policy and Poorly Performing States*. eds. Birdsall, Nancy; Vaishnav, Milan and Ayres, Robert L. Washington, D.C. Center for Global Development.

<sup>19</sup> Brooks, Rosa E. 2005. *Failed States, or States as Failure*. Chicago. *The University of Chicago Law Review*. Vol. 72, pp 1159-1196.

<sup>20</sup> Mechling, Andrew David. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

prosperity, political stability and a governance system capable of providing for the people's social welfare/fulfilling their basic human needs.<sup>21</sup>

The commonly used matrix for gauging or analyzing states is the Failed States Index.<sup>22</sup> It provides an annual ranking of states across the world based on 12 indicators in measuring the risk of conflict. These 12 indicators are drawn from three categories namely: Political and military, Economic and Social. The political and military indicators include aspects such as the legitimacy of the State, rule of law and human rights violations among others. The Economic indicators are concerned with issues such as poverty levels and economic performance and finally, the Social indicators includes aspects like demographic pressures, presence of internally displaced persons/refugees etc.

Other scholars such as Klare note that the ability of a state to protect its citizens from any threats internally and also from external attacks, is one of the most important elements of a state.<sup>23</sup> In addition to this, he argues that every state should have the capacity to protect its territorial integrity from any form of external influences/threats irrespective of such threats emerging from either state or non-state actors.

### **1.8.2. Failed States and International Terrorism**

In attempting to explain the causes of state failure, Klare states that it is as a result of prolonged interaction of various powerful corrosive factors such as political and ethnic factionalism, economic stagnation, corruption and decay in the national infrastructure among others<sup>24</sup>. He notes that whenever any state faces all or a number of the above factors, such raises the possibility of emergence of paramilitary bands signifying a decline of state authority. For example, in Afghanistan's case, the collapse of the central government gave rise to the emergence of the Taliban; the latter provided a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to plan and

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<sup>21</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2007. *Failed States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas*. Oxford: Blackwell. International Studies Review, Vol. 9, pp. 644-662.

<sup>22</sup> The Fund For Peace. "Fragile States Index 2015." <http://www.fundforpeace.org>. – Accessed on March 16, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Klare, Michael T. 2004. *The Deadly Connection: Paramilitary Bands, Small Arms Diffusion, and State Failure*, in *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, ed. Robert Rotberg. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Klare, Michael T. 2004. *The Deadly Connection: Paramilitary Bands, Small Arms Diffusion, and State Failure*, in *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, ed. Robert Rotberg. Princeton. Princeton University Press.



execute their terror activities. In Somalia, the ouster of Barre's regime gave way to sharp political and ethnic divisions along clan-lines, the emergence of militant Islamism, rise of the UIC under which Al Shabaab grew from its military wing to the terror outfit it later became.

In states where the factors outlined by Klare are prevalent, such makes it attractive for terrorist groups to try and establish themselves there. This aptly explains the cases of Afghanistan, Somalia as well as the current turmoil in Iraq and Syria on the terrorist organizations/terror elements that took advantage of state failure to entrench themselves and use as operational bases. This is primarily because such failed states are characterized by either the inability and/or unwillingness to effectively deal with both the internal and external security threats posed by terrorist groups.

Mechling, in highlighting the link between failed states and terrorism, uses Afghanistan and Somalia as modern day examples<sup>25</sup>. He traces the genesis of terrorism in Afghanistan to the Taliban's rise to power in the mid-1990's following the withdrawal of the Soviets. The Taliban were instrumental in providing refuge for Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda outfit.<sup>26</sup> The Al Qaeda leader on his part was key to the growth and rise to power of the Taliban itself having supported it politically, financially and logistically e.g. in training and arming it.

Failed states serve as incubators of terrorism by providing an enabling environment that offers a safe haven for both terror elements and groups<sup>27</sup>. By serving as sanctuaries for terror organizations to thrive, such failed states pose a threat to international security. For example, Rice observes that 'weak and failing states' pose a major threat to the security of the US compared to the threat posed by 'strong and aggressive states'.<sup>28</sup> Fukuyama, in examining the focus on failed states vis-à-vis global security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, observes that the absence of state capacity in impoverished countries has had a direct negative impact on the developed

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<sup>25</sup> Mechling, Andrew David. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

<sup>26</sup> Schanzer, Jonathan. 2004. *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups & the Next Generation of Terror*. New York. The Washington Institute.

<sup>27</sup> Piazza, James. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism*. Oxford. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, No. 3, pp. 469-488.

<sup>28</sup> Rice, Condoleezza. 2006. Transformational Diplomacy. Georgetown University <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm> - Accessed on February 22, 2017.

world.<sup>29</sup> This, he notes, has elevated the issue of state weakness to a priority area in the international agenda. Using this example, this explains why a global power such as the US, is very keen in the security developments in third world countries such as terror groups activities in Somalia, taking out known terrorist leaders/camps using drone strikes, supporting regional military efforts such as AMISOM aimed in establishing order and stability in the lawless state.

In the international system, states are the main actors and form the building blocks of world order.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, nation-states as the recognized political actors are obligated to meet certain expectations notably delivering political goods to their citizens. In the hierarchy of political goods, provision of security by a state to its citizens ranks top. It is the primary duty of every state to guarantee security in defending its territory internally and externally, firmly dealing with any threats/attacks and creating an enabling environment for its citizens to amicably resolve their differences/grievances against the state or among themselves without resorting to use of arms or any other form of violence.

A state's capacity to deliver other political goods such as healthcare, education, physical infrastructure (e.g. roads, railways, telecommunication facilities) as well as ensuring basic rights such as the right to participate in political processes, freedom of speech and assembly among others, can only be possible in an environment where security is guaranteed. It is worth noting that not all states have the capacity or political will to meet this objective, hence this marks the difference between stable states and failed ones. Rotberg highlights this by stating that the inability of some nation-states to deliver the requisite political goods to their populations is due to their failed status caused by among other factors, endemic internal violence.<sup>31</sup>

Failed states are more susceptible to contain terrorist organizations or have their territory used by terrorists as operational bases to launch attacks elsewhere, suffer from terror attacks or have some of their population join terror groups and carry out terrorist attacks.<sup>32</sup> Since they lack the

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<sup>29</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State Building, Governance and World Order in the Twenty First Century*. London. Profile Books.

<sup>30</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>31</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

<sup>32</sup> Piazza, James. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism*. Oxford. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, No. 3, pp. 469–488.

capacity to project their power and are ineffective in securing both their internal and external security, this makes them attractive for terror elements to infiltrate and operate from. The large number of alienated and disloyal citizens may also provide them with potential recruits. For example, following the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the anarchy that set in, Iraqis opposed to their country being occupied by foreigners, in particular non-Muslims (US and British forces and other personnel) constituted potential recruits into ISIS.

However, according to some scholars, failed states and terrorism are not mutually inclusive. Some elements of terror prefer operating within strong and stable states/societies given the availability of the operational infrastructure e.g. availability or sourcing weapons, finances etc, required by terrorist organizations to carry out their operations. Mechling, for example notes that a terror group aiming to promote its cause by use of social media would not prefer operating in an environment without internet network.<sup>33</sup> Newman observes that terrorist organizations have emerged from and operated in stable states<sup>34</sup> citing the cases of homegrown terrorists carrying out attacks e.g. in the US and France, noting that though in such cases, the terrorists act alone, they claim allegiance to established terror groups for example ISIS. Other scholars hold that one pre-emptive strategy against terrorist organizations is by deliberately allowing some states to completely fail since terrorists require operational infrastructure which would hence be lacking in a failed state.

In conclusion, it is worth pointing out that terrorism is not just a failed states affair since it also thrives within some stable societies/states, but for purposes of this study, there is ample evidence showing an inter-linkage between failed states and the growth/spread of international terrorism. The study will thus endeavor to focus specifically on this phenomenon in the subsequent chapters.

## **1.9. Theoretical Framework**

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<sup>33</sup> Mechling, Andrew David. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

<sup>34</sup> Newman, Edward. 2007. *Weak States, State Failure, and Terrorism*. Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 19, Issue 4. London & New York. Taylor and Francis.

In analyzing the phenomenon of failed states and international terrorism, this study will apply the Realist theory of international relations. The proponents of Realism can be traced as far back in history to classical theorists such as Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes to recent scholars such as Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz.<sup>35</sup> According to Realists, the international system is characterized by anarchy, that is, absence of a central authority to guarantee order.<sup>36</sup> As such, in the anarchic system, State power is the key variable since it is only through it (power) that states can guarantee their own survival.<sup>37</sup> For example, following the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush's administration regarded terrorism as an 'existential threat' and declared a global war against terrorists anywhere in the world.<sup>38</sup>

It viewed any terrorist group anywhere in the world as a potential threat to its security, and pursued a foreign policy of military action against terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. Hence, the US military forays in Afghanistan to pursue Al Qaeda operatives led by their leader, bin Laden as well as to topple the Taliban regime which provided protection to the terrorists. In Somalia, the US has been pursuing Al Shabaab leaders/operatives and their bases and eliminating them through drone attacks. In Iraq, the battle against ISIS by Iraqi forces has been backed by support from the US.

To Realists, States express power through their military capability. In its global war on terror after the events of 9/11, the US opted to apply its military might in shaping the international system by pursuing a unilateral military approach<sup>39</sup> in forcefully seeking to entrench democracy for example in erstwhile tyrannical and anarchical states like Iraq and Afghanistan respectively. Ethiopia, in conviction that its territorial integrity was under threat from Al Shabaab's rapid growth and the terrorist group's ideological motivation to 'reclaim Muslim lands' in Ethiopia as

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<sup>35</sup> Booth, Ken. 2011. *Realism and World Politics*. London & New York. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

<sup>36</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. 2013. *Structural Realism*. in: Dunne, Tim. Kurki, Milja & Smith, Steve. eds. *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

<sup>37</sup> Slaughter, Anne Marie. 2011. *International Relations, Principal Theories*. Wolfrum, R. (Ed.) Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

<sup>38</sup> Buros, Randi L. 2011. *Realism vs. Liberalism in the Development of Counterterrorism Strategy*. Small Wars Journal. - <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/realism-vs-liberalism-in-the-development-of-counterterrorism-strategy> - Accessed on March, 6 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Buros, Randi L. 2011. *Realism vs. Liberalism in the Development of Counterterrorism Strategy*. Small Wars Journal. - <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/realism-vs-liberalism-in-the-development-of-counterterrorism-strategy> - Accessed on March, 6 2017.

well as desire to establish an Islamic caliphate in regions of East Africa inhabited by Somalis, took a pre-emptive military decision to deploy its troops into Somalia and waged war against the Union of Islamic Courts under which Al Shabaab operated at the time. The US was instrumental in Ethiopia's military decision and had its backing. The same case, applies to Kenya's military operation in Somalia to protect its internal and external security from the threat posed by Al Shabaab.

The great power politics at play during the Cold War period pitting the US and the Soviet Union, had a bearing on the destabilization of some States into the failed states status they are today and the growth of terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda. Afghanistan served as an arena for great power politics between the two superpowers of that era, with the Soviets having deployed their troops there in furtherance of their foreign policy interests. To counter the Soviets move, the US embarked on a clandestine CIA operation to recruit, arm and train disgruntled Afghanis and other foreign fighters from Arab states to engage the Soviet forces in guerilla warfare aimed at forcing their withdrawal. The Soviets eventually withdrew and Osama bin Laden established Al Qaeda together with other jihadist fighters. Notably, with the end of the Cold War, Somalia was no longer of interest to the Americans who withdrew their support for Barre's regime, and its collapse in 1991 and the rise of clan and other divisions led to the anarchy that prevails to date.<sup>40</sup>

Syria's long protracted civil war following the events of the Arab Spring is also a good example of modern day great power politics at play. Russia's support for Bashar Assad's regime versus the US and its western allies support to the rebels continue to complicate the possibility of an end to the conflict. The endemic conflict, weakening of governmental authority, refugee crisis among other adverse effects of the conflict continues to plunge Syria further into the failed states index.<sup>41</sup> The conflicts in Iraq and Syria provided the enabling conditions for the growth and spread of ISIS. The failure by the international community, particularly major global powers and inter-governmental organizations such as the UN, to collectively agree on and find a lasting solution to the Syrian crisis vindicates Realists belief that cooperation in the international system

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<sup>40</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.

<sup>41</sup> The Fund For Peace. "Fragile States Index 2015." <http://www.fundforpeace.org> - Accessed on March 16, 2017.

is difficult.<sup>42</sup> For example, power politics within the UN Security Council have frustrated efforts aimed at solving Syria's conflict.<sup>43</sup>

Realists further advance that the international system is characterized by conflict and there is no supranational authority that can dictate state behaviour.<sup>44</sup> The conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia for example, are thus complex to resolve since as sovereign states, no state can dictate to them how to manage their internal affairs. From a realist perspective, states are the sole actors in international relations and advocates for strong states particularly militarily. Hence, failed states are an anomaly from realists' point of view since to them; state failure is an end.

### **1.10. Methodology**

In addressing the objectives of this study, the research will rely more on secondary data. Due to logistical challenges and time constraints given the period this study has to be undertaken and finalized, relying on primary data collection would be a challenge and hence the research will be based more on secondary data. However, it will capture some aspects of primary data sourced from discussions with experts on issues of Somalia, international relations and international security in general. The secondary data sources this study will rely on include: a review of both published and unpublished materials, journals, periodicals, academic papers and online sources. Some of the advantages of relying on secondary data for this research are that it will help save costs and time.

Discussions with experts and other people well versed with issues international relations and international security concerns such as terrorism. This will provide useful insights on the subject of study in regard to what constitutes failed states, their impact on international security and aspects of terrorism among others. Such experts will include scholars/academics, security experts

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<sup>42</sup> Adams, Simon. 2015. *Failure To Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council*. New York. Global Centre for the Responsibility To Protect.

<sup>43</sup> Barika, Nwibor L. 2014. *The Security Council and Global Peace, "Issues and Challenges"*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Vol. 19, Issue 8, pp. 47-51.

<sup>44</sup> Amin, Musarat et al. 2011. *Realism - Dominating Theory in International Relations: An Analysis*. Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences, Vol. 1, No. 7.

in government security institutions such as the National Counter Terrorism Centre and students of international relations/studies and security studies.

The research design to be used in this study is a case study, hence the choice of Somalia as a case study of a failed state in examining the impact failed states have on the growth and spread of international terrorism. Somalia will in this case be a representative of other failed states that have had a direct relationship with international terrorism.

### **1.11. Scope and Limitations of the Research**

In conducting this study some of the possible limitations that may affect it include limited financial resources to facilitate field work in data collection. This is likely to determine the sample size, preparation/sending of questionnaires among other procedures to be applied in collecting, analyzing and presentation of the data. Another limitation is time constraints given that the period allocated for conducting and finalizing this study for academic purposes is fixed and hence in striving to comply with the set deadlines, may not have the flexibility to accord as much time in the various research study stages as necessary. The possibility of bias on the part of the respondents could also be a limitation in regard to this study. For example, commonly held perceptions on Muslims/Islam vis-à-vis terrorism may arise from the respondents.

### **1.12. Chapter Outline**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One will be this proposal. Chapter Two will entail a comprehensive literature review highlighting the nexus between failed states and international terrorism. Chapter Three will specifically examine the case study of Somalia. Chapter Four features a Critical Analysis of the Impact of Failed States on the Growth and Spread of International Terrorism and finally, Chapter Five contains a summary of findings and conclusions from the study conducted.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE NEXUS BETWEEN FAILED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

### 2.1. Understanding the Failed States Concept

There are various definitions of a state. Weber defines it as a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.<sup>45</sup> In the state-centric international system, states are regarded as the main actors in international relations. The main characteristics of a modern sovereign state are a defined territory, population, a government or governing authority, sovereignty and recognition by other sovereign states. For a state to be considered as failed, it lacks the capacity to function as expected of a modern sovereign state. That could include for example, if it is incapable of securing its borders, has no or has a weak government/governing authority, has no control over parts of its territory, is unable to meet the basic requirements of its population in delivery of political goods such as security, education and healthcare among others. State failure is viewed as an anomaly in the international system.<sup>46</sup> According to Rotberg, a failed state is one which lacks the ability or is unwilling to function as a nation-state in the modern world.<sup>47</sup>

In drawing a distinction between stable or what she terms successful states versus failed states, Brooks notes that the former are those which meet requirements such as being in control over their defined territories and populations, enjoy the monopoly of legitimate violence within their territory and deliver political goods to their citizens.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, she describes failed states as those incapable of securing their territories, have no control over the means of legitimate violence, are unable to guarantee peace and stability to their populations and struggle or fail to ensure economic growth as well as provide social goods to their populations<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Weber, Max. *Politics as a Vocation*. – <http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Politics-as-a-Vocation.pdf> - Accessed on March 30, 2017.

<sup>46</sup>Brooks, Rosa E. 2005. *Failed States, or the State as Failure?* The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 1159-1196.

<sup>47</sup>Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*.The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25:3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>48</sup>Brooks, Rosa E. 2005. *Failed States, or the State as Failure?* The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 1159-1196.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid



From the cases of states such as Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo among others, some of the main characteristics of their failed states status include warlordism, violent struggle for resources and economic inequalities. There are various terminologies used by scholars and other institutions to explain state failure. Some refer them as fragile states, others failed states and other terms such as failing states, weak states among others. However, despite these varying terminologies, there seems to be little distinction in the main characteristics of state failure. What varies is the level of failure.

In determining what distinguishes stable states from fragile or weak ones, Patrick notes that such is based on a particular state's capacity to deliver the political goods expected of a modern sovereign state.<sup>50</sup> The political goods referred to cover four critical areas notably physical security, economy, social welfare and political institutions. Failed states face challenges in securing their territory and external borders among other security challenges such as dealing with crime and guaranteeing public order. They struggle to maintain a thriving economic environment conducive to foreign investment, managing natural resources, promoting enterprise and open trade among other requirements. Populations of such states lack or struggle to get their basic needs such as access to healthcare, education and other social services owing to the state's failure or lack of capacity to invest in such fundamental human needs. Finally, on the political aspect, failed states are characterized by absence of or weak governing institutions that are necessary to ensure checks and balances in exercise of power, fair judicial mechanisms, adherence to fundamental rights and freedoms among others.

It is worth noting that some scholars have taken a critical view over the conceptualization of failed states in the post 9/11 international system. For example, Newman observes that the focus on failed states may be a reflection of the Western world's (the US and its Western European allies) bias on what they project a modern state should be like.<sup>51</sup> Hence to him, the issue of failed states may be nothing more but a reflection of the West challenging the legitimacy of states

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<sup>50</sup>Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?* The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>51</sup>Newman, Edward. 2009. *Failed States and International Order: Constructing a Post-Westphalian World*. Taylor & Francis. Contemporary Security Policy, Vol.30, No.3, pp.421-443.

which in their view fail to reflect their notion of statehood and thus use such as a pretext for intervening in or controlling such states.

According to Brinkerhoff, failed states are characterized by three main factors: one is that there is breakdown of law and order due to state institutions losing their monopoly on the legitimate use of force.<sup>52</sup> This renders such institutions incapable of protecting citizens or another scenario where the same institutions are exploited to oppress the very same citizens they should be protecting. The second characteristic is that failed states are unable or struggle to provide basic services like healthcare, education and physical infrastructure including roads, telecommunication facilities as well as facilitate economic activities to the populace. The third characteristic is that at global level, there is absence of a credible entity to represent the state beyond its territorial boundaries.

The concept of state failure gained prominence in the early 1990's in global affairs.<sup>53</sup> The Somalia situation for example was a key factor in shaping global opinion on the concepts of states and state failure. Somalia had disintegrated to the status of a collapsed state, a situation which can simply be defined as a nation state ceasing to exist. In the immediate post-Cold War period, there was a shift in focus globally in regard to the link between development and the quality of governance. During the Cold War period, non-state actors including global financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank as well as some regional development banks in their interactions with state actors, focused solely on development assistance with little regard for the quality of governance. Their (financial institutions') charters prohibited them from engaging in activities that could be considered political which would be contrary to 'their purported neutrality'.<sup>54</sup>

That situation changed towards the end of the 1990's when those institutions and other development agencies expanded their focus to state institutions and started emphasizing on governance issues as a key link towards development. More attention was accorded to states

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<sup>52</sup> Brinkerhoff, Derick W. 2005. *Rebuilding Governance in Failed States and Post-Conflict Societies: Core Concepts and Cross-Cutting Themes*. Public Administration and Development, Vol. 25, pp. 3-14.

<sup>53</sup> Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.

<sup>54</sup> Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.

emerging from conflicts as well as other states considered weak or stressed-out. Issues such as corruption, transparency and accountability, military expenditure among others in the utilization of funds meant for development funds. The focus on fragile states was further raised by global events/happenings such as the civil war in the former Yugoslavia in the mid 1990's. In 2002, the World Bank established a Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit and unveiled a Low Income Countries Under Stress Office (LICUS) to address the issue of fragile states.<sup>55</sup>

By the year 2006, there was a major shift in how defence, development and diplomatic agencies for example, viewed the world and reshaped their policies on development aid for example, by insisting on strengthening of institutions capable of managing economic policies and processes. For instance, defence establishments in the Western (developed) world began to view the absence of institutions capable of guaranteeing order within countries as a top military threat than even the traditional threats of inter-state war based on military capabilities/technologies.<sup>56</sup>

In the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period, state weakness has been described and conceptualized using various terms. These include collapsed states, failed states, fragile states, failing states, weak states as well as others like troubled states and states at risk as preferred by NGO's and other aid agencies. Rotberg for instance refers to collapsed states as those where there is total absence of authority.<sup>57</sup> Citing the cases of Somalia, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Sierra Leone in the 1990's, He points out that when states collapse, anarchy and disorder prevails, sub-state actors assume control of certain regions and establish their own local security apparatuses through which they seek to regulate trade and other activities. Within such collapsed states, anarchy and illegal trade such as drug trafficking and gun running take root, which fuel or serve the interests of terrorist networks. Call describes state collapse as a complete collapse of a nation state, a situation whereby a state lacks the ability to provide the services as expected of it and such get to be provided for by non-state/sub-state actors; citing the examples of Somalia between 1995 and 2005 where even its Passports were no longer recognized internationally and Afghanistan from 1992-1995.

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<sup>55</sup> Mardirosian, Raffi C. 2010. *Infrastructure Development in the Shadow of Conflict: Aligning Incentives and Attracting Investment*. Stanford. Collaboratory for Research on Global Projects, Working Paper No. 57.

<sup>56</sup>Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.

<sup>57</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25:3, pp. 85-96.

Concerning the various categorizations of state weakness such as collapsed states, failed states, failing states and weak states among others, Patrick notes that state capacity is gauged by varied factors but the most important are in regard to a state's ability and willingness in provision of the political goods which cover the four critical areas of governance.<sup>58</sup> These include physical security, economic management, legitimate political institutions and social welfare. He lays emphasis on state weakness being not only an issue of capacity but also of will.

From these statements, the key issues that emerge are 'ability' and 'willingness' of a state as distinguishing factors of whether a state functions as a weak, failing or failed or even collapsed state. For example, by gauging a weak state's capacity and will, four categories of weak states emerge and these are: those that can be considered as relatively good performers, those that are inherently weak but willing, those states that possess the means (capacity) but lack the will and finally states that do not have either the will or the way (ability/capacity) to meet the basic functions of statehood.<sup>59</sup> Patrick notes that most countries have shortcomings in one or several of the four critical areas of governance cited earlier hence the dissimilarities of weak states which explains the various categorizations such as collapsed states, failed states, weak states among others.

## **2.2. Conceptualizing Terrorism**

The term terrorism has different meanings for different people or groups. There is even a saying that one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter.<sup>60</sup> For example, transnational terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS claim their terrorism motivations and acts are inspired by their quest to defend the Islamic faith from what they consider non-believers. Even Nelson Mandela and Kenya's pre-independence guerilla group, *Mau Mau*, were variously labeled as terrorists by the British and Apartheid regimes respectively, though their supporters held them as freedom fighters in their quests for independence.

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<sup>58</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>60</sup> Ganor, Boaz. 2002. *Defining Terrorism: Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter?* Police Practice and Research, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp.287-304.

Getting a proper or universally agreeable definition of terrorism remains a challenge. Despite it not being a new phenomenon, there is still no universally accepted legal definition of terrorism.<sup>61</sup> There are over one hundred academic and other official definitions of terrorism<sup>62</sup>. In the various definitions, terms such as ‘violence’, ‘terror’, ‘inflicting fear’, ‘pursuit or furtherance of political goals’ among others feature. Even the UN lacks a universal and legally accepted definition of terrorism.<sup>63</sup> One major challenge in properly defining terrorism is due to its ability to evolve<sup>64</sup>, such that for example at one point in time, it is driven by religious extremism, at another it is driven by nationalistic movements among other motivations. For instance, Israel considers the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hamas and Fatah as terrorist groups, while such movements consider themselves as freedom fighters/defenders/are pursuing political objectives in realization of an independent Palestine State.

Schmid observes that even what constitutes acts of terrorism varies from the person or institution using the term ‘terrorism’ and such is subject to change over the course of time.<sup>65</sup> For instance he cites Nelson Mandela and Yasser Arafat, leaders of the anti-apartheid and pro-Palestine liberation movements respectively who at one time were in the United States’ list of most wanted terrorists. Ironically, in later years, the two were at different times awarded the Nobel peace prize. Springer asserts that such is proof of how the issue of terrorism is such a highly political and controversial issue.

Despite the lack of a universally accepted definition of terrorism, various scholars, publications and other entities have conceptualized it variedly. The Institute of Economics and Peace defines

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<sup>61</sup> Golder, Ben. Williams, George. 2004. *What is ‘Terrorism’? Problems of Legal Definition*. UNSW Law Journal, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 270-295.

<sup>62</sup> Schmid, Alex. 2004. *Terrorism – The Definitional Problem*. Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law. Vol. 36, Issue 2, pp. 375-419.

<sup>63</sup> Setty, Sudha. 2011. *What’s in a Name? How Nations Define Terrorism Ten Years After 9/11*. University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 1-63.

<sup>64</sup> Buros, Randi L. 2011. *Realism vs. Liberalism in the Development of Counterterrorism Strategy*. Small Wars Journal. - <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/realism-vs-liberalism-in-the-development-of-counterterrorism-strategy> - Accessed on March, 6 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Schmid, Alex. 2004. *Terrorism – The Definitional Problem*. Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law. Vol. 36, Issue 2, pp. 375-419.

it as ‘an intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor’<sup>66</sup>. Mechling notes that such non-state actors, who include transnational terrorist groups, are not representative of any state and defend no territory.<sup>67</sup> The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as “the use of serious violence against persons or property, or threat to use such violence, to intimidate or coerce a government, the public or any section of the public, in order to promote political, social or ideological objectives”.<sup>68</sup>

According to the US Department of State, terrorism is “politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.<sup>69</sup> To other scholars such as Enders and Sandler, terrorism refers to “the premeditated use or threat of use of extra-normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly involved with the policy making that the terrorists seek to influence”.<sup>70</sup>

Terrorist organizations are driven by various motivations; some project themselves either as or a combination of national liberation movements, others as defenders of religious, economic, social or as fighting against imperialist oppression.<sup>71</sup> The commonly known international terrorist groups such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab and Boko Haram are mainly driven by religious extremism and seek to project themselves as the true defenders of Islam. One of their key objective seems to be to establish Islamic caliphates in regions they are dominant in and extend the same to other regions. Al Qaeda and ISIS for example seem to share a common goal in their collective ideology that views the US as a domineering imperialist power that should be

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<sup>66</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2016. <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf> - Accessed on March 8, 2017.

<sup>67</sup>Mechling, Andrew David. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

<sup>68</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI): Terrorism Report (2002-2005) - [https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/stats-services-publications-terrorism-2002-2005-terror02\\_05.pdf/view](https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/stats-services-publications-terrorism-2002-2005-terror02_05.pdf/view) - Accessed on April 10, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> United States Department of State. 2016. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*. - <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257738.pdf> - Accessed on April 10, 2017.

<sup>70</sup>Lizardo, Omar. 2008. *Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach*. Journal of World-Systems Research, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 91-118.

<sup>71</sup>Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. eds. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

vanquished by all means. Hence, their terror plots and attacks against it as well as its global allies. For example, the 9/11 attacks in the US, 1998 US Embassies' bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen in October 2000.

Unlike other conventional wars, such as a military war which is dictated by terms of engagements and established tactics, terrorism's nature is different and is regarded as mainly a psychological warfare. Chaliand and Blin note that terrorism's main target is the mind hence making it the most violent form of psychological warfare.<sup>72</sup> It is mainly aimed at creating fear among its targets be they governments, civilians or other entities<sup>73</sup>. Terrorism is mainly founded on the use of violence, sowing fear in a target population and pursuit of political objectives. In modern times, the weak opt to use terrorism as their preferred weapon against the strong unlike in the past whereby guerilla warfare was the more common strategy adopted. Hence, sub-national groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS prefer to engage in terror activities against military, economic and political powers such as the US and France rather than engage them in direct military confrontation which they are certain never to win.

Terrorism is essentially not a new phenomenon since according to Ganor, it has for over a long period in human history been used as a method of violent action by both individuals and organizations seeking to achieve political goals.<sup>74</sup> Tracing the history of terrorism goes back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century during the time of Jewish Zealots where terror was spread or carried out against the Roman occupying forces in the name of religion.<sup>75</sup> Other historical aspects of terrorism include that of the Assassins in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century targeting high ranking state representatives of the Muslim Caliphate as well as in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century where representatives of the Tsarist regime were targeted during Russian anarchist attacks.<sup>76</sup> The origins of the term 'terrorism' can

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<sup>72</sup>Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

<sup>73</sup> United States Department of State. 2016. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*. - <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257738.pdf> - Accessed on April 10, 2017.

<sup>74</sup>Ganor, Boaz. 2009. *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, in Shapira et al. (eds.), *Essentials of Terror Medicine*, Journal of Trauma-Injury Infection & Critical Care. Vol. 67, Issue 6, pp. 1448.

<sup>75</sup>Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

<sup>76</sup>Lizardo, Omar. 2008. *Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach*. Journal of World-Systems Research, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 91-118.

be traced back to the period immediately after the French Revolution of 1789 which was characterized by the French state's persecution of civilians.

Unlike conventional warfare, terrorism does not subscribe to the state-centric Westphalian system of rules and conventions. Terrorist organizations are thus viewed as outlaws since they do not have the legitimacy of warfare as an accepted form of violent exchange by state actors in the international system.<sup>77</sup> States are regarded as the primary actors as per the state-centric international system. As such, this makes states to enjoy the legitimacy of engaging in war and can justify it for example if acting in its interests to repress or crush an insurgency or rebellion within its territory. State actors are guided by centuries old rules and conventions regarding war. Non-state actors such as terrorist groups on the other hand do not subscribe to such rules and conventions and hence their indiscriminate attacks or threats of violence against non-combatants.

In explaining what constitutes modern terrorism, Lizardo states that it is a form of violent interaction carried out by a non-state actor/actors who is/are not recognized or do not enjoy the legitimate use of the monopoly of violence.<sup>78</sup> Such violence, which does not adhere to the laid down conventions and other international laws governing military engagement, is aimed against the representatives of a formally recognized state actor in the international system, he adds. Terrorists choose civilians as targets of attack since they serve as representatives of nation-states. Additionally, their targets of attack must not necessarily be civilians, other symbolic objects such as strategic buildings or key resources such as dams, power stations, airports can also fit that role. For example, the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, viewed as symbols of US military and economic might, attacks on embassies, regarded as diplomatic manifestations of the might of the US in host countries.

The changing nature of international terrorism towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be linked to the accelerated integration among the various actors in the international system owing to rapid developments and advancements in transport, communications and

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<sup>77</sup> Lizardo, Omar. 2008. *Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach*. Journal of World-Systems Research, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 91-118.

<sup>78</sup> Lizardo, Omar. 2008. *Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach*. Journal of World-Systems Research, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 91-118.



technology.<sup>79</sup> For instance, advancement and spread of information and communication technology has enabled terrorist groups such as ISIS to aggressively utilize the internet in seeking, attracting and radicalizing thousands of potential recruits from various parts of the world irrespective of factors such as nationality or economic status among others.

ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and AShabaab for example have been effective in taking advantage of the internet to post videos and images of their activities or threats of terror to further their goals, enabling them reach a bigger audience than would have been the case if such advances in technology were absent or out of reach to them. Advancements in sophisticated technology have also increased the availability and access to weapons for terror groups. Cronin observes that the current nature of transnational terrorism is not only a reaction to globalization, but is also facilitated by it.<sup>80</sup>

### **2.3. The inter-linkage between Failed States and International Terrorism**

Just like organized criminal groups, terrorists are more likely to prefer operating in an environment (in this case a state) characterized by factors such as lawlessness, widespread corruption within governance institutions, porous borders and weak law enforcement mechanisms/authorities.<sup>81</sup> In essence, a state that is incapable of securing its borders, has lost or has no authority over parts of its territory thus leaving such areas to be controlled by warlords for example, and is incapable of catering for the basic needs of its population among other basic requirements of a modern sovereign state can serve as an attractive option for terrorist organizations to infiltrate and operate from.

The focus on failed states as possible safe havens for terrorist organizations in the post 9/11 world is that the main threat to stability in the international system seems to have changed from the previous obsession with strong and aggressive states waging war on other states to expand

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<sup>79</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Cronin, Audrey K. 2003. *Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism*. International Security, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 30–58

<sup>81</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?* The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

their influence as was the case for example with Germany under Hitler, the expansionist aims of the Soviet Union, Japan's imperialistic endeavours among others particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The traditional concept of security was more inclined towards inter-state violence but with the threat posed by terrorist organizations to intra-state security and by extension global order, failed states have become a major area of focus in international peace and security given that states characterized by non-existent or weak governance systems are at greater risk of hosting transnational terrorist groups.<sup>82</sup> For example, Patrick notes that, "In the 1990s, few anticipated that remote, poor and war-ravaged Afghanistan would be the launching pad for the most devastating attack on the United States in the nation's history"<sup>83</sup>.

Global events in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period have seen the scope of international intervention expanded to prioritize issues of national and global security alongside the traditional development and humanitarian objectives.<sup>84</sup> For example, in the years before the US was hit by its most devastating terrorist attacks on 9/11, its policymakers regarded weak states as of little strategic significance and only considered them in humanitarian aspects. However, that perception changed after Al Qaeda's activities in Afghanistan, a state the policymakers erstwhile regarded as among those with sovereignty deficits.<sup>85</sup> For instance, Rice noted that "nations incapable of exercising responsible sovereignty have a spillover effect in the form of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and other dangers".<sup>86</sup>

A modern sovereign state is expected to provide political goods to its population. Howard notes that by failing or struggling to deliver such goods, a failed state essentially threatens the survival of its citizens and as such they may opt to seek the political and economic resources by means of political violence which makes them susceptible to being influenced by transnational terrorist

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<sup>82</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>83</sup>Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>84</sup>Brinkerhoff, Derick W. 2005. *Rebuilding Governance in Failed States and Post-Conflict Societies: Core Concepts and Cross-Cutting Themes*. Public Administration and Development, Vol 25, pp. 3-14.

<sup>85</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>86</sup> Rice, Condoleezza. 2006. Transformational Diplomacy. Georgetown University <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm> - Accessed on February 22, 2017.

groups.<sup>87</sup>He asserts that failed states serve as potential breeding grounds for terrorists who eventually end up extending their radical ideologies and threats of terror across the world.

Brinkherhoff points out that failing and failed states can serve as safe havens for terrorist organizations, from where they carry out and plan their operations with the intention of endangering lives of people in other countries. State failure has been regarded as a contributor to the prevalence of war and conflict. Such has made it gain more attention particularly in the aspect of the global war on terrorism. This may probably have informed Bush's sentiments in the immediate post-9/11 period that the US was facing a bigger threat from failing states compared to the erstwhile threats posed by aggressive/conquering states.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, in 2004 in New York in an address to the Council on Foreign Relations, Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, emphasized that international security could only be as strong as the weak links, referring to the security situation in some failed states and the danger they posed to others.<sup>89</sup>

Campos and Gassebner talks of international terrorism as constituting acts of terror which involve either citizens of more than one country or in territory across more than one country or a combination of both.<sup>90</sup> The two scholars assert that political instability at state level serves as a key contributor to international terrorism. They justify their assertions by noting that since terrorism requires skills particularly military and organizational, such skills are mostly perfected in states that have undergone or are experiencing certain forms of political instability such as civil wars, guerilla warfare, armed revolutions among other anarchic situations. Such forms of domestic political instability create favourable conditions for gaining military, tactical and organizational skills necessary for conducting terror operations/activities.

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<sup>87</sup>Howard, Tiffany. 2010. *Failed States and the Spread of Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism. Vol. 33:11, pp. 960-988.

<sup>88</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>89</sup> United Nations: Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. - [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/historical/hlp\\_more\\_secure\\_world.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/historical/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf) - Accessed on April 28, 2017.

<sup>90</sup>Campos, Nauro F. Gassebner, Martin. 2009.*International terrorism, political instability and the escalation effect*. IZA Discussion Papers, Working Paper No. 4061.

Drawing from the scholars' analysis of the interrelationship between domestic political instability and international terrorism, the cases of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Somalia can be better explained. For example, the internal political turmoil in those states had a major bearing on the terrorist groups which either sprang from or thrived or established themselves within them. Thousands of the fighters, whether from those states or foreign nationals, who took part in those wars/conflicts acquired military, tactical and other organizational skills that later enabled them transform into the terror groups they eventually became.

For instance, Al Qaeda's growth can be traced to the guerilla warfare and jihadist wars waged by Afghans and other Arab fighters against the occupying Soviet Forces in the 1980's. Under the leadership of Saudi-born Osama bin Laden, the core of the jihadist fighters who referred to themselves as *Mujahedeen* formed Al Qaeda. The subsequent civil war in the 1990's after the Soviets withdrawal that pitted the various ethnic groups like the Pashtuns, Tajiks and Uzbeks for political control/dominance, the rise to power of The Taliban and later the Northern Alliance under the leadership of Hamid Karzai as well as US military activities in the country after 9/11 among other events all served to keep Afghanistan a perennial war zone. That state of affairs created the perfect conditions for Al Qaeda to thrive within it and plan its terror activities against Western interests from there.

Syria's long protracted civil war as well as Iraq's disintegration as a functioning state, the sectarian divisions and violence pitting Shiite and Sunni Islamic sects have served to enable the growth of ISIS terrorists who continue to wage their campaign of terror in the Middle East, Europe and the Islamic Maghreb, particularly in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. Somalia's instability since the early 1990's, clan based divisions, warlordism and elements of radical Islam among other factors all conspired to keep the country a lawless state to date. Such conditions enabled the growth of Al Shabaab, whose founder members were battle hardened fighters who had fought in jihadist wars in the Middle East particularly in Afghanistan. Somalia and Sudan also served as a base for Al Qaeda operatives who used it to plan the attack on the US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania respectively in 1998.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Shinn, David H. 2007. *Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn*. The Journal of Conflict Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 47-75.

Campos and Gassebner postulate that what makes failed states serve as enablers of terrorism is due to their weak status and hence their inability to deal with terrorism is due to their weakness as functional states.<sup>92</sup> According to Rotberg, when a nation-state becomes unable to deliver the political goods to its population, such a state has failed.<sup>93</sup> In such a situation, the government loses legitimacy and by extension, the nation-state itself also becomes illegitimate as per its citizens perceptions of it. He notes that in the war against transnational terrorism, understanding the underlying forces of state failure is critical. To him, failed states by their very nature are both attractive to and likely to serve as viable sanctuaries for non-state actors such as terrorists and warlords among others. Hence, this explains the Western world's seeming urgency to strengthen weak nation-states in the developing world especially in the age of the global war against transnational terrorism.

Patrick observes that there is a linkage between poorly performing states in the developing world to global threats including transnational terrorism as well as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and other forms of international crime.<sup>94</sup> He points out that transnational threats stemming from such states pose the biggest danger to global security. Unlike past years, the main threat to international security is no longer posed by great powers that are militarily strong and aggressive, but by the world's most poorly governed states, he asserts.

States that have challenges or are unable to effectively control their territory and secure their borders are more susceptible to infiltration by terrorist groups/elements.<sup>95</sup> The attractiveness of failing and weak states to international terrorist groups is owing to the advantages they offer such as serving as safe havens for them to operate from undetected, accessibility to weapons and other necessary resources like finances and also enable them get potential recruits for indoctrination and training as terrorists. For instance, statistics from US State Department show that failing

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<sup>92</sup>Campos, Nauro F. Gassebner, Martin. 2009.*International terrorism, political instability and the escalation effect*. IZA Discussion Papers, Working Paper No. 4061.

<sup>93</sup>Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*.The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25:3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>94</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

<sup>95</sup>Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

states feature as the safe havens for majority of US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, the data also reveals that most individual terrorists originate from poorly performing authoritarian states undergoing or that have undergone conflict such as Afghanistan, Algeria and Sudan.

Failed or failing states also serve as transit routes or staging grounds for terrorists to infiltrate and/or plan against their targets of attack. For example, Al Qaeda exploited the advantages offered by conflict torn Afghanistan to grow into the international terror outfit it later became. ISIS rapid growth can be credited to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq that have enabled it get thousands of recruits from the two states and elsewhere, the prevailing anarchy in those states facilitating its training, access to weapons, financing and other operations. Similarly, Sudan served as a safe haven for bin Laden and some of his followers in the 1990's and is said to have been used in later years as one of the staging grounds for the bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1998. Al Qaeda operatives also exploited the internal conditions of another failed state, Yemen, to stage its attack on the US warship, USS Cole in October 2000. The ship had docked for refueling at the Port of Aden and the attack claimed 17 sailors on board.

However, some scholars have been critical of the failed states vis-à-vis international terrorism link pointing out that given the evolving nature of international terrorism, transnational terrorist groups only partially rely on such states for their operations. Patrick for example, notes that the contributing factors to radical Islamic terrorism may be more due to alienation of Muslims in Europe, citing the cases of Kosovo and Chechnya and less due to state weaknesses in the Middle East.<sup>97</sup> He adds that international terrorists' safe havens are as likely to be in the suburbs of Western capitals such as Paris, France as the slums of Karachi, Pakistan or the wastelands of the Sahara e.g. in Libya.

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<sup>96</sup> United States Department of State. 2016. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*. - <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257738.pdf> - Accessed on April 10, 2017.

<sup>97</sup>Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?*The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *The Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

Going by this argument, one can relate to the more recent terrorist attacks in various US cities like Boston and Orlando, Paris, London, Brussels and Stockholm attacks among others between 2015 and 2017, mostly blamed on ISIS. Al Qaeda for example has over the years evolved and spread its global network into numerous cells operating in a number of states in both the developed and developing/third world. The 9/11 attackers for example, though majority were of Saudi Arabian nationality, spend a better part of their lives in the US where they trained as pilots as they discreetly planned for the biggest terrorist attack in US history. Mechling observes that whereas terrorist organizations tend to operate from weak states, they do exist and operate from some of the world's most stable states.<sup>98</sup>

It is worth pointing out that though there is an inter-linkage between failed states and terrorism, not all failed states attract, host or have any connection to terrorists/terrorism. Various factors such as religious, cultural, political and geographic are also determinants in the global distribution of international terrorism. Such would explain why for example, why there is more terrorism activity in the predominantly Muslim Middle East states than in a number of central African states such as Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic which fall under the failing states category.

Menkhaus, for instance notes that though collapsed and lawless states such as Somalia can serve as key assets to international terrorists, their importance in transnational terrorist operations may be less than conventional wisdom attests.<sup>99</sup> He notes that as opposed to totally collapsed states, terrorists may prefer more what he terms as 'weak but functioning states' which have contributing factors like susceptibility to corruption and are interconnected to the global economy particularly in the areas of transportation, banking services and ICT among other resources necessary in carrying out their transnational terror operations. Another issue is the tendency to generalize failed states and the threats they pose to international security. Concerning this, Patrick notes that some policymakers/experts fail to make a distinction between the various levels of state failure and the specific threats they are linked to.

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<sup>98</sup>Mechling, Andrew David. 2014. *Failed States: An Examination of their Effects on Transnational Terrorist Organization Movements and Operational Capabilities*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Thesis.

<sup>99</sup>Menkhaus, Ken. 2003. *Quasi-States, Nation-Building, and Terrorist Safe Havens*. The Journal of Conflict Studies, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 7-23.

Other scholars such as Call questions whether the Western world's obsession with failed states and their threat to international security is merely for purposes of deterring the threat they pose to populations and institutions of rich countries rather than a genuine concern towards the inability of failed states in providing for security, welfare and rights of their populations.<sup>100</sup> Thus, he asserts that state failure should be analysed in the post-9/11 context whereby failing states are considered dangerous to Western security interests.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

There seems to be consensus among scholars on state failure being a major threat to international security, particularly in regard to its impact on the growth and spread of international terrorism. Though numerous terminologies are applied by various scholars to describe state failure or its levels, such as 'failed states', 'failing states', 'weak states', 'states in failure' and 'states at risk' among others, their conceptualization of state failure seems to agree on the main characteristics. These include a state lacking the capacity or willingness to function as expected of a modern state with respect to aspects such as failure to secure territory, challenges in exercising the monopoly of violence over other actors that pose a threat to the state, lack of or poor delivery of political goods to the populations and breakdown in law and order among other manifestations of state failure.

Most of the scholars cited in this chapter agree that some states which exhibit the above characteristics have acted or are at risk of serving as attractive sanctuaries for terrorist organizations which prefer operating in such ungoverned spaces. The examples cited such as Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan and the growth/spread of international terrorist groups notably Al Qaeda and ISIS, support this hypothesis. However, not all scholars agree with this perspective and are of the view that some terrorist groups would even prefer operating in stable states where there is supporting infrastructure crucial to their operations such as cash flow, connectivity to information technology and superior weapons. Others view the fixation with failed states in the post-9/11 international system as influenced by the Western world's bias

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<sup>100</sup>Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.



against the underdeveloped world in regard to fears over its (the West) own security interests. There is also the issue of radical Islamic extremism and its impact on international terrorism in the failed states' aspect.

As highlighted in this chapter, there is clearly a link between state failure and its impact on international security. International terrorism, piracy as well as organized criminal aspects such as drug trafficking and human trafficking among other threats to global security thrive better in and across states in/undergoing various stages of failure. The inherent characteristics within such failed/collapsed/failing/weak states provide a conducive environment for international terrorist groups to operate unchallenged as they recruit, train, plan and execute their campaigns of terror across the globe in stable and failed states alike.

**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**A CASE STUDY OF SOMALIA AS AN ARCHETYPAL FAILED STATE AND THE  
SPREAD OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

**3.1. Introduction**

This chapter explores the impact Somalia, widely regarded as one of the foremost failed states in the world, has had in relation to the growth and spread of international terrorism. In seeking to examine the case of Somalia and its place in the spread of international terrorism, the chapter shall include a brief history of Somalia in the context of its pre-colonial/colonial and post-colonial context, the role played by regional and international actors impacting on its domestic affairs, as well as other issues that have shaped the Somalia state's trajectory to its current status. It will also include an analysis on the emergence and entrenchment of terrorism within Somalia especially in relation to the origins and growth of Al Shabaab and activities by Al Qaeda as well the recent attempts by ISIS to expand its network within the Horn of Africa state.

**3.2. Historical Background on Somalia**

Somalia is a country situated on the east coast of Africa, bordering Ethiopia on the West, Kenya on the South West, the Indian Ocean on its east and the Gulf of Aden on its north. It has the longest coastline in Africa and lies at a strategic maritime route connecting the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, key international trade routes linking Europe, the Middle East and the Far East.<sup>101</sup> Somalia's current population (2017) is estimated to be about 11,391,346; of which 85% are the dominant ethnic Somalis and the remaining 15% composed of Bantu communities and Arabs.<sup>102</sup> Somalis are a large ethnic group spread across Somalia, Kenya's north eastern region, Djibouti and Ethiopia. Somalis are further grouped into a number of distinct clans and sub-clans.<sup>103</sup> In Somalia, the clan identity is a major factor shaping its politics. In Somalia, the main religion is Islam and about 99% of the population is Sunni Muslims. Due to its direct link to the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia was a key entry point for the spread of Islam and Arab influence in East

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<sup>101</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>102</sup> World Population Review: Somalia Population 2017 - <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population/> - Accessed on April 24, 2017.

<sup>103</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.

Africa.<sup>104</sup> It is perhaps due to this strategic location that has made the Horn of Africa nation serve as a battlefield between Islam and Christianity<sup>105</sup> as exemplified by its historical disputes with its predominantly Christian neighbours, Ethiopia and Kenya and the post 9/11 global war on terror pitting the US, viewed by the Arab world as representing Christianity, versus Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab, the latter two projecting themselves as fighting for or in defense of Islam. In later years, the Horn of Africa Country's geopolitical factor would make it to be viewed by the West, particularly the US, as a major source of global terrorism.<sup>106</sup> The origin of Islam in Somalia can be traced to the early periods of Prophet Muhammad where a number of Muslim faithful fleeing persecutions sought refuge in the Horn of Africa region after crossing the Red Sea from the Arab world.<sup>107</sup> Historical accounts have it that the Ethiopian emperor offered them protection, a gesture which Prophet Muhammad appreciated and decreed that no Muslims should ever attack the Ethiopian Christian kingdom. The 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed a widespread conversion of Somalis into Islam following the arrival, settling and intermarriage within Somali clans by Arabian Muslim Sufi Sheikhs.<sup>108</sup>

In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the erstwhile peaceful relations between the Ethiopian Christian kingdom and Islamic Somalia changed for the worst during the reign of Ethiopian Emperor Yeshaq. The emperor had labelled Muslims as 'enemies of the Lord' and invaded regions and kingdoms inhabited by Muslims on the Somalis side. The Muslims managed to recover their lands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and pushed further into Ethiopian territory forcing the latter to seek assistance from the Christian Portuguese who had emerged as a dominant force internationally in those centuries. The Muslims in return sought help from their fellow Muslims in the Arab world, particularly from the Ottomans and the ensuing armed conflict thus marked the first religious based conflict

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<sup>104</sup> Terdman, Moshe. 2008. *Somalia at War – Between Radical Islam and Tribal Politics*. Tel Aviv. The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University.

<sup>105</sup> Lyman, Princeton N. *The War on Terrorism in Africa*, Council of Foreign Relations. - [https://www.cfr.org/content/thinktank/Lyman\\_chapter\\_Terrorism.pdf](https://www.cfr.org/content/thinktank/Lyman_chapter_Terrorism.pdf) - Accessed on April 28, 2017.

<sup>106</sup> United States Institute of Peace, Special Report on: *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. - <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr113.pdf> – Accessed on May 3, 2017.

<sup>107</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.

<sup>108</sup> Terdman, Moshe. 2008. *Somalia at War – Between Radical Islam and Tribal Politics*. Tel Aviv. The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University.

in the Horn of Africa featuring the Muslims-Somalis-Arabs on one hand against the Ethiopians-Christians on the other.<sup>109</sup>

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the wave of European colonialism was spreading across Africa and Somalia was no exception. Colonialism plus other political developments featuring Ethiopia and Egypt had varying effects on Somalia. Due to their various strategic interests, Britain, France and Italy carved for themselves regions of Somalia where they extended their sphere of influence. For example, Britain owing to its strategic interests in the Red Sea for its operations in India took control of the northern Somali coast to defend and source supplies for its naval Port in Aden. Italy on the other hand took possession of southern Somalia.<sup>110</sup>

Around that time when the European powers were establishing colonies across Africa, Ethiopia was expanding its regional influence. In addition to Liberia, Ethiopia was the only other African state that never got colonized. In Ethiopia's case, it had fought off and defeated the Italians who had sought to colonize it. Under the leadership of Emperor Menelik II, Ethiopia posed a challenge to the imperialistic motivations in the Horn of Africa by also competing to gain control of territories inhabited by Somalis and which Ethiopia claimed as their own. This marked the origins of the conflict over the Ogaden region contested by both Ethiopia and Somalia.

The events which took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century characterized by Somalis split into British, French and Italian Somaliland as well as the Ogaden region under Ethiopia's control and the Northern Frontier District under British rule in Kenya, were the genesis of the Greater Somalia vision and symbolized in the five pointed star in Somalia's national flag.<sup>111</sup> The five pointed star represents the five territories inhabited by the Somali ethnic group namely: present Somalia (formerly Southern Somalia which was under Italian rule during colonial period), Somaliland (formerly British Somaliland), Djibouti, Kenya's North Eastern region and Ogaden region in Ethiopia. Over the years, this dream of a greater Somalia has led to conflicts such as what was

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<sup>109</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>110</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>111</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.

popularly known as the *shifita war* between Kenyan armed forces and Somali guerilla fighters over the North Eastern region where Somalis are dominant as well as a number of armed confrontations between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogaden region like was the case in 1977 during Siad Barre's reign.<sup>112</sup>

Other events in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw changes in the control over the Ogaden from the Ethiopians to the Somalis and back to the Ethiopians again as a result of strategic decisions and other activities by the various colonial powers. By the mid 1950's with the major global powers emerging victoriously from the World War II which had ended around 1945, there were attempts to reunite all Somalis under one large nation. The plan failed owing to the vested interests of the major powers and the growing rift between the Capitalist West and Communist east. For example, the US succeeded in convincing Britain to return the Ogaden region to Ethiopia in 1948. In return, the US was seeking Ethiopia to offer it a military base within its territory. The Soviets on the other hand had supported the proposal to reinstate Italy's control over the Somali regions including Ogaden due to the growing communist influence in Italian political ideologies.

The colonial legacy left Somalia divided along the north-south regions which had been colonized by the British and Italians respectively but on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960, the two: British Somaliland and the trust territory (the south) united and the Somali Republic was established. However, Somalia faced challenges in integration the north and south owing to the contrasting administrative, educational and legal systems that had been inculcated by the respective colonies in the two regions as well as differing ideologies on governance by populations in the respective sides. These challenges persisted and had a bearing on Somalia's domestic affairs up to the 1990's hence the eventual breakaway of Somaliland as an autonomous region in 1991.

The post-independent Somali Republic political leadership made the unification of all Somali-inhabited regions including Kenya's North Eastern and Ethiopia's Ogaden regions into the envisioned Greater Somalia nation a top priority. This influenced the militant attitudes and

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<sup>112</sup> Ciugu, Michelle W. 2014. *A Clash of Civilisations in Kenya: National Security and the Somali Question*. The Hague, Netherlands. A Masters Research Paper in Development Studies. International Institute of Social Studies.

strategies adopted by the Somali leadership towards Kenya and Ethiopia, hence contributing to the *shifita war* between Somali guerilla elements and Kenyan armed forces from 1963 to 1967 and the 1977 Somalia-Ethiopia war in the Ogaden region.<sup>113</sup> Somalia's vision of a greater Somalia was also reflected in other aspects such as, firstly its constitution of 1961 part of which championed the unification of all Somali-inhabited regions, secondly not specifying the exact number of representatives to the National Assembly in the hope of future inclusion of those from the disputed territories upon unification and finally the choice of a five-pointed star in its national flag, which signified the five regions representing the Somali nation.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1969, a military coup d'état overthrew the civilian government paving the way for the army commander, Major General Muhammad Siad Barre, being installed as President.<sup>114</sup> As is the case with many military regimes, the constitution was suspended, the National Assembly abolished, political parties were banned and top leaders of the former regime detained. In the 1970's, a period in the midst of the Cold War, Barre and his military regime benefited from large amounts of military aid from the Soviet Union.<sup>115</sup> This enabled Somalia expand its military capability to surpass that of Ethiopia by a large margin. Ethiopia in contrast was getting weaker militarily owing to political turmoil brought about by the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie and the rise of separatist factions across the country including the Ogaden region.

The rise to power of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia through the military coup that ousted Selassie led to events which later made the Soviets begin to regard Ethiopia as a genuine Marxist-Leninist state. The Soviets secretly began to extend aid to Ethiopia and the latter reciprocated by closing the US military base. Barre bolstered by the large size of his troops, fighter jets, tanks and other ammunitions decided to invade Ethiopia in 1977 over the Ogaden territory and managed to capture about sixty percent of it within a month since the invasion. Ethiopia mobilized a huge militia force which was integrated into the army and was effective in fighting off the Somalis. A key turning point in the war was a change in strategy by the Soviets

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<sup>113</sup> Ciugu, Michelle W. 2014. *A Clash of Civilisations in Kenya: National Security and the Somali Question*. The Hague, Netherlands. A Masters Research Paper in Development Studies. International Institute of Social Studies.

<sup>114</sup> Holzer, Georg-Sebastian. 2008. *Political Islam in Somalia. A fertile ground for radical Islamic groups?* Geopolitics of the Middle East, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.23-42.

<sup>115</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. 2007. *Governance without Government in Somalia. Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Press. International Security, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 74–106.

who since they were supplying arms and other military aid to both sides in conflict, made attempts to negotiate a ceasefire but after such failed, decided to abandon Somalia. The Soviets increased their military aid to Ethiopia and with the support of other Communist countries, Ethiopia managed to push back the Somali forces and reclaimed all the territories it had lost.

From the early 1980's to early 1990's, Barre's regime faced opposition from rival clans and other opposition movements. Clans which felt deprived under Barre's leadership such as the Hawiye, Isaaq and Majeerteen started to engage militarily in attempts to liberate themselves.<sup>116</sup> However, Barre's reaction to such opposition to his reign was brutal, featuring heavy bombardments by his military against civilians, mass rapes of women and destruction of water wells in a bid to starve the nomadic clans and their livestock.<sup>117</sup> For example, between May and December 1988, Barre's forces are reported to have engaged in savage attacks against the Isaaq clan killing about 4,000 of its men and bayoneting to death about 1,000 women and children. About 50,000 civilians are said to have been killed in the Barre regime's attacks against the Hawiye, Isaaq and Majeerteen clans and as well, thousands more lost their lives due to starvation. The conflicts also led to displacement of hundreds of thousands of Somalis who sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

By the early 1990's, Barre's autocratic regime was increasingly isolated owing to its policies of alienating and viciously attacking clans that opposed his administration. The various opposition groups grew stronger and stronger waging war against the regime's troops and assuming authority over large swathes of the country's territory. By the time Barre's regime fell in 1991 and his subsequent flight into exile, Somalia had descended into anarchy and lawlessness. In the post-Barre period, the resultant clan divisions and animosities, rise of warlordism among other factors continued to perpetuate the state of lawlessness and conflict that plagued Somalia for the better part of the 1990's into the 2000's.<sup>118</sup> The situation was made worse by the rise of radical

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<sup>116</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. 2007. *Governance without Government in Somalia. Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Press. International Security, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 74–106.

<sup>117</sup> Kimani, M. J. eds. 2014. *Insecurity in Somalia: The Spill-over effect to Kenya*. Nairobi. International Peace Support Training Centre. Issue Briefs Series, Issue No. 6. - [http://www.ipstc.org/media/documents/ipstc\\_issue\\_briefs\\_no6.pdf](http://www.ipstc.org/media/documents/ipstc_issue_briefs_no6.pdf)

<sup>118</sup> Silva, Mario. 2010. *Somalia: State Failure, Piracy, and the Challenge to International Law*. Virginia. Virginia Journal of International Law Association. Vol. 50, Issue No. 3, pp. 554-576.

Islam and violent extremism by groups such as the AIAI, UIC and in latter stages the Al Shabaab terrorist group.

### **3.3. The Origin and Growth of Al Shabaab**

The name Al Shabaab loosely translates to ‘the youth’ in Arabic.<sup>119</sup> Prior to May 2008, the group whose full name is Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahideen was hardly known outside Somalia. It was just a relatively small ragtag militia group operating as the UIC’s military wing. One significant event that highlighted its rise to global prominence was the US military attack from its warships stationed in the Indian Ocean on an Al Shabaab compound in central Somalia that killed its leader Aden Hashi Ayrow and other top leaders. The group’s activities had been the subject of interest from US authorities for a while hence leading to it being designated by George W. Bush’s government as a foreign terrorist organization two months prior to the attack.

Al Shabaab’s main objective is to enhance the global Islamic caliphate ambitions, a vision it shares with other global jihadist movements notably ISIS and Al Qaeda. It also aims to overthrow the moderate regime headquartered in Mogadishu, Somalia and rule the country in strict adherence to the radical Salafist-Wahhabi doctrine of Islam. Hence, the May 2008 attack on an Al Shabaab compound and subsequent killing of Ayrow and other leaders of the militant group had the unintended effect of lifting its global stature among other global Salafi-jihadist groups. This was well captured by remarks attributed to one of its top leaders, Mukhtar Roobow Abu-Mansoor, who in an interview with Al Jazeera mocked the US government’s designation of the group as a ‘badge of honour’.<sup>120</sup>

The militant group’s origins can be traced to the erstwhile Somali-Salafi Islamist group, Al-Ittihad Al-Islmaiya (AIAI) which was driven by an irredentist vision of reclaiming all the Somali-inhabited regions particularly the Ogaden region in Ethiopia and Kenya’s Northern Frontier District to fulfill the dream/desire of a greater Somalia.<sup>121</sup> The Al-Ittihad Al-Islmaiya

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<sup>119</sup>Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>120</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>121</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.



(AIAI) represented the radical wing of the Islamic Awakening Movement (IAM) of Somalia which was a non-Sufi Islamic movement that gained prominence in the immediate post-independent Somalia in early 1960's.<sup>122</sup> Just like other jihadist groups, Salafis subscribe to or seek the use of violence in establishing Islamic States/caliphates. AIAI was thus the foremost salafi-jihadist organization in Somalia.

There are conflicting accounts concerning when al Shabaab was formally established.<sup>123</sup> Some publications cite the late 1990's and others early 2000's, but the widely held view is that it was incorporated as a member of the AIAI in 2003. The defining moment in the evolution of Al Shabaab was during an AIAI alumni conference held in Laasa'aanood town which is situated in northern Somalia, whose agenda included among others, forging a post-9/11 plan for the group. It was at that conference where sharp ideological differences arose between two groups, one by elders led by Sheikh Ali Warsame and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. The other group consisted of relatively young men in their late twenties to early forties who included Ayrow and Ahmed Abdi Godane. The latter group consisted battle-hardened militants who had trained and fought in Afghanistan.

The elders' group through Warsame reportedly pushed for the de-militarization of the salafi-jihadist movement by transforming into a non-armed, unified political front in accordance to the prevailing global realities. However, the group led by Ayrow and Godane sharply opposed the proposition which they viewed as a submission to 'the US and its Christian infidels'.<sup>124</sup> They stormed out of the conference and in the subsequent days established the Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahideen. Aweys is said to have been hesitant on the elders proposal but sided with them owing to his kinship relations to Warsame (who was his brother-in-law). The militant faction viewed the elders call as a betrayal for the cause of jihad particularly in regard to the Ogaden region, Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia.

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<sup>122</sup> Elmi, Afyare A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration. Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London & New York. Pluto Press.

<sup>123</sup> Ackerman, Daniel G. 2014. *The Rise of Radical Islamic Terrorism in Africa: State Collapse vs. State Dysfunction*. University of the Witwatersrand. Masters in International Relations Research Project.

<sup>124</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>.

They thus launched Al-Shabaab to continue their salafi-jihadist ambitions and appointed Ayrow as their leader (Amir). Ayrow was relatively young, in his late 20's and together with Godane, Mukhtar Roobow, Abdullahi Ma'alin Abu Uteyba and Ibrahim Haji Jama Mi'ad among others who were installed into the militant group's top leadership. Just like the IAM and AIAI, Al Shabaab's main ideological objective was the irredentist vision. It aimed to repossess all Muslim territories from Ethiopia as well as establish an Islamic caliphate in regions inhabited by Somalis in East Africa.

Unlike other militant and other clan based groups that dominated Somalia before Al Shabaab's rise to prominence, the terror group managed to circumvent the sensitive clan factor in Somali politics. It did so by exploiting the Somali people's collective quest for unity and another key factor that played to its advantage was that its founder members and top leadership was drawn from the various clans. Most of its operatives were young men who were not encumbered by clan loyalties per se and seemed motivated by desire to oust from Somali leadership the older generation that had contributed much to Somalia's disintegration as a state.

Al Shabaab thus exploited the irredentist vision of the Somali population to provoke Ethiopia in the hope of drawing the latter into a military engagement. Ethiopia, with support from the US, fell into this trap by opting for a military invasion of Somalia in 2006 ostensibly to oust the UIC under which Al Shabaab operated as its military wing. The subsequent two-year military engagement between Ethiopia and the UIC/Al Shabaab and other anti-Ethiopian Somali factions effectively enabled Al Shabaab to expand both its military and organizational clout as well as giving the international recognition it craved for.<sup>125</sup> It painted Ethiopia as representing Christians and by invading Somalia, a predominantly Islamic state, the group advanced propaganda that such was an attack on Islam which called for action by all Islamist jihadist groups to unite in defeating the 'infidels' (Ethiopia/non-believers in Islam). The anti-occupation anger by Somalis against the Ethiopians helped Al Shabaab gain many recruits of Somali descent and by playing the global jihad card; the group was able to get hundreds of foreign fighters, mostly of Arab

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<sup>125</sup> Ackerman, Daniel G. 2014. *The Rise of Radical Islamic Terrorism in Africa: State Collapse vs. State Dysfunction*. University of the Witwatersrand. Masters in International Relations Research Project.

origin to fight its cause. Just like then to present day, the militant group continues to effectively utilize the twin issues of global jihad and irredentism to further its cause.

The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia in 2008 saw a wane in influence of the irredentist Islamist movement. Al Shabaab shifted its ideology more towards aiming to become a global jihadist movement. Its key leaders had past links to Al Qaeda and had served in jihadist wars in Afghanistan where they had honed their tactical and military skills. These included Ayro, Godane, Roobow and Turki among others in the group's rank and file. The militant group's founder members and key leaders deftly avoided playing into the entrenched clan politics/divisions that have characterized Somalia's domestic affairs for many decades hence enabling it to grow into a major movement with influence across a large section of the country where it had control.

Its growth is mainly credited to its tactics of creating and perpetuating a permanent state of fear, attracting and utilizing foreign money to acquire weapons and recruits as well as drawing foreign fighters to its rank and file thus giving it its desired image of a global jihadist force. For example, Ali notes that al Shabaab's links with Al Qaeda enabled it to swap fighters and other resources with its territorially closest jihadist sect of Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>126</sup> In its tactical organization and ideology, some of Al Shabaab's activities appear to have been borrowed from the military methods advanced by Abu Bakr Naji, an Al Qaeda affiliated military tactician.<sup>127</sup>

Naji, in his 'The Management of Savagery' book, advises jihadist groups to provoke 'the enemy' to attack Muslim lands and by so doing, the militants engage the invading forces in a sustained warfare aimed at first, overstressing its military resources, secondly, exposing its weaknesses and thirdly, harnessing popular anger from the population against the invaders.<sup>128</sup> The

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<sup>126</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>.

<sup>127</sup> Naji, Abu B. *The Management of Savagery. The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*. Translated into English by: McCants, William. 2006. John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University.

<sup>128</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

combination of these factors leads to creation of an environment of brutal savagery that leaves the population at the mercy of yearning for someone or an entity/group who can manage such a state of savagery. In application of such a strategy, Ali cites the 2006 invasion by Ethiopian troops in Somalia supposedly to oust the UIC from power and rid the region of the terrorist threats posed by the Al Shabaab, as a good example of how such a military strategy works. Somalis irrespective of their deep clan divisions are ever united by their strong animosity towards Ethiopia.

Hence, by invading Somalia in pursuit of the UIC even though the latter did not enjoy universal support among Somalis, the Ethiopians invasion and stay in their country did not go down well among the Somali people hence their support for the UIC/Al Shabaab. Naji's strategy held that the invading force would in the face of incessant urban insurgency get frustrated, weaken and eventually be forced to withdraw. Ethiopia's case was no different in its military forays in Somalia and though it succeeded in ousting the UIC from power and weakening its control across the country, it eventually had to make a tactical retreat by withdrawing its troops in late 2008 after about two-years.

Al Shabaab seems to have tried similar tactics in the events that finally led to Kenya's decision to deploy its troops in Somalia. What started it off were a string of kidnappings of foreign tourists in luxurious tour resorts in various islands in Lamu. The resultant international media coverage on the incidents posed bad news for Kenya's tourism industry which is highly dependent on foreign tourists. The tourism industry being one of the key contributors to the country's GDP, the Kenyan authorities had to take action.<sup>129</sup> In addition, al Shabaab leaders had been peddling rhetoric of their intentions to attack Kenya in furtherance of their global Islamic caliphate vision. Given the group's growing influence within Somalia and the threat it posed to Kenya's internal security, the 2011 military invasion of Somalia<sup>130</sup> in pursuit of the al Shabaab was thus a matter of 'when' and not 'if'. Thus, based on Naji's military strategy for jihadist groups, this explains al Shabaab's incessant terror attacks in the capital, Mogadishu targeting the

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<sup>129</sup>Kimani, M. J. eds. 2014. *Insecurity in Somalia: The Spill-over effect to Kenya*. Nairobi. International Peace Support Training Centre. Issue Briefs Series, Issue No. 6. - [http://www.ipstc.org/media/documents/ipstc\\_issue\\_briefs\\_no6.pdf](http://www.ipstc.org/media/documents/ipstc_issue_briefs_no6.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> Agbiboa, Daniel E. 2014. *The Westgate Terrorist Attack and the Transformation of Al-Shabab: A Global Jihadist Perspective*. David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, The Davies Papers: Africa Series, No. 3.

Somali National Government's top officials and installations as well as military bases/installations belonging to the Somali National Army and AMISOM forces among others, all in the hope of creating a permanent state of savagery.

Other key events that led the militant group gain global prominence included the July 2010 attack in Kampala, Uganda which claimed the lives of 74 people who were watching the FIFA World Cup finals.<sup>131</sup> The motive of the attack was due to Uganda's military involvement within Somalia as part of AMISOM. In December 2015, an Al Shabaab attack against Burundi forces within Somalia killed about 50 soldiers. The September 2013 Westgate Mall terrorist attack<sup>132</sup>, April 2015 attacks in Garissa University and various attacks against soldiers, police and civilians in Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera among others within Kenya were attributed to the group owing to Kenya's decision to get directly involved militarily in Somalia.

Within Somalia, al Shabaab's attacks have not spared foreign militaries and their installations therein such as the El Adde and Kulbuiyow attacks against Kenyan soldiers and numerous attacks in Mogadishu targeting AMISOM forces and Somali government officials. Prior to the Kenyan military's deployment in Somalia, Al Shabaab had grown in strength and influence and controlled a large segment of the country, including key cities/towns such as the strategic Kismayu Port from where it controlled the lucrative charcoal smuggling business. The smuggling trade in charcoal as well as sugar among other commodities, are some of the ways it managed to raise finances to fund its activities.

In 2009, Al Shabaab operatives in Australia were reported to have targeted a military base close to Sydney but their plans were thwarted by security personnel who foiled it.<sup>133</sup> One of the militant group's operatives, who held Danish nationality, was also identified as the attacker of the failed attempt in 2010 to kill the controversial cartoonist, Kurt Westergaard. The latter had angered Muslims across the world following his provocative 2005 caricatures of the Prophet

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<sup>131</sup> Agbiboa, Daniel E. 2014. *Terrorism without Borders: Somalia's Al-Shabaab and the global jihad network*. The Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence. Journal of Terrorism Research, Vol. 5, Issue No. 1, pp. 27-

<sup>132</sup> Agbiboa, Daniel E. 2014. *The Westgate Terrorist Attack and the Transformation of Al-Shabab: A Global Jihadist Perspective*. David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, The Davies Papers: Africa Series, No. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Agbiboa, Daniel E. 2014. *Terrorism without Borders: Somalia's Al-Shabaab and the global jihad network*. The Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence. Journal of Terrorism Research, Vol. 5, Issue No. 1, pp. 27-

Mohammad. The Western world's anxieties about the Somali-based terrorist group are also heightened by reports that an unknown number of Somali nationals who are passport holders of various Western countries such as the US, Canada, France and Britain, are among its recruits/operatives hence pose serious threats to their national security upon return to their adopted countries given the militant ideology and training Al Shabaab has imparted on them. For example, based on a 2010 report by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, a number of American citizens of Somali origin had been recruited by Al Shabaab.<sup>134</sup>The report was backed by the arrests in the State of Minnesota early 2009 of a number of Somali-Americans upon return from Somalia where they had fought alongside other Al Shabaab operatives.

### **3.4. Somalia's Failed State Status and its Impact on International Terrorism**

Based on statistics from the 2016 Global Terrorism Index, Somalia was ranked number seven among states where the impact of terrorism was highest. Iraq topped the list with other states such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen following in that order.<sup>135</sup>A closer look at these states is that they have been involved in some kind of conflict, be it internal or one that has assumed an international dimension. For instance, Afghanistan has been embroiled in conflict since the 1970's to date. Over the course of this long duration, the unending cycle of conflict has enabled the entrenchment of terrorism through the activities of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, drawing in other actors such as the US and Britain and the resultant terror attacks within the Asian country and in those two countries and their allies or states as friendly to Western interests. Iraq and Syria's endemic conflicts have given rise to one of the deadliest terrorist groups in recent times, ISIS. The entrenchment of Al Qaeda within Pakistan and the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria are also good examples in examining how global terrorism has impacted on these states.

For close to three decades, since 1991 to date, Somalia has been widely regarded as the archetypal failed state.<sup>136</sup> The ouster from political power of its last nationally recognized leader,

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<sup>134</sup> *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb* - a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. January 21, 2010. - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html> - Accessed on May 8, 2017.

<sup>135</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2016 - <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf> - Accessed on March 8, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> United States Institute of Peace, Special Report on: *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. - <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr113.pdf> - Accessed on May 3, 2017.

Siad Barre and his authoritarian military regime thrust the country into a cyclic pattern of violence that has manifested itself in various forms ranging from inter-clan fights, warlordism, radical Islam and the reign of terror by the Al Shabaab militant group. Since 1991, Somalia has had no effective central government with capacity to govern the entire state.<sup>137</sup> Various attempts by the international community and regional actors such as the UN, AU and IGAD to have a national government in place in Somalia have only resulted in a governing entity mainly restricted within Mogadishu hence with little power to exert much control across a significant territory of the entire state.

Brooks' conceptualization of failed states perfectly fits the case of Somalia in the period between 1991 and 2017. To her, a failed state is apolitical entity that is incapable of securing its territory, has no control over the means of legitimate violence, is unable to guarantee peace and stability to its population, fails to guarantee economic growth and struggles to provide social goods to its population.<sup>138</sup> With the absence of an effective central government or recognized governing authority and disintegration of its armed forces, Somalia has since the early 1990's descended into the failed states' status. It has been over this period been characterized by lawlessness and civil disorder, porous borders allowing all manner of regional and international non-state and state actors to meddle in its internal affairs in pursuit or furtherance of their vested interests, economic collapse, humanitarian crises marked by extreme famine, hundreds of thousands of its population internally and externally displaced among other manifestations of state failure.

From the various definitions of failed states, Somalia fits the case.<sup>139</sup> The several definitions of failed states cited earlier in this study summarize them to denote political entities that are incapable of or are unwilling to meet the fundamental requirements expected of a modern sovereign state. A state in the modern world should among other factors primarily have a defined territory, a permanent population and a recognized government or governing authority. Such a

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<sup>137</sup> Bruton, Bronwyn E. 2010. *Somalia A New Approach*. New York. Council on Foreign Relations. Council Special Report No. 52.

<sup>138</sup> Brooks, Rosa E. 2005. *Failed States, or the State as Failure?* The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 1159-1196.

<sup>139</sup> International Crisis Group. 2002. *Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State*. Nairobi and Brussels. International Crisis Group. Africa Report, No. 45. – <https://www.somali-jna.org/downloads/ICG%20Countering%20Terrorism.pdf>

state is also expected to provide the political goods required by its citizens including security from internal and external attacks, education and healthcare provision as well as other basic rights like the freedom of association and expression. From these, Somalia has been deficient in most of these requirements. Firstly, its defined territory is questionable given that entities such as the breakaway regions of Somaliland and Puntland long declared their autonomy from the greater Somalia. There have also been attempts at seeking autonomy of the Jubaland region by the Sheikh Madobe-led movement. Hence, Somalia has been unable to defend its own territory though all the breakaway entities are yet to get the international recognition required.

In regard to population, over two million Somalis have been displaced over the last two decades, 1.5 million of these internally displaced within Somalia and neighbouring states such as Kenya hosting over 300,000 refugees at the Dadaab camp and about 250,000 in Ethiopia.<sup>140</sup> Thirdly, Somalia has had no nationally recognized and effective government or governing authority since 1991. Attempts by regional blocs such as IGAD and AU to have in place a transitional federal government from 2004 to 2012, such regimes have not enjoyed the authority or influence to effectively govern the entire state as would be expected of a government in a modern state.

Concerning the sovereignty aspect, Somalia's internal crisis for the past three decades has drawn in all manner of state and non-state actors to meddle in its domestic affairs. No sovereign state worth its name would countenance foreign armies invading in its territory like was the case in Kenyan and Ethiopian militaries ventures within Somalia at different periods furthering their foreign policy goals. In addition, the various transitional federal governments or the current Somali national government led by Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo, due to their overdependence on external actors for financial, military and other support, have been at the mercy of such external actors who dictate terms or influence their policy decisions regarding governance matters in Somalia. Such signifies an erosion of Somalia's sovereignty and goes against the principle of state sovereignty which advances that within the international system, the state is the dominant authority.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR): Somalia Situation 2017 - <http://www.unhcr.org/591ae0e17.pdf> - Accessed on May 17, 2017.

<sup>141</sup> Silva, Mario. 2010. *Somalia: State Failure, Piracy, and the Challenge to International Law*. Virginia. Virginia Journal of International Law Association. Vol. 50, Issue No. 3, pp. 554-576.



Additionally, A modern sovereign state in the post-Westphalian international system is one with a functioning government or governing authority, has the capability of securing both its internal and external security and delivers the political goods expected of it by its population. Somalia's prolonged anarchy since the early 1990's has eroded both its internal and external security exposing its population to all manner of insecurity. The infiltration and setting up operational bases by international terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda<sup>142</sup>, rise of home-grown terrorism through the emergence and growth of Al Shabaab, clan militia groups and warlordism have over the years manifested themselves within Somalia rendering the country a continual battlefield. In provision of political goods such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, political and basic human rights, such has been extremely wanting. For example, the radical ideals propagated by Al Shabaab denied many Somalis basic human rights such as women's rights to pursue education, men dictated to on how to dress and shave, banning of cinemas/films, secular music and even watching foreign football on TV among other prohibitions that would be considered a violation of people's rights.

In the various conceptualizations of state failure, various terms have been used by scholars to describe the phenomenon particularly in the post-9/11 period. These include: collapsed states, failed states, failing states, states at risk and weak states among others. For example, for scholars such as Rotberg and Call, a state like Somalia belongs to the last category of state failure, that is, collapsed states. Rotberg defines a collapsed state as "a mere geographical expression, a black hole into which a failed polity has fallen"<sup>143</sup> and this aptly captures the Somalia situation in the last two and half decades (1991-2006). Call on the other hand described collapsed states as those whose state apparatus ceases to exist or function, hence the state in no longer capable of delivering all the political goods expected of it.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*. Harmony Project. Combating Terrorism Center at Westpoint. - <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp.../Al-Qaidas-MisAdventures-in-the-Horn-of-Africa.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25:3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>144</sup> Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.

According to data from the GTI 2016, about 50% of all terror related attacks took place in countries mired in internal conflict.<sup>145</sup> The same statistics indicated that about 41% of terrorist attacks occurred in states whose governments were engaged militarily in an internationalized conflict. The numerous terrorist attacks in Kenya by elements linked to the Somalia based Al Shabaab between 2012 and 2016 for example have been linked to the terror group's dispute against the Kenyan state over its military activities within the Horn of Africa country. Similarly, terror attacks within Somalia by the militant group targeting Somali national government officials, key and strategic installations among others can be attributed to the endemic conflict that has plagued the country for close to three decades making it a sanctuary for terrorism to thrive due to factors such as unsecured borders, the state of lawlessness and absence or weak governance institutions.

The prevalent anarchy in Somalia has helped create an enabling environment for terrorist organizations to thrive.<sup>146</sup> Al Shabaab's origins, growth and unchecked reign of terror across a large territory within Somalia would not have been possible or as easy in a modern sovereign state. Of the conditions expected of a modern sovereign state, the most fundamental is its capability to provide security, both internal and securing its external borders, to its population. Hence, with the lack of an effective governance mechanism able to guarantee order, loss of territory to militant groups such as Al Shabaab, AIAI and various warlords/clan militias and challenges or failures in providing the basic goods including education and healthcare, Somalia has effectively been existing or functioning as nothing more but a failed state.

Such levels of state failure have had a direct impact on the growth and spread of international terrorism.<sup>147</sup> Al Qaeda's ventures within Somalia and its use as a transit route for its operatives and weapons is well documented.<sup>148</sup> Somalia was instrumental for Al Qaeda in carrying out the

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<sup>145</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2016 - <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf> - Accessed on March 8, 2017.

<sup>146</sup> Phillips, James. 2002. *Somalia and Al-Qaeda: Implications for the War on Terrorism*. Washington D.C. The Heritage Foundation, Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, Issue No. 1526.

<sup>147</sup> Rice, Susan E. 2003. *The New National Security Strategy: Focus on Failed States*. Washington D.C. The Brookings Institution. Policy Brief No. 116.

<sup>148</sup> Rice, Susan E. 2002. *U.S. Foreign Assistance and Failed States*. Washington D.C. Working Paper for the Brookings Website, Foreign Policy and Governance Studies, The Brookings Institution. - <https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-foreign-assistance-and-failed-states>. - Accessed on May 4, 2017.

bomb attacks on the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.<sup>149</sup> The Al Qaeda operatives who carried out the bombings as well as the 2002 attacks against Israeli interests in Mombasa are said to have used Somalia as their staging ground for recruiting, training and smuggling the weapons.<sup>150</sup> Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, a Comoran national who was the key architect of the 1998 and 2002 attacks against US and Israeli interests, operated mainly from Somalia<sup>151</sup>, slipping in and out of Kenya undetected by the authorities. He was Al Qaeda's pointman in East Africa.

Similarly, Somalia alongside Yemen served as a refuge for hundreds of fighters and other terror elements pushed out from Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the US military activities in the two countries in the post 9/11 global war on terrorism.<sup>152</sup> Some of these terrorists later formed the core of the foreign fighters within Al Shabaab's ranks. Additionally, most of the founder members and top leadership in Al Shabaab were trained militants who had fought in the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq hence equipping them with military, tactical and organizational experience and given the weak central government in Somalia with no authority over a large proportion of the territory, were able to effectively mobilise, recruit, plan and conduct their terrorist activities within Somalia and beyond. With the dire economic and social conditions within the country, thousands of young men with no meaningful economic engagement became easy prey for indoctrination and recruitment into Al Shabaab's terror activities. The influence of foreign money in advancing the terror group's activities served as an inducement for such youths due to lack of other alternatives.

In 2010, a report prepared by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations noted that due to the state weakness prevalent in Somalia, Al Qaeda was discreetly expanding its presence in the

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<sup>149</sup> Mohamed, Mohamed A. 2009. *U.S. Strategic Interest in Somalia: From Cold War Era to War on Terror*. New York. State University at Buffalo, Master of Arts Thesis.

<sup>150</sup> *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb* - a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. January 21, 2010. - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html> - Accessed on May 8, 2017.

<sup>151</sup> Aronson, Samuel L. 2013. *Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics in Approaches to Counterterrorism*. African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies. Vol. 7, pp. 24-34.

<sup>152</sup> *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb* - a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. January 21, 2010. - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html> - Accessed on May 8, 2017.

lawless country.<sup>153</sup>The Al Qaeda cells in Somalia, just like in the case of the others such as in Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan among others, operates semi-autonomously with only peripheral ties to its global leadership. Al Qaeda's influence in Somalia was also reflected in Al Shabaab's adoption or change of strategy to suit that of the former's more lethal tactics.

ISIS has also been seeking to expand its network into Somalia.<sup>154</sup> This has reportedly driven a wedge between Al Shabaab with some favouring the group retain its allegiance with Al Qaeda while another faction prefers an alliance with ISIS. Owing to their long history of alliance and sharing of fighters, training and other logistics, Al Qaeda appears to have the upper hand though the rapid growth of ISIS globally may seem a more attractive option for the Somali based militant group as it continues to crave for more global recognition and influence. The power struggles within Al Shabaab over varying interests or ideologies among its leadership with some preferring pursuit of nationalistic interests for the greater Somalia, others a radical Islamist rule in Somalia and another group whose main goal is to enhance the global jihadists cause for a global Islamic caliphate.

ISIS' desire to enhance its network into Somalia by affiliation with Al Shabaab seems to be motivated by several factors such as the safe haven Somalia's lawlessness provides. Such would facilitate ease of movement for its operatives across the Middle East through the Horn of Africa-Gulf of Aden route. According to Azman and Alkaff, Somalia's strategic territorial location lies along key trade routes to the Red Sea and Suez Canal, a region lucrative for sea piracy.<sup>155</sup> They note that if ISIS exploited piracy along that route it would not only benefit it economically but also strategically. By entrenching itself in Somalia, ISIS would be able to extend itself in East Africa and the rest of Horn of Africa. Somalia's long and unguarded coastline makes it easy for

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<sup>153</sup> Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb - a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. January 21, 2010. - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html> - Accessed May 8, 2017.

<sup>154</sup> Siegle, Joseph. 2017. *ISIS in Africa: Implications from Syria and Iraq*. Washington DC. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. - <http://africacenter.org/spotlight/islamic-state-isis-africa-implications-syria-iraq-boko-haram-aqim-shabaab/> - Accessed on May 18, 2017.

<sup>155</sup> Azman, Nur A.B. and Alkaff, Syed H. 2015. *ISIS in Horn of Africa: An Imminent Alliance with Al-Shabaab?* Singapore. Nanyang Technological University, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. -<https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/icpvtr/co15282-isis-in-horn-of-africa-an-imminent-alliance-with-al-shabaab/>

terror elements to cross over and to the Middle East, particularly conflict zones such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In summary, over the last two and half decades since 1991, Somalia has represented the worst that a state in the modern state is not expected to. The absence of an effective central government has over the years led the Horn of African state into deplorable levels of state weakness characterized by among others, increased levels of internal and external security, dire humanitarian conditions leading to displacement of millions of Somali nationals internally and externally, famine, poor or absence of basic services such as healthcare provision and education facilities/services. The prolonged state of lawlessness has also directly contributed to the entrenchment of terrorism within the Somali state, with international terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda using it as an operational base to train and plan attacks against Western interests such like was the case in the 1998 US Embassies' bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. ISIS is also making inroads into Somalia to extend its network of terror in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. The emergence and growth of the Somalia based Al Shabaab into a lethal terrorist organization coupled with its ties to global terror groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS continues to pose a major threat both in the region and to international security at large. The growth and spread of its bloody campaign of terror is directly linked to the total failure of Somalia as a state in the international system.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**  
**THE IMPACT OF FAILED STATES ON THE GROWTH AND SPREAD OF**  
**INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

**4.1. Introduction**

In seeking to explain the inter-linkage between failed states and the growth/spread of transnational terrorist groups, Takeyh and Gvosdev uses the workings of multinational corporations (MNCs) as an analogy to highlight their similarities.<sup>156</sup> They note that just like MNCs, international terrorist organizations exploit the prevailing global network of economic, communication and transport systems for purposes of managing their ‘subsidiaries’ as well as controlling the movement of finances, human resources (personnel) and other materials from one area to another. In reference to terrorist group’s operations, the ‘subsidiaries’ quoted above mean their numerous cells situated in various countries or locations, the ‘human resources’ referring to the terrorists and ‘materials’ to denote weapons and other arms used in their campaigns of terror. The two hence observe that failed states serve as the ‘corporate headquarters’ of international terrorist groups due to their ideal status of offering them secure and stable sanctuaries from where to establish their factories and training facilities, meaning operational bases. Additionally, Takeyh and Gvosdev note that just like MNCs, transnational terrorist groups are not ideologically and territorially restricted to a specific region in the objectives they pursue but are instead globally inclined.

Drawing from this analogy of the operationalization of MNCs in explaining the failed states vis-à-vis international terrorist groups, various issues emerge. One is that failed states due to their ideal status as ungoverned or ungovernable spaces serve as attractive locations for transnational terrorist groups to establish their operational bases. Due to the inherent conditions in failed states such as widespread poverty, unemployment, absence or poor delivery of basic services like food, education and healthcare, their populations provide a pool of recruits for indoctrination and training into terrorists. The complete absence of or weak law enforcement authorities also enable

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<sup>156</sup>Takeyh, Ray & Gvosdev, Nikolas. 2002. *Do Terrorist Networks Need a Home?* The Washington Quarterly. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Vol. 25, Issue No. 3, pp.97-108.

global terrorist networks to conduct their operations within and out of such states without any interference.

Failed states such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq and Syria for example can from Takeyh and Gvosdev's analogy be described as the subsidiaries of Al Qaeda and ISIS. Al Qaeda's 'home nation' remains Afghanistan but its global network includes among others, Yemen under AQAP, Somalia where Al Shabaab is its affiliate and Nigeria under Boko Haram. ISIS on the other hand other than its strongholds in Iraq and Syria, is very much present in its 'subsidiaries' such as in Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, the Sinai peninsula and Indonesia among others.<sup>157</sup>

This chapter shall contain a critical analysis on the impact failed states have had in regard to the growth and spread of international terrorism. In seeking to understand and demonstrate the impact failed states have had in regard to international terrorism, the analysis shall delve into four key emerging issues which arose from the study. These issues include first, the focus on failed states in the post-9/11 international system whereby aspects such as how the world attention has since the Al Qaeda attacks in the US shifted to regard state weakness or failure as a threat to global security as well as the international response to the manifestation of terrorism in that period.

The second emerging issue is an analysis of Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' in regard to the failed states vis-à-vis international terrorism context.<sup>158</sup> The other issues include an analysis of some of the challenges in as far as dealing with terrorism in the aspect of failed states is concerned and finally on some of the options in responding to the problem of terrorism in the failed states context.

#### **4.2. Focus on Failed States in the post-9/11 International System**

In the post-Cold War period, particularly between early to late 1990's, much of the attention on failed states focussed on the humanitarian and state-building aspect. The conflicts which plagued states such as the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda drew the attention of the major global

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<sup>157</sup> Bunzel, Cole. 2015. *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. Issue No. 19.

<sup>158</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 22-49.

actors given the threat they posed to international order. The 9/11 terrorist attacks within the US led to a shift in focus on a new dimension of threat to international security; that of failed states' link to the growth and spread of international terrorism. The Osama bin Laden-led Al Qaeda terrorist group had emerged from, grew and thrived within a state that fit the definition of a failed state, notably Afghanistan.

The internal conflicts that plagued Afghanistan since the 1970's served to create an environment of anarchy which was instrumental in providing a sanctuary for the terrorist group's operations.<sup>159</sup> The US viewed the 9/11 terrorist attacks as constituting nothing less but acts of war against it and its global allies.<sup>160</sup> The foreign policy adopted by George W. Bush's administration and which continues to be pursued presently, primarily identified failed states as constituting a major threat to global security due to their potential to provide sanctuaries for transnational terrorist groups.

Simons and Tucker define failed states as those states characterised by absence of a centralised governing authority or simply as either ungoverned or ungovernable states.<sup>161</sup> Drawing from this and other definitions of failed states, the focus on failed states has been motivated by desire by major global actors such as the US and its Western European allies to ensure such ungoverned spaces are not exploited by transnational terrorist groups to further their campaigns of terror by establishing their operational bases, recruiting personnel, staging and/ or planning attacks in other states. For instance, the US' National Strategy for Combating Terrorism highlighted the attractiveness of failed states to terrorists owing to the advantages they have in enabling them execute their operations undetected.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> US Homeland Security Committee: A National Strategy to Win the War Against Islamist Terror – Accessed at: <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-National-Strategy-to-Win-the-War.pdf> - Accessed on May 29, 2017.

<sup>160</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Simons, Anna. Tucker, David. 2007. *The Misleading Problem of Failed States: A 'Socio-geography' of Terrorism in the post-9/11 era*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp 387–401.

<sup>162</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.



Prior to 9/11, the major global powers regarded strong and aggressive states as constituting a bigger threat to international security compared to failing or weak states. The threat of inter-state war was the major focus on global order particularly in the post Cold War period. However, Al Qaeda's daring attack within US territory in 2001 was a major turning point. US Foreign Policy before 9/11 seemingly did not recognize the threats failed states posed to global security.<sup>163</sup> Additionally, terrorism was regarded by US authorities as a matter of 'law enforcement' as opposed to being an issue of 'war and peace'.<sup>164</sup> Hence, in the aftermath of the terror attacks, Bush's administration changed its policy on terrorism, which it began to regard as an existential threat to the US.

The war against international terrorism thus became a top priority for the US and influenced its foreign policy of pursuing terrorists anywhere in the world by utilising its military and intelligence machinery as well as counter-terrorism operations with its global allies. The various strategies adopted and aimed at dealing with the activities of transnational terrorists such as the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003) explicitly singled out failed states as providing safe havens to global terrorists. According to some scholars such as Hansen, in the post 9/11 world, the failed state has had a 'rising career'.<sup>165</sup> This is in reference to their (failed states') elevation to the top of security policy agendas in most of the Western world unlike previously when they were regarded merely as a humanitarian problem.

The Western world's focus on failed states in the post 9/11 period can also be highlighted by the European Union's security strategy of 2003. The strategy, among other issues therein, singled out state failure among key threats facing global order; highlighting the relationship between state collapse and threats such as terrorism and organized crime.<sup>166</sup> It cites the cases of

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<sup>163</sup> Piazza, James A. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?* International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, pp. 469–488.

<sup>164</sup> US Homeland Security Committee: A National Strategy to Win the War Against Islamist Terror – Accessed at: <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-National-Strategy-to-Win-the-War.pdf> - Accessed on May 29, 2017.

<sup>165</sup> Hansen, Wibke. 2011. *The Failed State-Organized Crime-Terrorism Nexus*. German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

<sup>166</sup> European Union. 2003. *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*. Accessed at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> - Accessed on June 4, 2017.

Afghanistan and Somalia where state collapse has had devastating security implications not just within those states but across neighbouring states and globally.

By viewing the international system through a Realist perspective which emphasises on state supremacy whereby state superiority is based on military capability, state failure is accorded a dim view. Thus in the post-9/11 world, the capacity of states within the international system to secure their defined territories by use of their military and law enforcement agencies, provide basic goods to their populations among other requirements of a modern nation-state clearly distinguishes strong states from failed ones. One of the characteristics of a modern nation state is its ability to exercise the monopoly of force in securing its borders. Such monopoly guarantees a state the authority over any non-state actors which might threaten or pose a threat to its power. Drawing from this, Piazza notes that failed and failing states fall short in applying the monopoly of force and hence unable to exercise unchallenged authority within their territory.<sup>167</sup>

In contrast, strong states perform better than failed or failing states in as far as securing their internal and external security is concerned. Hence, they are able to deter terrorist groups, other organized criminal entities from operating as freely within their borders like the case with failed states. For example, it is highly unlikely for transnational terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Qaeda to operate for as long and as freely as they have done or continue to in failed states such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan in strong states like the US, Germany, Russia and China.

In the latter states, the effectiveness of the law enforcement agencies in securing their internal security deters such militants from operating as freely as they do in weak states. This explains why such terror groups opt to operate sleeper cells and adopt non-conventional methods in their attacks in such stable states to avoid detection by the authorities like was the case in 9/11. The training of the attackers as pilots and use of airplanes as weapons of attack was a non-conventional method in executing terror in the heart of the US compared to the more conventional methods applied in places such as Kabul (Afghanistan), Mogadishu (Somalia),

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<sup>167</sup> Piazza, James A. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?* International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, pp. 469–488.

Aleppo (Syria) and Mosul (Iraq) where IEDs, vehicle-borne-explosives and frontal assaults by militants using deadly arms is the norm.

However, the focus on failed states in post-9/11 has tended to reflect a Western-world's bias on poorly performing states as posing a threat to global security. For instance, Schoeman observes that in response to Al Qaeda's attacks in the US in 2011, the Bush administration's New National Security Strategy of 2002 explicitly singled out failed states as constituting a serious threat to national security.<sup>168</sup> The Strategy highlighted the link between failed states, terrorism and organized crime.<sup>169</sup>

Other critics consider the West's view on failed states and their potential threat to international security as informed more by the Western world's fears for the security of their own institutions and citizens as opposed to a genuine concern for the security of all peoples anywhere on earth. Call, for example notes that the obsession by the West on failed states in post 9/11 is motivated by their belief that such failing states are dangerous to Western security interests.<sup>170</sup>

In conclusion, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda operatives in the US, failed states have gained global attention owing to the threat they pose to international security. The link between state failure and the fostering of transnational crimes such as terrorism and other manifestations of organized crime has been established. This is owing to the inherent conditions within failed and failing states which enable international terrorism to thrive. These conditions include the absence or presence of weak governments in such states which creates a power vacuum that makes it easy for transnational terrorist organizations to establish operational bases from where they can operate undetected.

In addition, failed states are unable to secure their territories hence easy infiltration and operation within them by such terror elements. The dire conditions in such states such as high levels of unemployment, lack or poor delivery of basic goods such as food, healthcare and education

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<sup>168</sup> Schoeman, A. 2008. *The Dilemma of the Failed State Thesis in post-9/11 World Affairs*. Koers Journal, Vol. 73, pp. 751-770/

<sup>169</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. 2002. – Accessed at: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf> - Accessed on May 5, 2017.

<sup>170</sup> Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507

makes their population deprived hence easy targets for recruitment into terrorism. Failed states despite their political, economic and social struggles still retain their sovereignty status and hence transnational terrorist groups prefer to operate within them well aware that external interference in their activities will or may face opposition from the local population and governing regime owing to violation of sovereignty by any external actor.

Thus, the focus on failed states in the post-9/11 international system has significantly shifted from the post-Cold War period where such states were primarily viewed in the humanitarian aspect. In the early 1990's, states that were in crisis or emerging from such, like Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan among others attracted global attention in terms of refugee crisis and efforts aimed at state building among others. However, since 9/11, their potential threat to international security has necessitated a shift in focus.

#### **4.3. A 'clash of civilizations' in the failed states vis-à-vis international terrorism context**

Huntington, in his 1993 classic, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' explored the next phase of global conflict in the post-Cold War era.<sup>171</sup> He observed that such would be informed by a clash of civilizations among various groups and nation-states. To Huntington, the evolving nature of conflict in the post-Cold War world would be dominated by conflicts between and among various civilizations particularly owing to their cultural and religious identities. He predicted that conflicts among humankind would be influenced by cultural identities such as religion, noting that Islamic extremism would pose the biggest threat to global security. Huntington's hypothesis further postulated that though nation states would remain the most dominant actors in international relations, global conflicts would primarily feature groups representing different civilizations.

His theory is widely regarded as a response to challenge Fukuyama's 'The End of History and the Last Man'. Fukuyama's theory held that the end of the Cold War signified an end to humanity's socio-cultural revolution and that Western liberal democracy would become universal and accepted as the last form of human government.<sup>172</sup> He was of the view that

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<sup>171</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. *The Clash of Civilizations?* Foreign Affairs, Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 22-49

<sup>172</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York. The Free Press.

humanity had reached the end of history in as far as the evolution of conflicts of ideologies such as that between Liberal democracy and communism, and other conflicts driven by Fascism, nation state wars among others.

Drawing from Huntington's hypothesis, the emergence and growth of transnational terrorist groups driven by radical Islamic extremism comes to light. As he predicted, Islamic extremism has emerged as the main threat to global security in the post Cold War period. Islam is generally regarded as a religion of peace. However, the extremist brand propagated by the radical salafi-jihadism doctrine to which ISIS, Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab among other terrorist organizations subscribe to, has been instrumental in fuelling terrorism across the world.<sup>173</sup> Radical Islamists belonging to these terrorist groups among others have over the years claimed their motivations are aimed at defending Islam by targeting what they consider non-believers (infidels). To such extremists, the US, its Western European allies and Israel constitute the major enemies of Islam.

The clash of civilizations can be highlighted by past and current activities by the Western powers in predominantly Islamic regions particularly in the Middle East. For example, the origins and growth of ISIS can be directly linked to the US military activities in Iraq which culminated in the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime. The great power politics at play in Syria which started at the height of the Arab spring pitting the US and its Western allies on one hand in support of the rebels and Russia and Iran on the other hand in support of Assad's regime, created an anarchic situation in the Middle East state which coupled with Iraq's disintegration as a functioning nation-state, provided a conducive environment for the growth of ISIS. The terror group originally served as Al Qaeda branch in Iraq.<sup>174</sup> The anarchic situation in Iraq and Syria, two good examples of failed states, has served to provide ISIS and Al Qaeda terror elements with a conducive environment to thrive by serving as safe havens, operational bases and providing a ready pool of recruits into radical Islamic extremism.

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<sup>173</sup> Wright, Robin et al. 2016. *The Jihadi Threat: ISIS, Al Qaeda and Beyond*. United States Institute of Peace. Wilson Centre.

<sup>174</sup> Bunzel, Cole. 2015. *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. Issue No. 19.

In the early 1990's in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of Soviet Union forces from the country following a prolonged guerrilla war in the 1980's waged by a combination of foreign Arab fighters and Afghan nationals covertly sponsored by the US left in its wake a highly fragmented and conflict-ridden society. The prevailing lawlessness and the readily available presence of thousands of foreign fighters and other Afghans who had been part of the *Mujahedeen* served to aid the origins and growth of Al Qaeda.

The events of the first Gulf War also had a bearing on the clash of civilizations. Triggered by Iraq's decision to militarily invade its oil-rich neighbour, Kuwait, the decision by Saudi Arabian authorities to grant the US-led global coalition of forces the right to use its territory as a base for their operations did not go down well with extremist Islamists. In particular, the Saudi-born Osama bin Laden viewed the presence of Western troops drawn from Christian nations as a serious violation of Islam's holy lands; Saudi Arabia having been the home nation of Prophet Muhammad and being home to Islam's holiest sites: Mecca and Medina.<sup>175</sup> Al Qaeda's propaganda machine thus called on Muslims across the world to rise against the Western 'infidels' led by the US.

Another aspect of the clash of civilizations can be viewed in the global jihadists' dream of establishing a global Islamic caliphate. This appears to be the main objective of the two main global terrorist groups, ISIS and Al Qaeda.<sup>176</sup> Al Shabaab's activities against Kenya and Ethiopia are also motivated by these caliphate-ambitions. They are intended to unify the Muslim lands of Kenya's North Eastern and Ethiopia's Ogaden regions respectively with that of Somalia, including the breakaway regions of Somaliland and Puntland. Similarly, the Northern Nigerian based Boko Haram got recognition from ISIS as its Islamic State West Africa Province which stretches from Northern Nigeria and covers the neighbouring Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The terror group's origins can be traced back to 1992, emerging from its base in Maiduguri in the State of Borno in Northern Nigeria, but gained global infamy from 2011 when it began waging a

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<sup>175</sup> Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. eds. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

<sup>176</sup> Wright, Robin et al. 2016. *The Jihadi Threat: ISIS, Al Qaeda and Beyond*. United States Institute of Peace. Wilson Centre.

bloody campaign of bombings, kidnappings and beheadings mostly targeted at Christians.<sup>177</sup> The election of Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from southern Nigeria, as President also served to bolster the group's crusade against the Nigerian state which it viewed as ruled by a Christian regime, against its jihadist ideology. Boko Haram is driven by an ideology aimed at creating an Islamic state in Nigeria and neighbouring states like Chad and Cameroon governed by sharia law.<sup>178</sup>

Huntington was of the view that the post-Cold War period would be characterised by conflicts pitting various civilizations triggered by their contrasting religious and cultural differences. For instance, he observed that the Western world's endeavour to universalize its democratic values had the effect of being countered by other civilizations such as the Islamic world. This can serve to explain why radical Islamic terrorist groups have succeeded in portraying in particular the US as an imperialistic power, representing Christians and seeking to force its values which they see as anti-Islam, on Muslims against their will.

As Chochua points out, Islamist terrorist groups like Al Qaeda have long considered the US, given its superpower status in world politics as the leader of the Crusaders.<sup>179</sup> By crusaders, it is in reference to the historical church-sanctioned religious wars against Islamic rule in the Holy Land. Chochua thus notes that such Islamist terrorists have managed to create an 'us' versus 'them' perception among their followers in order to depict the US's activities in the Arabian peninsula as a war against Muslims by Christians. Osama and his Al Qaeda group effectively used their propaganda machinery to portray the US military invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively as a war against Islam, thus managing to gain more recruits and finances.

Notably, Al Shabaab while still operating under the UIC, used the same tactics and propaganda in relation to the Ethiopian military invasion of Somalia in 2006. It whipped up the emotions of

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<sup>177</sup> Bintube, Mustapha. 2015. *Boko Haram Phenomenon: Genesis and Development in North Eastern Region Nigeria*. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research. Vol.1, No.1, pp.1-22.

<sup>178</sup> Walker, Andrew. 2012. *What Is Boko Haram?* United States Institute of Peace. Special Report. Washington.

<sup>179</sup> Chochua, David. 2006. *Catastrophic Terrorism – a Clash of Civilizations?* [https://www.gfsis.org/media/activities/thumb1/pub/files/chochua\\_clash\\_of\\_civilizations.pdf](https://www.gfsis.org/media/activities/thumb1/pub/files/chochua_clash_of_civilizations.pdf) - Accessed on June 16, 2017.

Somalis against Ethiopia, the latter which to them represents Christianity and goes against every aspect of their religion, Islam. In Nigeria, Boko Haram has attempted to exploit the North-South, Muslim-Christian divide and resorted to establish an Islamic rule which outlaws any political and social activities that reflect the Western way of life. Activities or issues such as a western-style education system, secular entertainment, voting in elections among others are all forbidden in Boko Haram controlled areas.<sup>180</sup> The terrorist group's ambition is to have Northern Nigeria and neighbouring Chad and Cameroon be ruled in strict accordance with Islamic law.

In the Horn of Africa region, Al Shabaab has sought to establish itself and propagate a jihadist campaign of terror against neighbouring states notably Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi due to their involvement in Somalia affairs.<sup>181</sup> Troops from neighbouring states to Somalia and others in the region such as Uganda and Burundi, under AMISOM, have also suffered from losses to personnel and installations as they seek to defeat the terror group and create an enabling environment for the Federal Government to thrive as a guarantee of lasting peace in Somalia. Al Shabaab's goals, just like its other jihadist-inclined groups like Boko Haram, Al Qaeda and ISIS, is to have Somalia and neighbouring Somali-Muslim dominated regions in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and the breakaway regions of Puntland and Somaliland ruled under strict Islamic law.

In the post-Cold War period, radical Islamic extremism has emerged as one of the major threats facing international security. The growth and spread of transnational terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Qaeda have posed one of the biggest threats to security in the international system. The radical Islamic extremism espoused by these and other terrorist groups to some extent is a by-product of a clash of civilizations. Hence, in the post 9/11 world, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Somalia among other failed states, have served as the main arenas of global conflict driven by a clash of civilizations. In Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria for example, the conflict dimension has largely reflected a clash between radical Islamists on one hand and the US and its Western European allies on the other. While the West views such failed states as breeding

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<sup>180</sup> Bintube, Mustapha. 2015. *Boko Haram Phenomenon: Genesis and Development in North Eastern Region Nigeria*. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research. Vol.1, No.1, pp.1-22.

<sup>181</sup> Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. 2016. *Al-Shabaab as a Transnational Security Treat*. IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP) and Sahar Foundation.



grounds and safe havens for terrorists, the latter regard the former as imperialistic Christians persecuting Muslims.

Islamist jihadists seem motivated by desire to take the world back to centuries past and ruled the world under Islamic laws. They also challenge the Westphalian model of statehood that accords primacy to territorial integrity, sovereignty and respect or adherence to international law.<sup>182</sup>

#### **4.4. Challenges in dealing with terrorism in failed states**

There are various factors which impact on efforts in dealing with terrorism in the context of failed states whether at state level, regional or international aspect. To begin with, drawing from the various definitions and characteristics of failed states, the issue of a state's capacity to exercise effective control over its geographically defined territory is a major challenge. For example, Piazza talks of failed and failing states as being those incapable of applying the monopoly of legitimate force over their territory and hence struggle to secure their defined national boundaries.<sup>183</sup> Rotberg argues that in addition to the inability to exercise power within their geographical territory, failed states also struggle from what he refers as 'administrative incapacity'.<sup>184</sup>

This administrative incapacity manifests itself in the form of such states inability to provide its population with the political goods they require and as is expected of a modern nation state. Such political goods include security, functioning governance institutions such as Judiciary and bureaucracy (Civil Service), education and healthcare provision among others. Howard observes that populations in failed states are deprived of political and economic resources which they need for their survival, a situation which raises the potential of pushing them into seeking for such resources by any means including resorting to political violence.<sup>185</sup> She notes that the

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<sup>182</sup> Newman, Edward. 2009. *Failed States and International Order: Constructing a Post-Westphalian World*. Contemporary Security Policy, Vol.30, No.3, pp.421–443.

<sup>183</sup> Piazza, James A. 2008. *Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?* International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 52, pp. 469–488.

<sup>184</sup> Rotberg, R. I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>185</sup> Howard, Tiffiany. 2010. *Failed States and the Spread of Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 33, No. 11, pp. 960-988.

ramifications of such are that citizens of failed states become vulnerable to manipulation by international terrorist organizations hence posing a danger to global security.

Hence, states that struggle or fail to effectively govern their territories and provide the requisite political goods to their populations may serve as attractive options for international terrorist organizations to infiltrate and operate in. This is because a state that is ineffective in defending its territory makes it easy for its authority to be challenged by non-state actors. Such states are more prone to civil war, prolonged armed struggle between their governments and non-state actors such as guerilla movements, rebel groups or even terrorist organizations due to the prevalent lawlessness brought about by the states' weakness in projecting power over their territory and utilizing the monopoly of force over any other actor.

As per this research study on the inter-linkage between failed states and international terrorism, the situation in states such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria are clearly explained from the above cited issues on state capacity. In these states for example, they have been characterized by absence of a well functioning government capable of securing their territories against any challenge posed by international terrorist groups notably Al Qaeda and ISIS. In Iraq and Syria's situation, the weak central governments therein have been unable to project any form of power in large territories within the states which ISIS controls. In Somalia, the federal government's authority is mainly restricted to its capital, Mogadishu, leaving Al Shabaab to control a significant portion of the state's territory.<sup>186</sup>

Takeyh & Gvosdev note that one main factor which makes failed states attractive to terrorist groups is that they enable acquisition of adequate territory which they are in total control of hence enable them to install their training and communication facilities, arms storage and conduct their training and planning of attacks unhindered.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Bryden, Matt. 2015. *The Decline and Fall of Al-Shabaab? Think Again*. Sahan Pathfinders in Policy and Practice. <https://somalianews.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/bryden-decline-and-fall-of-al-shabaab-22v2015.pdf> - Accessed on June 24, 2017.

<sup>187</sup> Takeyh, Ray & Gvosdev, Nikolas. 2002. *Do Terrorist Networks Need a Home?* The Washington Quarterly. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Vol. 25, Issue No. 3, pp.97-108.

Another challenge is the issue of state sovereignty. Tunkin defines state sovereignty as the supremacy of a State within its defined territory as well as the capacity to independently engage in international relations with other actors.<sup>188</sup> All states in the international system are regarded as equal regardless of their territorial size, population, economic and military strength among other aspects. Hence, since failed states lack the capacity to effectively govern their own territories which would serve to prevent or disrupt activities by terrorists, it would be asking for too much from them to expect them to deal with the manifestation of terrorism within their territory. That leaves the international community or more particularly those states directly affected or endangered by terrorism to take pre-emptive actions against terrorist organizations.

Such actions include direct military actions within states which harbor terrorists, which pose a dilemma due to the competing interests of the sanctity of respecting state sovereignty vis-à-vis a state's right to exercise self-defense against its internal security. For example, the inability of states such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq and Syria to effectively govern themselves and the resultant infiltration or emergence and growth of terrorist groups notably Al Qaeda and its affiliate, Al Shabaab in later years led to direct military actions by states which had been attacked and continued to face the threat of attack by the terrorist organizations. The US military forays in Afghanistan were driven by desire to pursue and defeat Al Qaeda militants as well as dethrone the Taliban which had provided sanctuary to the Osama bin Laden outfit.<sup>189</sup> US Foreign Policy for Afghanistan also sought to have in place a functioning government capable of bringing order to the country long afflicted by internal conflict; hence eliminate the governance vacuum that had aided Al Qaeda and the Taliban's growth and dominance. For instance, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003) outlined that no efforts would be spared in fighting terrorist networks and all their supporters in every corner of the world including in states which provide sanctuary and other form of support to such groups.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Tunkin, G.I. 1970. *Theory of International Law*. Moscow. Harvard University Press.

<sup>189</sup> Shahzad, S.A. 2011. *Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban: Beyond Bin Laden and 9/11*. London. Pluto Press.

<sup>190</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

Ethiopia and Kenya's military invasion within Somalia in 2006 and 2011 respectively was aimed at defeating the Al Shabaab militants whose continued presence and growth within the Horn of Africa state posed a major threat to the security of the two states. The Ethiopian and Kenyan military involvement in Somalia, though seen as aimed at vanquishing the terror element was not favourably viewed by the Federal Government in Somalia as well as other nationalist figures who saw it as a serious breach of their country's sovereignty. In the case of Ethiopia, the centuries old rivalry with Somalia evoked feelings of nationalism among a majority of Somalis, some of whom would willingly support Al Shabaab rather than fathom Ethiopian forces within their territory.<sup>191</sup>

Another factor is the issue of religion whereby the fight against terrorism particularly by the Western powers is viewed by some in the Muslim world as targeting their faith. The terrorist organizations on the other hand have effectively applied their propaganda rhetoric to propagate this view in their favour hence attracting more followers and sympathizers as well as willing recruits and financial support. Al Qaeda, ISIS and Al Shabaab among other radical Islamic terrorist groups have always sought to depict the West as anti-Islam and view their activities against terrorists in places such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Afghanistan as targeting Muslims.

Hence, counter-terrorism activities in those ungoverned spaces are not viewed in terms of as a response to manifestation of terrorism in failed states which are incapable of dealing with terrorism but rather as imperialistic actions by Christian western powers against Muslims in those lands. For example, regional efforts by Kenya and Ethiopia to directly engage Al Shabaab have been countered by propaganda from the terror group that it is Muslims being targeted in Somalia. This has somewhat helped the group's cause in that it enables it get recruits from Kenyan Somalis in North Eastern and Coastal regions.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>192</sup> Botha, Anneli. 2013. *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenyan Youths to Radicalisation and Extremism*. Pretoria. Institute for Security Studies (ISS). ISS Paper, No. 245.

The link between organized crime and terrorism is also another challenge impacting on efforts to deal with terrorism in failed states. For example, in Somalia, prior to its capture by Kenyan forces in 2012, the strategic Port City of Kismayu was a key avenue for Al Shabaab to get financing for its activities from the proceeds of illicit trade in charcoal and sugar. Between 2012 and 2014, it was reported that the group generated an estimated \$83 million every year from proceeds of illegal trade in charcoal exports to Gulf States.<sup>193</sup> The same report also alleged that the terror group was also engaging in sugar smuggling into Kenya, earning it a significant fortune, such as \$12 million in 2015 alone, to finance its activities. Similarly, another report by Journalists claimed that rogue elements within Kenyan military in Somalia were indirectly funding Al Shabaab by collaborating with the group in the illicit trade in charcoal and sugar.<sup>194</sup>

Due to the inherent factors in failed states such as absence of or where present, weak governments, porous borders and widespread lawlessness, it becomes easier for organized criminal networks to operate in and from such ungoverned spaces than would be the case in more stable states. As such, it makes it easy for non-state actors such as terrorist groups, rebel movements and guerrilla forces to get financing for their activities by either directly engaging in organized criminal activities or through informal taxation whereby they benefit from some of the proceeds.

The issue of great power politics that has been at play in some of the failed states that host international terrorist organizations is another factor. In Syria for instance, the power play pitting the US and its allies on one hand and Russia which supports the Assad regime on the other has frustrated efforts by the international community to resolve the conflict that has raged since 2011. What began as a spread of the Arab Spring into Syria through clamour for political change fast metamorphosed into a regional and international crisis that has claimed thousands of deaths and displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

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<sup>193</sup> Fanusie, Y.J. & Entz, Alex. 2017. *Al-Shabaab Financial Assessment*. Centre on Sanctions & Illicit Finance: Terror Finance Briefing Book. Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

<sup>194</sup> Journalists for Justice. 2015. *Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia*. Nairobi. Journalists for Justice, International Commission of Jurists, Kenya Chapter.

ISIS has been the biggest beneficiary of the Syrian conflict; the weakening of the central government and porous borders providing it with a sanctuary to conduct its operations unhindered.<sup>195</sup> The rebels seeking to oust Assad's regime control large territories within the country, a situation which ISIS took full advantage of to extend its influence from Iraq to the Syrian-rebel controlled areas. The US and its Western allies have long supported the rebels and on the other hand, Russia and Iran back Assad's government. The power play particularly between the US and Russia has severally manifested itself at the UN level where the two, being veto-wielding members of the Security Council have frustrated attempts at passing resolutions aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict.<sup>196</sup>

Moreover, failure by the international community to get a lasting solution to the conflict and the continuation of armed conflict by various factions within Syria has served to bolster ISIS's growth and dominance within the Middle East, extending its radicalisation campaign globally and gaining thousands of fighters who carry out its terrorist activities in various parts of the world as it seeks to enhance its caliphate ambitions. ISIS has essentially made both Iraq and Syria its playgrounds.

The structure of the international system is another challenge in that, as per the Realist thinking, states are mainly driven by pursuit of their own interests. As such, in inter-state relations, the degree of strategic value a particular state attaches to another is a key consideration. For example, for many decades, Somalia has not been considered as of much strategic value by the Western world. Hence, its disintegration as a functioning nation state since the early 1990's has never been accorded much focus and meaningful action by the West in as far as seeking a lasting solution to stabilize the conflict-plagued Horn of Africa nation is concerned. In Afghanistan's case, until 9/11, the US was not much concerned with the political, economic and social situation in the country. However, that changed after the Al Qaeda terror attacks within US soil which led to a change in foreign policy with main focus on pursuing Al Qaeda militants within Afghanistan

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<sup>195</sup> Bunzel, Cole. 2015. *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. Issue No. 19.

<sup>196</sup> Adams, Simon. 2015. *Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council*. New York. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Occasional Paper, Series No. 5.

as well as militarily forcing a regime change to oust the Taliban who had given the Osama bin Laden outfit a safe sanctuary to operate freely from.<sup>197</sup>

Additionally, the US versus Russia's power play in Syria is informed by pursuit or defense of their strategic interests within the Middle East and not really concerned with resolving the conflict.<sup>198</sup> Assad is a key ally of Russia and Iran and hence maintenance of the status quo is in both their interests. A regime change in Syria on the other hand if it were to result in having in place a US-friendly/ allied one, would be in the US' best interests and to Russia and Iran's disadvantage. Hence, such power politics can only extend the conflict which favours the continued growth of ISIS and the spread of international terrorism.

The lack of effective military and law enforcement authorities capable of disrupting the operations of terrorist groups within failed states has also enabled the growth and spread of international terrorism.<sup>199</sup> State failure manifests itself through a total breakdown of law and order due to ineffective or weak law enforcement mechanisms. The failed states which have been mainly discussed in this research study notably Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria lack effective military and law enforcement agencies that can deal with the terrorist groups roaming freely within and across their borders. Until recently, Somalia did not even have a national army or a centralized police force and judicial mechanism with the ability to deal with Al Shabaab. That left the terror group with the authority to serve as a law unto itself and dictate the way of living for millions of Somalis.<sup>200</sup> In Iraq, the military and national police force collapsed following the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime with a core number of former military officers

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<sup>197</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?* The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 27–53.

<sup>198</sup> Adams, Simon. 2015. *Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council*. New York. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Occasional Paper, Series No. 5.

<sup>199</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>200</sup> United States Department of State. 2014. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*. Washington D.C. United States Department of State Publication, Bureau of Counterterrorism. - <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/> - Accessed on May 29, 2017.

joining the ranks of ISIS and being key founders of the terror group.<sup>201</sup> For example, ISIS top command includes key members of former Saddam era soldiers.

State failure essentially leads to collapse or weakening of government which manifests itself in various aspects such as poor governance institutions, failure or poor delivery of basic services (political goods), ineffective military and law enforcement agencies hence leading to porous borders which are attractive in enabling terrorist groups among other non-state actors to infiltrate and operate their bases unhindered. Other challenges include the inability or weaknesses by inter-governmental organizations such as the UN and other regional bodies like AU, IGAD, Arab League among others in respective conflict zones to find lasting solutions such as effective state-building that would stabilize such ungoverned spaces and eliminate or reduce the potential for terrorist groups to thrive.

#### **4.5. Options in Responding to the Problem of Terrorism in Failed States**

The twin issues of global terrorism and failed states are not new phenomena in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century but the interrelationship between the two gained prominence in the post-9/11 world. The link between state failure and its impact on the manifestation of international terrorism has seen the international community pursue various options in responding to this issue. As noted by Rotberg, it is vital to understand the factors which are central to state failure in the war against terrorism.<sup>202</sup> Some states have taken it upon themselves and applied preventive and pre-emptive strategies to deter terrorists from attacking them or their allies. For instance, in response to 9/11, the US military action in Afghanistan was a preemptive and preventive strategy. Having established Al Qaeda was behind the attack, the US declared a global war on terrorism and sought to pursue terrorists in all places they sought sanctuary in and operated from. There was a shift in focus among US policy makers in relation to failed states which previously were viewed mainly in the humanitarian aspect to being regarded as posing a major threat to international security.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Bunzel, Cole. 2015. *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. Issue No. 19.

<sup>202</sup> Rotberg, R. I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>203</sup> Schoeman, A. 2008. *The Dilemma of the Failed State Thesis in post-9/11 World Affairs*. *Koers Journal*, Vol. 73, pp. 751-770



Afghanistan served as the main operational base for the Osama bin Laden-led group where it enjoyed the protection of the Taliban regime. The issue of state sovereignty did not get in the way of the US military action to invade a sovereign state. For instance, Tutuianu observes that in regard to Afghanistan prior to 9/11, the issue of state sovereignty was ‘rather fictitious (legal) instead of de facto’.<sup>204</sup> This meant that state sovereignty was more in the legal aspect than in practice in that, having been captive of a Taliban regime that gave protection to and supported an internationally recognized terror group, Al Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 attacks and others such as that on the USS Cole in Yemen and US Embassies’ bombings in East Africa, the US was justified in applying pre-emptive and preventive action by militarily invading Afghanistan to wage war on the terrorists.

Tutuianu additionally notes that in the post 9/11 international system, US actions and the global community’s response in the war against terrorism have demonstrated that sovereignty has become increasingly weak and hence can no longer offer ‘absolute protection’ against rogue states and failed states.<sup>205</sup> He cites the case of Iraq where due to fears that Saddam’s regime was developing WMDs which could eventually be acquired by terrorists as well as pose a major security threat to its key ally, Israel and other strategic allies in the Middle East; the US opted for a preventive war through direct military invasion to force a regime change and seek to find and destroy the WMDs which eventually were established to have been non-existent.

The scholar also attempts to justify the ‘elimination or reduction of sovereignty’ in cases where states intervene in other states’ internal affairs by explaining that in the case of failed states and genocides, it creates the ripple effect of massive displacement of people hence occasioning a refugee crisis which opens up new avenues for terrorists to exploit. This may explain why the international community, in particular the European Union, has increasingly sought to involve itself in effort to solve the Syrian crisis. The conflict has between 2011 and 2017, led to the

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<sup>204</sup> Tutuianu, S. 2013. *Towards Global Justice: Sovereignty in an Interdependent World*. The Hague. Asser Press.

<sup>205</sup> Tutuianu, S. 2013. *Towards Global Justice: Sovereignty in an Interdependent World*. The Hague. Asser Press.

displacement of over 5 million people who have sought refuge mostly in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>206</sup>

In Kenya and Ethiopia's case, the presence of close to one million Somali refugees also poses a major security threat. The Kenyan military operation has among its other objectives sought to not only defeat Al Shabaab, but also stabilize the country hence creating a conducive environment that would lead to repatriation of the refugees back to their home nation. A situation of perpetual conflict in Somalia remains a security nightmare for both Kenya and Ethiopia. Hence, both states can justify their military activities within Somalia aimed at defeating Al Shabaab militants as well as stabilizing the country so that it ceases being a sanctuary for terrorists, the sovereignty of the Horn of Africa nation notwithstanding. As highlighted by the US' National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003) 'states that have sovereign rights also have sovereign responsibilities'.<sup>207</sup>

The UN, through Resolution 1373 of the Security Council also obligates all its members states to cooperate as one strategy of preventing terror attacks through adoption of various strategies including denying terrorists sanctuaries, suppressing terrorism financing as well as putting in place measures to prevent terrorists' movement within their territories.<sup>208</sup> Therefore, in regard to state sovereignty, rogue, failed or weak states can no longer use it as a defense to block efforts by other state actors or a global coalition to directly intervene in pursuing terrorists within their territories or seeking to stabilize such states among other interventions in the global war against terrorism, particularly in the context of failed states.

Failed or weak states are characterized by lack of effective military and law enforcement authorities capable of securing their territory against internal and external threats such as activities by terrorist groups/elements operating within them or across their borders. The US'

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<sup>206</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): Syria Emergency - <http://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html> - Accessed on June 9, 2017.

<sup>207</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>208</sup> United Nations Security Council: Resolution 1373 of 2001. Accessed at:- [http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2012/docs/United%20Nations%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201373%20\(2001\).pdf](http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2012/docs/United%20Nations%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201373%20(2001).pdf) - Accessed on June 11, 2017.

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003) highlighted that some states are incapable of meeting their sovereign requirements such as effectively securing their territories hence making them attractive sanctuaries for terrorist organizations.<sup>209</sup> It noted that this was due to those states' deficiency in their military, intelligence and law enforcement capability which would enable them effectively secure their territories. Hence, some of the options that could apply in responding to the issue of terrorism in such failed states may include enabling them to build/strengthen their capacity in military, intelligence and law enforcement.

In states such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Syria for example, a starting point would be first to stabilize the states by seeking a peaceful resolution to their prolonged conflict; quite a tall order given the complexities of the causes, factors and actors involved in the conflicts. In Somalia for instance, despite the numerous complexities of the conflict that has raged on for close to three decades, there seems to be some headway being made in that there is a more nationally recognized federal national government in place despite its restricted authority and challenge by Al Shabaab<sup>210</sup> and regional efforts by the African Union (AU), through AMISOM as well as the military operation/presence of Kenyan forces seems to have made substantial gains in weakening the influence and control of the terror group across the country.

Therefore, more regional and international support to the federal government, intelligence sharing to aid counter-terrorism efforts, strengthening the military and police capacity through supply of arms and training among other interventions would go a long way in boosting its ability to deal with Al Shabaab and other armed groups/militants which threaten the stability of the Somali nation.

The activities of some global powers in various states have had a major bearing on those states' stability. For example, the US military invasion in Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent fall of Saddam's regime left the country torn right down the middle along the Shiite-Sunni divide

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<sup>209</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter\\_Terrorism\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf) - Accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>210</sup> Ainte, Abdihakim. 2017. *Somalia: Another Paradigm Shift?* Al Jazeera Centre for Studies. Qatar. <http://studies.aljazeera.net> – Accessed on June 5, 2017.

triggering a wave of sectarian violence and plunging the Middle East state into anarchy.<sup>211</sup> The emergence and growth of ISIS is credited to this state of affairs in Iraq, eventually spreading into Syria and other parts of the Muslim world and extending globally into the deadly terrorist group it has evolved into. The power play between Western powers led by the US vis-à-vis Russia, Iran and the Assad regime in Syria has to a large extent contributed to the lawlessness that has plagued the state, making it a playground for radical Islamic terrorism.<sup>212</sup>

In Afghanistan, the Cold War politics that began with the Soviet Union's invasion of the state in the 1970's, the Americans support, arming and training of the Mujahedeen whose guerilla warfare against the Russians eventually forced them out in late 1980's, transformation of the Mujahedeen into Al Qaeda, the coming to power and brutal regime of the Taliban and its support and protection to the bin Laden outfit and the eventual invasion by US forces after 9/11; all signified various stages that made the country the perpetual conflict-ridden state it has been to date.<sup>213</sup> Libya has since 2011, when Muammar Gaddafi's regime fell after sustained warfare waged by rebel forces backed by NATO, remained plagued by internal conflict and created a vacuum allowing terrorism to thrive. France was in the frontline of NATO's military support to the rebels who succeeded in ousting Gaddafi and his government from power.

It is evident that some of the activities by global powers have had a bearing on some of these failed states' stability that in addition to other factors have made them safe havens for terrorist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda. Such global powers among other actors, should go beyond achieving their strategic interests in such states/regions and clean up their mess through meaningful efforts at state building and supporting/strengthening governance institutions to stabilize the states they (directly or indirectly through their military and other foreign policy goals) destabilize, leaving them weak and vulnerable to infiltration and capture by terrorist groups among other non-state actors with varying objectives.

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<sup>211</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. 2006. *Iraq's Sectarian and Ethnic Violence and the Evolving Insurgency*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington DC.

<sup>212</sup> Adams, Simon. 2015. *Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council*. New York. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Occasional Paper, Series No. 5.

<sup>213</sup> Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. eds. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

Other options include disrupting the activities of organized criminal networks hence eliminating or weakening terrorism financing channels. For example, the capture of the strategic Port City of Kismayu in Somalia by Kenyan forces was a major blow to Al Shabaab given that a significant proportion of the terror group's financing of its activities was sourced from proceeds of illegal importation of charcoal as well as smuggling of contraband. Another option includes allowing intergovernmental organizations at global or regional levels such as the UN, AU, Arab League, IGAD among others to have a bigger mandate in their efforts to resolve conflicts at state and regional level without undue influence or frustration from major powers or other states with vested interests in such conflicts or state/regional issues. For instance, in Iraq's case during the period where claims of WMDs abounded, the UN should have been left to verify and handle the matter rather than the US military action which followed and whose effects are being felt to date as manifested by the disintegration of the Middle East country as a functioning nation-state, the devastating sectarian violence and ISIS' campaign of terror within and across its borders.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

In post 9/11, the issue of international terrorism has gained prominence given the threat it poses to global security. About two decades before the Al Qaeda inspired attacks in the US, the world was just recovering from the Cold War period and the effects it had had on international security. Back then and in the period up to 9/11, global order was threatened more by the actions of state actors, in particular strong and aggressive states who given their military capabilities raised the probability of inter-state wars. However, in the post-9/11 period, focus shifted to failed states and the threat they pose to international security. Afghanistan, a failed state by all accounts, had served as the operating base of the Al Qaeda terrorist group where the 9/11 attackers had been indoctrinated and trained for the attack. Earlier attacks such as that of the bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 as well as that of the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000 also linked to the Osama bin Laden-led terror group had all been planned and trained for in states considered as failed states, including Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia.

In the post-Cold period up to 9/11 failed states were regarded more in the humanitarian aspect than constituting a major threat to global security. The events in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia which had shocked the world given the magnitude of the genocides and the resultant

humanitarian crises, as well as other conflicts in Somalia, DRC, Cambodia among other failed states were handled mostly as a humanitarian concern. In the aftermath of 9/11, international attention turned to the link between failed states and terrorism. Such states served as attractive areas for terrorist groups to operate from in recruiting, training and planning their attacks against their targets, particularly Western interests and their allies.

Hence, this analysis endeavoured to undertake a critical study of the impact failed states have on the growth and spread of international terrorism. From the emerging issues in this chapter, there is a clear inter-linkage between failed states and terrorism. Failed states have been accorded more global attention in the post-9/11 period given the activities of international terrorist groups within such states and the manifestation of global terrorism. Al Qaeda and ISIS have emerged from and grew within states that can be regarded as nothing less than failed states. Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, where these two global terrorist groups emanated from, are perfect examples of failed states as characterised by their lack of or weak governments, inability to secure their internal and external security, extreme lawlessness and governance failure hence unable to deliver basic services to their populations. Somalia and Yemen as well as Libya in the post-Gadaffi period are also in the rank of failed states where terrorist groups thrive and spread their campaigns of terror globally. The toxic mix of state failure and radical Islamic extremism has made these failed states to pose a major threat to global security.

From the analysis, some of the challenges in dealing with the issue of terrorism in failed states also emerged and ranged from the issue of state sovereignty, the anarchic nature of the international system, the issue of religion, the link between organized crime and terrorism, great power politics between and among major world powers, the issue of state capacity/capability as well as the inherent factors within failed states such as absence or weak law enforcement mechanisms/authorities among other challenges.

Thus, in the global war against terrorism, spotlight has been turned on failed states given their potential to attract international terrorist groups or other terrorist elements who regard such states as conducive sanctuaries in conducting their activities unhindered. The absence of effective governance authorities or where present, weak ones, as well as other factors such as porous

borders, inability by law enforcement and military to secure such states' internal and external security and the prevalent lawlessness in most failed states make them potential targets for terrorist elements to establish themselves in. Though not all failed states have a link to terrorism, the inherent conditions within them would make it easier for terrorist groups and other organized criminal groups to establish themselves in and operate more freely as compared to strong and functioning nation-states.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The international system has in the 21<sup>st</sup> century been grappling with the phenomenon of global terrorism given the threat it poses to international security. In essence, terrorism is not a new occurrence since it has been prevalent since medieval times. Historical accounts trace its history to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century where Jewish Zealots used it against the Roman occupying forces.<sup>214</sup> What has made terrorism to be a major area of focus towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is in regard to its evolution into a more potent danger to world peace and stability.

The growth and spread of international terrorist groups, in particular, ISIS and Al Qaeda and their increasingly sophisticated, unpredictable and indiscriminate nature of attacks has elevated terrorism into the main threat to international order in this century. Prior to that, global security was threatened more by the military activities of aggressive state actors. For instance, World Wars I and II were primarily a conflict between states. The Cold War era on the other hand was an ideological warfare, as the main protagonists; the USA and Soviet Union sought world dominance by acquiring superior weapons and competing to win to their respective sides as many allies as possible.

In the immediate post-Cold War era, inter-state conflicts were less prevalent but intra-state conflicts increased as exemplified by the cases of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, DRC, Somalia and Cambodia among others. International focus on these conflicts was more concerned with the humanitarian concerns such as the refugee problem. However, the events of 9/11 were a watershed moment as the threat international terrorism posed to global security became a major priority. Global attention shifted to failed states, which had prior been viewed in the lens of humanitarianism and regarded as an anomaly of the Westphalian state-centric system, given the link between them and the growth and spread of international terrorism.

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<sup>214</sup> Chaliand, Gérard and Blin, Arnaud. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.



## 5.1. Findings and Conclusions

This research sought to provide an analytical study of the impact failed states have had on the growth and spread of international terrorism, with Somalia as a case study. In seeking to accomplish this, the study focused on three objectives; first to establish the link between failed states and the growth/spread of international terrorism and secondly to examine the extent to which Somalia's prolonged instability has contributed to the growth and spread of international terrorism. The final objective was to make suggestions on how to respond to the problem of terrorism in the context of failed states.

With respect to the first objective, the study established that there is an interrelationship between failed states and the manifestation of international terrorism. The study found out that failed states serve as sanctuaries for terrorist groups to establish themselves in, as well as recruit and plan their attacks. It established that there are various conceptualizations and definitions of what constitutes failed states, with terms such as failing states, weak states, states at risk among others arising; though all seem to refer to them as political entities which lack the capacity or are unable/unwilling to perform the requirements of a modern nation state.<sup>215</sup> Such states are characterized by weak or absence of governments hence unable to secure their territories, lack control over the means of legitimate violence, inability to guarantee peace and stability to their populations and failure to deliver social goods to the citizens.

Terrorist organizations are thus more likely to prefer operating in and out of such states where anarchy and disorder prevails.<sup>216</sup> Such an environment enables them to carry out their activities without interference from law enforcement authorities. The study established that states that are incapable of securing their borders, lack the authority to govern parts of their territory and are unable to cater for the basic needs of their citizens are more prone to infiltration by terrorist groups. Failed states have a higher potential to produce terrorism due to their weak status as

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<sup>215</sup> Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 25:3, pp. 85–96.

<sup>216</sup> Patrick, Stewart. 2006. *Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?* The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Washington Quarterly. Vol. 29, pp. 27-53.

states and hence, their inability to counter the manifestation of terrorism within their territory is due to their weakness as functional states.<sup>217</sup>

In the post 9/11 world, failed states have posed the biggest threat to global peace unlike before where the potential for inter-state war was higher. Thus the failed states link to international terrorism is a fairly new phenomenon that gained prominence after the Al Qaeda attacks in the US. In the immediate post-Cold War period, failed states were regarded more in relation to humanitarian concerns. Before and during the Cold War period, international security was threatened more by the actions of strong and militarily aggressive states.

By analyzing the origins and growth of the global terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and ISIS as well as their affiliates such as Al Shabaab and Boko Haram, the study established that there is a link between the inherent conditions within the states where such groups can be traced to and the growth of such terrorist groups. In the case of ISIS and Al Qaeda, the state failure in Iraq/Syria and Afghanistan respectively coupled with radical Islamic extremism to a large extent aided their growth into international terrorist organizations. The state of lawlessness due to the decades-long conflict in Somalia was instrumental in aiding Al Shabaab's growth.

Failed states are also attractive to terrorist groups since they serve as viable transit routes or staging grounds. For example, Sudan and Somalia were used by Al Qaeda as staging grounds and transit routes for the terrorists who carried out the bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Al Qaeda's Fazul Mohammed and his accomplices are reported to have used Somalia as a transit/training/staging ground for their attacks on Israeli tourists in Kikambala, North Coast of Mombasa in 2002. Yemen was similarly used to stage the attack on the USS Cole in 2000.

The study revealed that the potential for terrorist groups to emerge from and grow/thrive undetected is less in stable states compared to failed states due to the fact that in the former, they have the capacity to secure their territories from internal and external threats, have functioning

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<sup>217</sup> Campos, Nauro F. Gassebner, Martin. 2009. *International terrorism, political instability and the escalation effect*. IZA Discussion Papers, Working Paper No. 4061.

governments hence law enforcement and other governance institutions are effective and provide the basic social goods to their population such as security, education and health services and a thriving economy. Thus, in states such as Japan, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Sweden and Australia for example, it is difficult for terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda to operate as freely as they do in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan where they control large territories, run training camps and arms/weapons storages.

The study also found out that consensus is lacking among scholars on the concept of failed states. Some scholars were critical of the conceptualization of failed states, noting that the definition of failed states is mostly a reflection of the Western world's bias against the underdeveloped world or simply states that do not fit their criteria of what constitutes a 'functioning state'. Others took a critical view of the whole failed states-terrorism link, observing that the obsession on failed states in post-9/11 was informed more by fears by the developed world of their own security by attempting to blame it on the underdeveloped world yet ignoring their own role in contributing towards the growth/spread of international terrorism.<sup>218</sup> The study also noted that not all failed states contribute to international terrorism, but rather the potential is higher with respect to failed states than stable states.

In regard to the second research objective, it can be concluded from the research study that the long drawn conflict in Somalia, which has left the Horn of Africa nation without an effective government for close to three decades, has contributed towards creating a combination of factors that have aided the growth and spread of international terrorism. These factors include but are not limited to: absence of a nationally recognized and effective government, porous borders, displacement of hundreds of thousands of Somalis within and out of the country, economic stagnation as well as lack of/poor law enforcement authorities among others. The absence of an effective government capable of securing its borders and within its territory enabled the entry into the country of terrorists affiliated to Al Qaeda due to its proximity to the Arabian peninsula. This proximity for instance, made it easy for hundreds of foreign fighters who had been pushed

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<sup>218</sup> Call, Charles T. 2008. *The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'*. Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1491-1507.

out of Iraq and Afghanistan following the US military activities in both states in the global war on terrorism waged after 9/11, to seek refuge in Somalia as well as Yemen.<sup>219</sup>

Al Shabaab's emergence and growth is also directly linked to the state failure in Somalia. Its core founders and leaders were trained by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and fought in jihadist wars in the Middle East before returning to Somalia where they were able to regroup as the militant wing of the UIC before converting into a fully fledged terror group as an affiliate of Osama bin Laden's global organization.<sup>220</sup> The terrorist group controls a significant territory within Somalia where it functions as a quasi-government, imposing informal taxes on various trading activities such as charcoal and sugar smuggling and dictating the population's social conduct such as banning Western-style education and secular entertainment. The terrorist group has within its ranks thousands of foreign fighters, mostly from the Arab world, fighting for what it propagates in its ideology, as a jihadist cause. Its terrorist motivations have been manifested through a number of attacks in Kenya and Uganda as well as against Kenyan and AMISOM troops and those of the Somali Federal Government within Somalia.

Embroiled in internal conflict since 1991, Somalia has been described as the 'archetypal failed state'.<sup>221</sup> Over that period, it has existed without an effective central government that has the capacity to govern the entire state.<sup>222</sup> This state of affairs has made it serve as an attractive sanctuary for terrorist groups seeking to extend their jihadist ideology into the Horn of Africa. Al Qaeda, and lately ISIS, operate cells within Somalia which they use as staging grounds against Western interests in East Africa.<sup>223</sup>

Lastly, in relation to the third research objective, this study sought to make suggestions on how to respond to the problem of terrorism in the context of failed states. One of the findings from the

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<sup>219</sup> *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb* - a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. January 21, 2010. - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html> - Accessed on May 8, 2017.

<sup>220</sup> Ali, Abdirahman. *The Anatomy of al-Shabaab*. - <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34053611/The-Anatomy-of-Al-Shabaab-by-Abdi-Aynte>

<sup>221</sup> United States Institute of Peace, Special Report on: *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. - <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr113.pdf> - Accessed on May 3, 2017.

<sup>222</sup> Bruton, Bronwyn E. 2010. *Somalia A New Approach*. New York. Council on Foreign Relations. Council Special Report No. 52.

<sup>223</sup> *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*. Harmony Project. Combating Terrorism Center at Westpoint. - <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp.../Al-Qaidas-MisAdventures-in-the-Horn-of-Africa.pdf>

study was that responding to terrorism in the context of failed states is a more difficult process due to the absence of effective military or law enforcement authorities to disrupt the operations of terrorist groups. As outlined clearly in this study, terrorists prefer to operate in ungoverned spaces where lawlessness thrives. Such environments are conducive to terrorist groups as they are able to operate undetected and unhindered. Hence in a state or territories within states where military and law enforcement mechanisms are non-existent or where present, ineffective, terrorist groups are likely to find such places attractive for their operations. Thus, one effective option in responding to such is to have effective armed forces (military and law enforcement) by strengthening the governance capacity of failed states. For example, a more stable and well governed Somalia state will make it more easy to counter the activities of Al Shabaab and other terrorist entities which have made the Horn of Africa nation their playground.

In summary, international terrorism remains the biggest threat to global security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Contrary to conventional warfare, terrorism does not subscribe to the state-centric Westphalian system of rules and conventions. In the state-centric international system, states are regarded as the primary actors in international relations. As such, states enjoy the legitimacy of warfare which is dictated by international laws and conventions. Terrorists on the other hand do not subscribe to such laws hence their indiscriminate attacks on innocent populations. As such, they are viewed as outlaws since they operate outside the state-system and challenge the state-centric international system.

In theory, the Westphalian state-centric model envisioned rational states acting as per the requirements of a modern state. However, in reality, not all states are equal in capacity and some states are very much challenged with respect to meeting their fundamental requirements. Such states have experienced state failure to levels that have been variously described using terms such as 'failed', 'failing', 'weak' or even 'collapsed' states. In the pre-9/11 world, global focus on such states was hinged more on the humanitarian aspect in regard to issues such as state building, improving governance, refugees and internally displaced among others. However, in the post 9/11 period, the potential of such states to serve as safe havens for globally inclined terrorist organizations saw change in focus to the potential threat such states posed to international peace and security.

A critical study on the origins, growth and spread of global terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and the more recent and more deadly ISIS, point to an inter-linkage between state failure and the manifestation of international terrorism. That is not to make a general conclusion that terrorism only thrives within and out of failed states. The evolving nature of global terrorism has seen terrorist groups resort to use of the internet for example to identify, indoctrinate and recruit people within very advanced societies in the Western world, some of whom have gone on to carry out acts of terror within those states or aid the terror group's ideologies and strategies in other ways. The change of tactics by the terror groups, from use of bombs for example, to use of other tactics such as laying sieges in malls and other enclosed spaces like schools and colleges and spraying their victims with bullets, has aided such terror group's strategies of attack within states in the developed world or others that may be considered as stable states.

However, in spite of this, failed states remain the most attractive options for terrorist groups to thrive in. The conditions within such states accord terrorists more advantages for their operations than in other states. Thus, this research study endeavoured to provide a critical analysis of the impact failed states have had with respect to the growth and spread of international terrorism. The study demonstrated that there is indeed an inter-linkage between failed states and terrorism.

APPENDIX I: MAP OF SOMALIA



**APPENDIX II: MAP COVERING SOMALIA AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA**





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