

UNDERSTANDING AL-SHABAAB: CLAN, ISLAM, AND INSURGENCY IN KENYA

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Abstract: *Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen has proven itself to be a highly adaptable organisation. Their most recent evolution has seen them transform from an overt, military and governmental force in southern Somalia to a covert, insurgent and anarchic force in Kenya. This article indicates how al-Shabaab has reinvented itself in Kenya. Both 'clan' and 'Islam' are often thought of as immutable factors in al-Shabaab's make-up, but here we show that the organization is pragmatic in its handling of clan relations and of Islamic theology. The movement is now able to exploit the social and economic exclusion of Kenyan Muslim communities in order to draw them into insurgency, recruiting Kenyans to its banner. Recent al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya, launched since June 2014, indicate how potent and dangerous their insurgency has become in the borderlands and coastal districts where Kenya's Islamic population predominates.*

Key words: al-Shabaab, Somalia, Kenya, clans, Islam, insurgency, al-Hijra

The Problem

The killing of Ahmed Abdi Godane in an American air attack on 1 September 2014,¹ seemed an important moment in the short but bloody history of the Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen. Many assumed the death of al-Shabaab's charismatic and ruthless leader might herald the sharper decline and contraction of the movement in the wake of the assault from the African forces of AMISOM (the African Union Mission to Somalia) in southern Somalia. Instead, al-Shabaab has continued a period of evolution, begun more than a year before the emir's violent death, losing territorial control in some parts of southern Somalia but opening up a widespread insurgency in Kenya's borderlands and coastal areas. If their propaganda is to be realised, then al-Shabaab intends to extend this insurgency across the region of eastern Africa.

This is not the first time that al-Shabaab has undergone significant change. The Salafist jihadi Islamic movement, always drawing deeply on its Somali nationalist roots, has managed several transformations since it first emerged as an urban militia in defence

of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in Mogadishu.² As part of the ICU, al-Shabaab were driven from Mogadishu by the Ethiopian invasion, going first into the rural areas of central Somalia, and then migrating south, to some extent chased there by its enemies. Rebuilding to command many rural towns and villages in Bay, Bakool, and along the Shebelle valley, and securing several strategic beach-ports, including Barawe, building alliances with local sheikhs and their militias along the way, al-Shabaab took control of the port-city of Kismayu in 2008. Though it sometimes struggled to maintain territorial and political dominance in parts of central Somalia, al-Shabaab's authority remained largely unchallenged in the south, and it continued to pose a threat to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu after the Ethiopian retreat.³ During this phase, al-Shabaab was heavily extended. As an occupying force, they had to convince the local populations they controlled – through means both coercive and supportive – that they were a genuinely better option than the rich, but alien, TFG. Similarly, al-Shabaab forces were regular thrown into pitched battles against better-equipped opponents, often backed by air support and intelligence provided by the West.⁴

Then, in 2010, al-Shabaab's regional impact heightened, with the infamous "World Cup bombings" in Kampala.⁵ The reaction turned a coalition of the region's militaries against the Islamists. Pushed on by a vengeful Ugandan President Museveni, by September 2014 the Africa Union forces fighting al-Shabaab as part of the Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) comprised 22,000 soldiers from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. The Ugandans mounted their first significant push against al-Shabaab in April 2011, forcing them out of Mogadishu by August, this being followed by Kenya's invasion of southern Somalia in October, supported by Ethiopian incursions one month later. Though it would take the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) nearly a full year to capture Kismayu from al-Shabaab, the movement immediately retaliated by taking the struggle back into Kenya. Grenade and bomb attacks were launched within the first week of the invasion, in what was initially opportunistic retaliation but then turned into a full al-Shabaab insurgency within Kenya.⁶

The al-Shabaab now waging insurgency in southern Somalia and Kenya is a very different movement than the one that was first born in Mogadishu, or even the one that more recently held hegemony over Kismayu. As Hansen, Marchal, Menkhaus, and others have documented, al-Shabaab's internal politics have invariably been tumultuous,

with long-running disagreements between clan factions, between ‘nationalists’ and ‘internationalists’, and among the foreign *mujabideen*.⁷ A critical step toward consolidating al-Shabaab’s Kenya strategy came in June 2013, when Godane staged a purge at Barawe that removed his rivals. Hansen traces the origins of this purge to the troubles that have beset the movement since the famine of 2010-11, with increasingly vehement quarrels amongst the leadership surrounding the role of its executive council, the *shura*, and the tactics to be adopted.⁸ As Bryden⁹ confirms, the purge saw the execution of several leading commanders at Barawe, and up to 200 *mujabideen* of the organisation’s *Amniyat* (“secret service”).¹⁰ In the aftermath of the blood-letting, came al-Shabaab’s renewal as a potent guerrilla movement, a role that has since Godane’s death been further advanced by his successor, Ahmed Omar Diriye ‘Abu Ubeydah’.¹¹

The purge left al-Shabaab a smaller but more coherent movement, focused on an emerging insurgency within Kenya, and – perhaps eventually – moving across all of eastern Africa. Still able to secure a decent income, and with 5,000 fighters in the field despite its setbacks in southern Somalia, al-Shabaab remains a capable organisation.¹² Godane’s purge was not about theology or ideology, but rather about restructuring and survival. It has forged a more extreme al-Shabaab, prepared to use violence in a less discerning manner beyond Somalia, striking at civilians.¹³ This ruthlessness is to be seen in the “hit-and-run” insurgency al-Shabaab is now deploying in southern Somalia and in Kenya’s borderlands.¹⁴ Leaner and less restricted, al-Shabaab no longer contests a full-scale war of attrition against a better-supplied enemy in Somalia – a war they knew they could not win. An insurgent al-Shabaab now exploits divisions among the peoples of the borderlands, targeting Christians and non-Muslims, while radicalising and mobilizing Kenya’s Islamic youth. Freed of their responsibility to govern, al-Shabaab have become ‘spoilers’.¹⁵

What, then, are the implications of al-Shabaab’s transformation in Kenya for our understanding of the organisation? Three questions are posed in this article: First, what does it mean for our understanding of the place of the clan in al-Shabaab’s mobilisation? Second, how easily will al-Shabaab’s advocacy of jihadi theology adapt to the Kenya context? In answer to both these questions, we make the point that al-Shabaab’s behaviour has always been flexible and adaptable, and that neither clan affiliations nor the divisions of Islam are necessarily barriers to the movement’s wider support in Kenya.

Our third question concerns the insurgency itself, and we ask how readily al-Shabaab can recruit from amongst a wider Kenyan *Ummah* that goes beyond the ethnic Somali community? Any complacent notion al-Shabaab's Somali origins impede this new aim is simply misguided. We suggest that the movement is already accomplished in achieving exactly this, and that it will find a ready pool of potential recruits among Kenya's disaffected Muslims. This is illustrated in our concluding section, which considers the attacks mounted in Kenya's coastal districts and borderlands since June 2014.

Clans – primordial or modern?

Anthropologists typically describe Somali clan membership and sub-clan division as being a 'segmentary lineage model'. It is predominately through this conceptual understanding that all the major catastrophic events in Somalia over the past two decades have been interpreted, by both academics and the media: in blunt terms, the 'segmentary lineage model' is viewed as having fomented, and to some extent consolidated, conflict.¹⁶ Given that much of the blame for past violence has been associated with the 'segmentary lineage model', it is important that we understand how this might impact upon the developing al-Shabaab insurgency in Kenya. But it is first necessary to realise that the very manner in which the clan functions amongst Somalis, and thereby the means by which al-Shabaab might exploit clan affiliation or be limited by it, is the subject of controversy and debate.

For Lewis, still most widely read and influential among all of the scholars who have written about Somalia, the most pervasive organisational principle in Somali society is patrilineality. Lewis sees this "call of kinship" as a timeless and unchanging feature of the system, insisting that these ties remain obdurately relevant despite the influence of modern economics, nationalism, and urban migration.¹⁷ According to this logic, if a Somali had to make a choice between two friends arguing over a serious issue, he would be more likely to ally with the one with less 'generations counted apart' – a shared great-grandfather rather than a shared descendant three generations earlier. The Somali segmentary lineage model is seen to consist of strong patrilineal linkages, firm clan allegiances and enforceable blood contracts (*diya*). Whether directly referenced in academic works or inferred in media analysis, this model is frequently used to explain the origin of conflict.¹⁸ It is most commonly visible in media reportage that has accompanied

Somali humanitarian disasters and tends to invoke the primordial and bestial character of Somali society.¹⁹

However, there is a larger and still growing body of scholarship that rejects such 'primordialism' and instead promotes a dynamic, responsive and changing model of Somali society.²⁰ Abdi Samatar is among these writers. Commenting on popular and academic analyses of the fall of Siad Barre in 1992, Samatar refutes the assertion that the form of 'clanism' witnessed in Somalia in the present day bears any resemblance to the systems that preceded colonialism. In this representation, many groups and clans (especially those in southern Somalia) shared an agro-pastoralist lifestyle that necessitated they work together to combat the harsh conditions which could randomly befall any individual or group working alone. Samatar further suggests that in this evolving system, which also involved intimate social and economic relations with pastoral groups, productivity was key to the functioning of political power:

'In fact, those who were not productive, and consequently unable to care for their households, had no standing in the community, let alone the ability to command any authority. In other words, being a competent pastoral manager or a good peasant was a necessary prerequisite for any leadership post'²¹

For Samatar, then, there is no comparison between traditional Somali culture of which clans were a significant but interrelated element, and the situation today where clan allegiance has become divorced from the shared sense of responsibility and order. Samatar's argument explicitly recognises that Somali society has been in the process of significant social change since at least the mid-nineteenth century, driven initially by increasing pastoral mobility, the incorporation of agriculturalists, and, latterly, greater sedentarisation and urbanisation for a portion of the population.²² These are processes and trends that clearly emerge in the excellent historical work of Cassanelli and others.²³

In addressing this apparent separation of clan from other constituent elements of traditional Somali culture, Samatar points to the rise of the political movement for independence in the 1950s, and the subsequent struggle for votes and power as a key influence on the restructuring and heightened importance of clans. He argues that the clan system became a platform for political organisation and mobilisation. In a political environment where all were anti-colonialist and nationalist, ideological differences were absent. Clan became the basis of political action – the first building-block in constructing a political constituency. As Siad Barre promoted the nationalist state of

Somalia, the politics of mobilisation and resource allocation around the clan was already dividing that state: clans became political entities in a way they had never been before.²⁴

This explanation has great merit in describing and understanding the political modalities that are apparent in Somalia since the dissolution of the Barre state after 1991.²⁵ Government resource allocations disappeared in 1991, but only to be replaced by revenues available from external sources. Where the political class once competed for government largesse, they now seek to control external funding channels and local economic opportunities through the mobilisation of clan affiliations and loyalties - defined only by modern patronage rather than the logics of 'traditional' society.²⁶ The clue to clan affiliations, and thus clan identity, therefore lies in an understanding of the local political economy within which clans compete. Such new and emergent elites are not bound by traditional constraints, yet they utilise the networks and connections of clan to mobilise for their own purposes.²⁷

This "modernist" view of clan is widely accepted as functional among the Somalis of both southern Somalia and northern Kenya.²⁸ In these circumstances, clan affiliations and loyalties present just as many opportunities and constraints for al-Shabaab in Kenya as they did in southern Somalia. Moreover, in their new Kenyan role as 'spoiler', al-Shabaab only needs to remain mindful of clan, rather than to work through it.²⁹ As al-Shabaab's most recent propaganda indicates, by building a meta-narrative of jihad through their adoption of terror tactics and their emphasis on the oppression of Muslims by a pro-West Christian government, the movement seeks to undermine the ties that bind Somalis to the Kenyan state.³⁰ Clan in Kenya thus presents no impediment to al-Shabaab's insurgency.

Islam – 'a veil lightly worn'

Somalis stand apart in Kenya in many ways, but since 9/11 religion has come to be seen as the variable that matters most. With the rise of al-Shabaab, Somali Islam has come to be associated with radical fundamentalism. This is a dramatic distortion of the prevailing social reality. The role of religion interacts with clan structure, nationalism and Islamic unity, to define the possibilities and limitations of fundamentalism.³¹ Religion is regularly presented as a feature of a united Somali culture. In order to address this assumption, we must firstly ask to what degree there is a common perception of

Islam amongst Somalis, and what potential there is for a shared religious viewpoint to provide a basis for political action?³²

While Islam in eastern Africa has been thoroughly studied over many years,³³ since the emergence of the terrorist threat in the region at the end of the 1990s there has been a distinct focus on “radicalism.”³⁴ This quest to identify radical Islam has sometimes been misleading, often highlighting apparent international connections whilst not fully representing the complexities of local Islamic practice.³⁵ Menkhaus points out that popular practice of Islam among Somalis is far from fundamentalist and is best thought of as ‘a veil lightly worn.’³⁶ He reminds us that women have traditionally not been veiled; *xeer* customary law has superseded *shari’a*; veneration of saints is still a key part of religious practice; Somali politics has tended to be secular; and that Somalis are not scrupulous in their religious observance. For the most part, then, the exigencies of Somali pastoral life have ensured that pragmatism has ruled over religious doctrine.³⁷

How is it, then, that al-Shabaab has managed to thrive as a fundamentalist organisation in such unpropitious circumstances? The answer lies in the capacity of the movement to evolve and respond flexibly to opportunities. Current transformations in Kenya are thus nothing new, and this is best illustrated through a brief review of the emergence of Somali fundamentalism in general and al-Shabaab in particular.

Islamic study groups and Muslim Brotherhood cells were active in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia even as the regime of Said Barre came to its knees at the beginning of the 1990s.³⁸ As Barre’s government finally collapsed, armed factions struggling for control of key resources, these fundamentalist cells made several attempts to gain territory. The best known success was the southern Somalia town of Luuq.³⁹ Here religious laws were fervently imposed, but under fundamentalist control security improved dramatically, and NGOs happily worked under Islamic rule. Luuq’s Islamist administration then ran into difficulties when ‘outsider’ members of clans drawn to Luuq by radicalism came into conflict with the locally dominant Marehan. The fundamentalist movement in Luuq was therefore forced to deal with precisely the same challenges posed by the modern clan structure as do all secular attempts to administer Somali areas.⁴⁰ All fundamentalist groups in Somalia, not least al-Shabaab, have had to learn to cope with this constraint.

The imposition of forms of *shari'a* law and the administration of Islamic courts featured prominently at Luuq, but it was in Mogadishu that the most intense struggles around religious and clan politics took place prior to 2006. Attempts to establish Islamic courts in Mogadishu, often supported by business interests in the city, date from the early 1990s but struggled against clan and militia politics.⁴¹ Marchal notes these tensions, observing a growing circumspection and accommodation with clan interests among those promoting *shari'a* law: they have learned to compromise. Al-Barakat owner Ahmed Nuur Ali Jima'ale, for example, provided funding for the courts initiative in the late 1990s and was backed by many other businessmen.⁴² Far from being exclusionary, the Islamic courts movement in Mogadishu built support among different Muslim groups including the Islamists of *Al-Itihaad* and other *Salafis*, but also numerous smaller Sufi groups.⁴³

These courts were initially absorbed into the Transitional National Government created after 2000,⁴⁴ but after 9/11 external pressure mounted on Somalia's Mogadishu-based politicians to restrict fundamentalist participation. The new Transitional Federal Government, formed in 2004, excluded Islamists. This marked the emergence of a Somali reaction against foreign interference.⁴⁵ As the TFG lost legitimacy,⁴⁶ the Islamic courts movement surged back to prominence in Mogadishu. Thus, by 2006 the courts movement was a radical reaction against foreign interference, reinforced by capable and well-equipped militias⁴⁷ and supported by militant Islamists seeking a political platform.⁴⁸

It was in these circumstances that al-Shabaab emerged.⁴⁹ Widely viewed as having brought peace and security through tough but fair *shari'a* law, al-Shabaab won territory and opposed foreign influence. But the wide spectrum of political and religious views then represented within al-Shabaab posed significant challenges to the Islamic Courts themselves. As the Islamist influences within al-Shabaab asserted a harsh and immediate application of *hadith*, with brutal punishments, a wider political agenda also began to be heard, including irredentist claims on the Ogaden and calls for global *jihad*. In reaction to fears of this Islamist ascendancy, the Ethiopians invaded in December 2006 to support the TFG against the ICU.⁵⁰ They speedily displaced al-Shabaab from Mogadishu.⁵¹

Al-Shabaab took heavy losses in these struggles, in which US Special Forces also played a role,⁵² but they emerged from the violence with their political agenda reinforced and affirmed. The invasion by foreign forces had given cause to *jihad*, opening a political space for the strengthening of fundamentalist political Islam.⁵³ As Hansen argues, at this stage ‘democracy, nationalism, Marxism and clanism had been tried out and yielded little for the Somalis’.⁵⁴ Political Islam now offered stability and honesty in the face of war and corruption brought about by the Ethiopians and the TFG. The Ethiopian invasion hence dramatically weakened the mandate of moderates, and forged unity around al-Shabaab.⁵⁵

The invasion drove al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu and into southern Somalia, where by 2008 it had established a strong economic base in the coastal city of Kismayu, before extending its influence up the Juba valley and into the countryside of Jubaland and Gosha, often absorbing and co-opting local militias in the process.⁵⁶ This gave al-Shabaab control over vast swathes of territory across southern Somalia, swelling its coffers through the tithes taken from local communities and renting-seeking on trade and business interests, including charcoal exports and the smuggling of goods across the border into Kenya. This was proving extremely lucrative by the time the drought of 2010 weakened the movement’s control of these areas, and began the decline of its phase of domination in the south. In April 2011, a major assault against al-Shabaab began when the Uganda forces within AMISOM pushed out of Mogadishu. Then, in October 2011 the Kenyan Defence Forces launched their invasion of southern Somalia, intent on seizing the port of Kismayu, dismantling al-Shabaab’s economic structure, and scattering their *mujahideen*.⁵⁷ By the time of this assault, al-Shabaab had become more absorbed with revenue-raising and governance than with religious ideology – an issue that was causing considerable internal strife for the organisation, and would indeed be one of the triggers for the purge of the high command initiated by Godane in June 2013.⁵⁸

This history puts al-Shabaab’s fundamentalist ideology into perspective: when in a position to govern, either on behalf of the ICU in Mogadishu, or in the countryside of Gedo, al-Shabaab has imposed fundamentalist doctrine with a heavy hand; when rallying the *Ummah* against the foreign invader, and organising its military tactics around mobility and covert action, as in the flight to southern Somalia after 2006 or in the present circumstances of Kenya’s borderlands, al-Shabaab is both more flexible and more eclectic in its use of Islamic theology. Accounts of al-Shabaab’s internal politics reaffirm

this view, especially the detailed elaboration of the movement's ideological history set out by Hansen,⁵⁹ who points out that al-Shabaab has always accommodated rival and fractious groups, and has repeatedly splintered as key leaders separate from one another to pursue narrower political, ideological and economic interests,⁶⁰ or as the international cadres of the movement assert themselves against those with a narrower, local perspective - as has happened once again in June 2013.⁶¹ Radical Islam in eastern Africa therefore has its peculiarly local manifestations, while also being part of wider global *jihad*.

Al-Shabaab recruitment

Over the past decade a range of studies have reviewed the problem of Islamic radicalisation in eastern Africa, both in terms of the local political threat and the contribution to international *jihad*. Three features of this literature have direct relevance for any discussion of al-Shabaab recruitment in Kenya. First, it is broadly agreed that there is a general perception among radicalised populations in eastern Africa that Islam is under attack by the West.⁶² Commentators argue over the centrality of this perception – whether it is a recurrent theme or a causal logic – but it seems to be an assumption that applies very strongly to the Somali case, and has strengthened in Kenya as the state security forces there mount indiscriminate assaults against their own Somali and Muslim citizens.⁶³ Second, it is agreed that education, wealth, and degree of integration are all key factors in determining affiliations to radicalisation and global *jihad*: but, there is dispute as to how these factors operate in the eastern African arena. Is it affluence or poverty that causes Muslims in eastern Africa to take up arms? Is global *jihad* more attractive to the uneducated, or to the educational elite? The overwhelming evidence from eastern Africa suggests that Muslims are more likely to radicalise because they have been excluded by host societies, especially in Kenya⁶⁴ - a finding that is actually endorsed by Marchal's evidence on al-Shabaab recruitment within Somalia.⁶⁵ Third, it is debated whether recruitment to the radical cause is driven by dispositional or situational factors? The emphasis on profiling techniques in international counter-terrorism has led to implicit assumptions that a disposition toward activism can be identified, while more variable situational factors (geographic location, the operation of kinship networks, neighbourhood factors) have not been as thoroughly investigated – perhaps precisely because they require a deeper understanding of cultural and social factors. In eastern

Africa, and especially Kenya, these situational factors appear especially significant and it is these that al-Shabaab has determinedly exploited.⁶⁶

Even the best evidence collected on behalf of western intelligence agencies in eastern Africa now tends to confirm the view that cultural and religious factors may be less important in mobilisation than is socio-economic disadvantage or political exclusion. The Congressional Research Service's 'Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The US Response'⁶⁷ provides a cogent summary of these points, with specific reference to the Somali case. The report finds that among the socio-economic factors, both al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda use the 'victimisation narrative' to recruit and sustain support. Within Somalia, this focuses upon the 'foreign invader' rallying call. In Kenya, this works by articulating a "sense of social, cultural, political and economic exclusion" felt by the country's Muslims.⁶⁸ The report states that in the places where the Muslim population is concentrated, social services have historically been weaker than elsewhere in the country. Somalis in Kenya typically express frustrations emerging from a lack of job opportunities and a sense of exclusion from the mainstream political economy. Male youth are especially disaffected, a factor identified as important for al-Shabaab recruitment in particular.⁶⁹ Where economic deprivation is most extreme, as in the towns close to the Somalia border where large refugee communities have congregated, recruitment is often linked to the provision of some kind of social service and basic protection. In these borderlands the provision of social goods can be a key incentive for youth to join radical movements such as al-Shabaab,⁷⁰ especially when recruits might be paid anything between USD 60 and USD 200 per month by the movement. Income at this level can allow recruits to provide for extended family members.⁷¹

To what extent is this congruent with what we know of militia recruitment patterns in Somalia in the past? Long before the emergence of al-Shabaab, Compagnon laid stress upon the place of clan in militia recruitment after the fall of the Barre state. But for Compagnon, like all those who view clan relations from a modernist perspective, "lineage polarisation" was "a product of competing enterprises and not their cause."⁷² "With the emergence of new factions and the decay of others," he concluded, "the interplay of clan-ism and political entrepreneurship remains the creative force behind factionalism."⁷³ A longer-term process in which conflict and militia recruitment has devolved to "descending levels of clan lineage," as sub-clans and sub-sub-clans

increasingly become the units of operation for armed groups, was later observed by Menkhaus. This devolution of conflict to lower lineage levels meant that warfare became more localised and more random,⁷⁴ and less dependent on the patronage of senior clan elders. Al-Shabaab has notoriously benefitted from this in southern Somalia, drawing into its orbit affiliates from smaller clan groups, and from those groups marginalised by others. Clan has a place in these historic explanations of recruitment, therefore, but it is subtle, flexible and responsive to local economic circumstances.

These points have been developed most tellingly in the writing of Roland Marchal, who provides what is by far the most extensive discussion of al-Shabaab recruitment published to date. Marchal's findings echo the view that neither clan nor theology are as important as we may have supposed.⁷⁵ His account lays stress upon the importance of securing young recruits among the Somali population, but of the avoidance of doctrinal teachings at an early stage. Disaffected and dislocated youth – those who are orphaned, or with displaced families – feature prominently. It has often been argued that al-Shabaab exploits clan divisions to gain recruits, Marchal tells us, particularly by taking the part of lesser sub-clans or sub-sub-clans – what have been termed 'minority' clans. Marchal challenges the negative implications of this, pointing out that such clans are also often those who have struggled to capitalise upon economic benefits in Somalia's war economy. Disadvantage and marginalisation again emerge as key elements in al-Shabaab's relationship with such clans, and even within larger clans, such as the Rahanweyn, al-Shabaab recruitment has succeeded in drawing in those who, for whatever reason, are excluded from mainstream patronage and support. And in terms of religion, Marchal reminds us that in war-torn Somalia many people have turned to religion for solace in troubled times: among al-Shabaab's affiliates are many "born again *jihadis*" – young men of no particular education or religious persuasion, but men cast adrift by the dislocations of war and looking for a spiritual anchor. Lastly, though coercion has been used by al-Shabaab at times of crises, such as among Bantu communities in the Juba valley following the Kenyan invasion,⁷⁶ it is not a strategy they generally advocate.⁷⁷ Overall, then, Marchal's account of al-Shabaab recruitment tells us that they adopt a flexible and responsive strategy, that takes recruits from where they can best be found, and that places social and economic factors above clan and religion.

In Kenya, recent al-Shabaab recruitment has deployed all of the techniques and strategies described by Marchal, while also building upon an established pattern of radicalisation that has been well documented since the early 1990s.⁷⁸ Kenya was already a major area of recruitment for al-Shabaab long before the invasion of October 2011, with Kenyan *mujabideen*, recruited in Garissa, Isiolo, and Nairobi's Eastleigh district, finding their way into southern Somalia to join the Islamist "International" brigade. Estimates suggest that al-Shabaab's foreign *mujabideen* numbered 1,000 at their peak in 2010, and this may have included as many as 500 to 700 fighters of Kenyan origin.⁷⁹ From 2009, when the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) began their own strategy of recruiting Kenyan Somalis into the military to develop a "Third Force" they intended to insert back into Somalia, it was known that al-Shabaab was actively drawing recruits to its banner from amongst Kenya's Muslims. Al-Shabaab reputedly signed-on these recruits for approximately the same fee as the Kenya military,⁸⁰ with monthly payments of up to USD 150 being reported at the time.⁸¹

Before 2011, al-Shabaab recruitment within Kenya focused around key mosques at the coast and in Nairobi, and especially the Muslim Youth Center (MYC) in Majengo, close to Eastleigh. Founded in 2008, by the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque committee as an advocacy organisation, the MYC focused on the economic and social grievances of Kenya's Muslims, but quickly developed links with al-Shabaab.⁸² The most prominent preacher linked with the MYC, Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohammed, was identified by the UN Monitoring Group as an active supporter of al-Shabaab and was believed to have spent time with the organisation in Somalia. UN reports have documented the activities of Kenyan mosques and businessmen in contributing significant financial support to al-Shabaab, while also facilitating the recruitment of fighters, especially in the Nairobi district of Eastleigh but also in Mombasa.⁸³ Sheikh Hassan Hussein Adam, for example, was among the younger, outspoken preachers whose voices were heard at the Masjid al-Ahmar mosque, which became another gathering point for radical Muslims.⁸⁴ Though young Kenyan Somalis were prominent at the Nairobi mosques, other Muslims were also recruited from the coastal districts and Mombasa.

A clear indication of al-Shabaab's success in establishing well-organized and highly trained cells in Kenya was apparent in the infamous Kampala "World Cup bombings" of July 2010. Following the attacks, Uganda's security officers quickly

identified Kenya as the source of the plot, and suggested that several Kenyans had carried out the attack. Among those finally brought to trial at Kampala's High Court in June 2015 are seven Kenyan Muslims, including some from western and central Kenya who are recent converts to Islam.⁸⁵ With hindsight, the Kampala bombings signalled al-Shabaab's emerging regional ambitions.⁸⁶ It was a sign of things to come.

In the months following Kenya's invasion of Somalia in October 2011 it quickly became apparent that retaliatory al-Shabaab attacks were being organized by locally-based Islamists from within Kenya.⁸⁷ Many of al-Shabaab's Kenyan *mujabideen* had by then left Somalia to come back into Kenya, as a result of internal squabbles and a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the battle against AMISOM amongst the foreign fighters.⁸⁸ There were also rumours that some Somalis recruited and trained by the Kenya Defence Forces in 2009 and 2010, but then rejected for permanent military service, may have been subsequently recruited into al-Shabaab.⁸⁹ These issues perhaps distracted Kenya's security services from immediately recognizing the full extent of the domestic radicalisation that by then confronted them. An International Crisis Group report, published just three months after the invasion, was amongst the first to provide evidence that "Kenya Swahili Muslims" were amongst those mounting attacks in Kenya. This was followed by press reports highlighting the Kenyan origins of many known al-Shabaab operatives.⁹⁰ By the later part of 2012 the problem of domestic radicalisation and the widespread disaffection of young Kenyan Muslims was openly discussed, highlighting that Kenya's problems might now be "home grown".⁹¹

Back in November 2010, at the height of al-Shabaab's powers in southern Somalia with its international brigade leading the assault against AMISOM, the al-Kataib Media Foundation released a recruitment video. Entitled "Message to the *Ummah*", this 35-minute video featured numerous al-Shabaab *mujabideen*, including several Kenyans, who spoke in Swahili. The video carried both English and Swahili sub-titles – yet another indication of its regional and international targets and intentions. The video called for Muslims from all over eastern Africa to join the "holy war" against non-believers.⁹²

Before October 2011, al-Shabaab's recruitment of "foreign" Muslims from Kenya and elsewhere was intended to strengthen the *mujabideen* in southern Somalia.

After October 2011, this changed, with an al-Shabaab franchise, known by the name al-Hijra, replacing the MYC as the driver of local recruitment within Kenya.⁹³ Al-Shabaab made their intentions clear as early as January 2012, when a video introduced Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali as the head of their new Kenyan franchise, to be known as al-Hijra.⁹⁴ Later that year, the UN provided details of al-Hijra's membership, its background, and its well-developed strategy for drawing recruits into al-Shabaab, many of whom had joined the fight in southern Somalia while others ran activities in Kenya.⁹⁵ By early 2012, al-Hijra turned its full attention to developing the war within Kenya,⁹⁶ with more Swahili-language videos featuring Kenyan *mujahideen* and audio messages addressing the Kenyan *Ummah*: for example, "The Year of Unity" (released in April 2012), and "Battlefield El-Wak" (February 2012), featuring Swahili-speaking Kenyan recruits.⁹⁷ In an audio message of 3 March 2013, Godane for the first time addressed "the Muslims of Kenya", urging them to "boycott the Kenyan elections and wage *Jihad* against the Kenyan military".⁹⁸

Al-Hijra was a means to take the war to Kenya, but the foundations of radicalism on which it was built lay in the social and economic grievances of the wider Muslim community. Al-Hijra called for support from all Muslims, not only from Kenya's 2.6 million Somalis. To garner support, their propaganda played upon the many disadvantages faced by Muslims, and on their history of political alienation and exclusion in Kenya, seeking to harness their long-standing disaffection and dissent. Playing to these themes, al-Shabaab's sophisticated public relations wing mounted a highly effective media campaign to promote the movement in Kenya.⁹⁹ Further media releases, first in May 2014, and then most recently in a lavish and lengthy video production released in February 2015, have confirmed and clarified the focus of al-Shabaab's struggle on the insurgency in Kenya and beyond.¹⁰⁰ These videos are skilfully made, referencing the history of mistreatment suffered by Kenya's Muslims at the hands of the Kenyan state and connecting their grievances to global *jihadi* goals. But even more striking in this respect is their propaganda magazine *Gaidi Mtaani* ('Terrorist on the Street'). This Swahili publication, with the occasional English language item, is explicitly targeted at the Kenyan *Ummah*. Launched three months after al-Shabaab declared its intentions to mount war within Kenya, four issues were produced up to November 2013.¹⁰¹ The articles are well written, and show a good understanding of Kenya's history and the particular concerns of its Muslim population. Professionally produced, with multiple

illustrations and eye-catching slogans, *Gaidi Mtaani* is visually powerful and clearly intended to appeal to a younger audience.

The magazine provides a powerful insight into the organisation's public relations mission, revealing important aspects of al-Shabaab's recruitment and propaganda strategy. Articles link current oppression to Kenya's long history Muslim marginalisation, portraying the Kenyan state as being in collaboration with foreign powers that wish to attack Muslims.¹⁰² Al-Shabaab's violence is thus a legitimate defence of Islam. The second issue of the magazine featured lengthy discussion of the life and work of Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohammed, lamenting his assassination (allegedly by agents of the Kenyan state¹⁰³) and praising his role in defence of Kenya's Muslims.¹⁰⁴ All of this is done without mention of any Islamic factionalism, presenting instead a united front against foreign oppressors. The corruption and incompetence of Kenya's national security services are of course highlighted and ridiculed,¹⁰⁵ but the magazine also succeeds in presenting plausible and even convincing evidence of the distortions and omissions in Kenyan press coverage of al-Shabaab. *Gaidi Mtaani's* coverage of the Westgate attack of September 2013 mocked the ineptitude of the Kenyan state, emphasising the connection to global *jihad* and urging Muslims to recognise that Kenya is losing the war.¹⁰⁶

Lastly, there are also connections between global drivers of radicalism and more local factors in the perceptions of Kenyan recruits. By linking the struggle in Somalia to a broader war, and engaging the narratives of 'occupation' and 'liberation' in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, Marchal notes that al-Shabaab's recruits have always been encouraged to see themselves as part of a global insurrection.¹⁰⁷ In Kenya, this can readily be linked to the glorious history of Islamic rebellion against colonialism,¹⁰⁸ the local history of Muslim radicalism since the 1980s,¹⁰⁹ and the struggles that Kenyan Muslims face in protecting themselves from an aggressively Christian and pro-Western state.¹¹⁰

Until early 2015, in its public statements Kenya's government persistently adhered to the "external stresses" interpretation of their security challenges, officials always emphasizing the role of foreign *jihadis* and international organizations in "bringing trouble to Kenya."¹¹¹ Though evidence of al-Shabaab recruitment within Kenya pre-dates the invasion of southern Somalia and has built up significantly since then, as we

have shown, acknowledgement of the “home grown” threat of insurgency has only come about as detailed information about recent deadly attacks in Kenya’s border regions has entered the public domain. The concluding section considers these recent attacks and their impact.

Conclusion: al-Shabaab’s Kenyan insurgency

This analysis has alarming implications in light of al-Shabaab’s declaration that it is now taking the struggle to its enemy, mounting a campaign to mobilise the *Ummah* of Kenya. There is nothing in al-Shabaab’s recent history to suggest that clan affiliations in Kenya will prove a barrier to recruitment: their pragmatic and modern approach to clan politics is well adapted to the situation in north-eastern Kenya.¹¹² Aside from the disaffected amongst Kenya’s large Somali population, there are many non-Somali Muslim groups in Kenya’s north-eastern and coastal regions who may find good reason to align themselves with an insurrection. Nor are the sectarian divisions amongst Muslims in Kenya likely to be a barrier to al-Shabaab, especially if it can use its affiliate al-Hijra in allowing Kenyans to identify *their* struggles as being in common cause with those of the movement, if only in the short-term, in order to wage war more effectively.

On the ground, the shape of al-Shabaab’s insurgency in Kenya became clearer between May and July 2014, in the wake of the attempted “crackdown” by the security forces in Operation Usalama Watch. Launched in early April, this resulted in the round-up of over 4,000 Muslim “suspects”, mostly of Somali origin. The arrests appeared random and unregulated, and were accompanied by the mistreatment and abuse of suspects, the stealing of their personal property, and widespread bribery and corruption in the checking of their documentation. The ethnic targeting of Somalis, and the victimisation of Muslims were the two dominant aspects of the operation.¹¹³ Within a few days of its conclusion, in mid-May, al-Shabaab resumed its bombing and grenade campaign across Kenya, with an attack on a Nairobi market that killed ten and left 70 others injured.¹¹⁴

There then followed a cluster of attacks in rural coastal areas over June and July 2014, suggesting the emergence of a new and dangerous phase in al-Shabaab’s insurgency. This began on 15 June 2014, when the prosperous rural village of Mpeketoni, in Lamu County, was the scene of a bloody massacre.¹¹⁵ The *mujabideen*

commandeered vehicles on the main road between Witu and Lamu Town, driving into Mpeketoni and blocking the roads before beginning the murders. Burning buildings and vehicles, the gang chanted Islamic slogans and selected only non-Muslims as their victims. The assault left 48 villagers dead. Al-Shabaab's acknowledged their responsibility for the massacre, and then conducted further attacks over the next month. On 6 July, two further coastal villages, Hindi and Gamba, were attacked in a similar fashion to the assault on Mpeketoni. Here, the victims were identified and their hands bound behind their backs before their throats were slit. Al Shabaab again was quick to claim responsibility.¹¹⁶ Then, on 19 July, in an assault clearly calculated to have maximum impact on what is an important tourist route, a bus was halted on the road between Malindi and Lamu and sprayed by fire from automatic weapons, killing more than 30 passengers. This brought the death toll at the coast to over 100 in a period of only one month.¹¹⁷

Mpeketoni had been chosen for attack because it was a predominantly Christian village, at the centre of a rural settlement scheme set up in the 1970s to accommodate Kikuyu from Kenya's Central Highlands.¹¹⁸ Al-Shabaab's statement acknowledging the attack accused the Christians of having "taken" a Muslim village.¹¹⁹ Hindi and Gamba were, similarly, villages with extensive Kikuyu settler populations, a large number of Christians, and significant church communities. A video released by al-Shabaab to celebrate the Mpeketoni attack was entitled "Reclaiming Muslim lands under Kenyan Occupation". Produced in Swahili and English versions, as well as Arabic, the video includes footage of Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohamed preaching about Mpeketoni, describing the land as having been taken from Muslims by "disbelievers" and demanding that *jihad* was needed to rectify such wrongs.¹²⁰ Al-Shabaab's "spoiler" tactics need only pit Christian and other groups against ordinary Kenyan Muslims for their operations to be a success. Unsurprisingly, these attacks have been effective in worsening relations between religious communities, but also seem to have raised concerns around ethnic targeting by al-Shabaab.

This was especially pertinent when Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta countered al-Shabaab's claims following the Mpeketoni attack by asserting that local political rivalries lay behind the incident.¹²¹ Mpeketoni surely was a troubled location, with local squabbles around electoral politics in 2013 and deep concerns of local land-grabbing and

speculation prompted by the plans to develop the nearby port of Lamu.¹²² It may also have been prey to the activities of the Mombasa Republican Council, a political group who have been advocating coastal secession.¹²³ These factors were present at Mpeketoni, and may well have played a part in what happened; but it was the *mujahideen* of Harakat al-Shabaab who carried out the attack and it was the *jibadi* movement that selected this target - precisely because it allowed the melding of local politics with the broader aims of al-Shabaab. And in this combination lies the danger for Kenya: an al-Shabaab that can skilfully manipulate local politics to its own advantage in north-eastern and coastal Kenya, as it once did so effectively in Jubaland, will prove a very difficult foe for the Kenya security forces to contain.

At Mpeketoni it was believed that al-Shabaab's *mujahideen* were assisted by "local forces" – it seems to have been the first major attack in which al-Shabaab and Al-Hijra forces directly collaborated.¹²⁴ In subsequent attacks the role of Kenyan affiliates has become clearer. Kenya police reports identified a recent Kenyan convert to Islam, Idris Kamau, as the organiser of attacks mounted in Hindi and Gamba in July 2014.¹²⁵ Then, in late November and early December, there were deadly attacks in Mandera. First, a Nairobi-bound bus was ambushed south of Mandera, with the murder of 28 people – many of them school teachers and civil servants heading home for a period of leave in Central Province.¹²⁶ Ten days later, gunmen attacked a camp outside Mandera housing quarry workers, killing 36 men. The victims were again non-Muslims, mostly from central Kenya.¹²⁷ In both Mandera attacks, Swahili-speaking Kenyans were reported to have been among the attackers.¹²⁸ To underline the focus of its campaign, al-Shabaab released an account of the Mandera attacks that attributed the killings to its Saleh Ali Saleh Brigade, named in honour of a Kenyan member of Al-Qaeda who had held high rank in al-Shabaab.¹²⁹ Such was the mounting crisis in Kenya following these attacks, both the Inspector General of Police, David Kimaiyo, and the Minister for Internal Security, Joseph ole Lenku, resigned from their posts.¹³⁰

The attack that finally brought Kenya's "home-made" terrorism into the open occurred on the campus of Garissa University, on 2 April 2015. An al-Shabaab unit entered the campus before dawn, moving through the student dormitories slaughtering any non-Muslims they encountered. The security around the campus was negligible, despite the fact that the University lay close to both police and military posts. When the

attack began, the security response was slow and cumbersome: it took several hours to lock down the campus, and even longer to apprehend the assailants with the siege lasting 15 hours before the last attackers was captured. Victims reported that the assailants spoke good Swahili, some with local accents: among them were Kenyans and Tanzanians. By the end of a traumatic day, 142 young Kenyan students lay dead, and another 78 were seriously injured.¹³¹ This as the worst terrorist atrocity in Kenya since the Al-Qaeda attack on the US Embassy of 1998, with a far greater death toll than the infamous attack on the Westgate Mall.¹³² In the aftermath of Garissa, copious evidence emerged confirming the Kenyan origins of many of the attackers, while al-Shabaab press releases confirmed and praised the role of Kenyan *mujahideen*.¹³³ Intelligence reports were soon in circulation identifying an al-Shabaab unit known as *Jeysb Ayman* (Ayman's Army), led by Kenyans and comprising predominantly of Kenyan Muslim recruits. *Jeysb Ayman* operates in all the borderlands areas, and especially Lamu County and other coastal areas where its main aim has been to attack non-Muslims and to disrupt the tourist economy.¹³⁴ Since Garissa, there has been no more denial of the extent of the internal insurgency Kenya now faces.

In the most recently published account of al-Shabaab's regional strategy, published just after the Garissa attack, Matt Bryden explains that the movement has become adept at exploiting "the stresses and fissures" within east African societies, and that the callous assault on the university campus needs to be understood not as a sign of al-Shabaab's desperation or decline, but as "a manifestation of the group's resilience, adaptability and strategic continuity."¹³⁵ That continuity can be traced to the vision of al-Shabaab's emir, Godane, whose purge of June 2013 prepared the movement for its transition into this "rural guerrilla" stage of its existence. Though most writers have characterised the role of Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen in Kenya as a kind of "reinvention,"¹³⁶ the real danger and potency of this lies in understanding how deeply ingrained this role already is in the practice and experience of the movement. Al-Shabaab is now firmly embedded in the soil of Kenya, and it may not be long before it extends the same methods and the same role into Tanzania and Ethiopia.¹³⁷ East Africa's struggle against Islamic fundamentalism is far from over.

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Endnotes

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- ¹ Maruf and Joseph. "Sources on final days of Al-Shabaab's Godane".
- ² Barnes and Hassan, "The rise and fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts", 151-60.
- ³ Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement" is the most important source on al-Shabaab's history, esp. 10-23. See also Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, ch 2.
- ⁴ For a history of the war with AMISOM, see Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*.
- ⁵ Open Society Foundations, *Counterterrorism and Human Rights*.
- ⁶ Anderson and McKnight, "Kenya at war", 4-7; Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*.
- ⁷ Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*; Marchal, "A tentative assessment," 381-404; Menkhaus, "The crisis in Somalia", 357-390; Anzalone, "Al-Shabaab's tactical and media strategies", 12-16; Pantucci, "Bilal al-Berjawi", 14-17.
- ⁸ Hansen, "An in-depth look", 9-12.
- ⁹ Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, 3-6.
- ¹⁰ Menkhaus, "Al-Shabaab's capabilities", 5.
- ¹¹ Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 5.
- ¹² Anderson and McKnight, "Kenya at war", 8-11
- ¹³ Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, 2.
- ¹⁴ Gartenstein-Ross and Appel, "Al-Shabaab's insurgency."

- ¹⁵ Menkhaus, *Conflict Assessment*, for the use of the term “spoiler” in this context. See also, Anderson, *Why Mpeketoni*, 1-6; Branch and Mosley, “Why East Africa's borders are blowing up”, 1-4.
- ¹⁶ Bestemann, *Unravelling Somalia*.
- ¹⁷ Lewis, *Blood and Bone*.
- ¹⁸ As discussed by Schlee, *Approaches to identity*, intro.
- ¹⁹ For examples: Gettelman, “New Somali government” (for a fatalist approach to clanism); Blair, “Somalia: analysis of a failed state” (for the conflation of ‘clan’ and ‘warlord’); Dowden, “Internal and external” (for war as a ‘continuation of Somali tradition’).
- ²⁰ For the key debate, see: Besteman, “Representing violence”, 120-33; the response from Lewis, “Doing violence to ethnography”, 100-108; and Besteman’s reply, “Primeordialist blinkers”, 109-20.
- ²¹ Samatar, “Destruction of state and society”, 630, 639.
- ²² Ibid, 627
- ²³ Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*; Barnes, “U dhashay Ku dhashay”, 487-98; Bemath, “The Sayyid and Saalihiya Tariga”, 33-47; Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty*; Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest*.
- ²⁴ Samatar, “Destruction of state and society”, 636; Menkhaus, “Government without governance”, 60.
- ²⁵ For a controversial interpretation of the consequences, see Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*.
- ²⁶ World Bank, *Conflict in Somalia*.
- ²⁷ Samatar, “Somalia's Post-Conflict Economy”.
- ²⁸ Besteman, *Unravelling Somalia*, 4; Schlee, “Customary law”, 258-71; Little, *Economy Without a State*; Simons, *Networks of Dissolution*.
- ²⁹ Menkhaus, *Conflict Assessment*, 9-15.
- ³⁰ A lengthy propaganda video released early in 2015, Al-Kataib Media Foundation, “The Westgate siege – retributive justice”, gives warning of al-Shabaab’s intention to internationalize its assault, across eastern African and beyond.
- ³¹ For the most recent examination, Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*.
- ³² This section draws upon Anderson, “Clan identity and Islamic identity”, with significant updating.
- ³³ For the historiography: Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs*; Lewis, *Saints and Somalis*; Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest*; Thordsen, “New Muslim Activism”; Mwakimako and Willis, “Islam, Politics and Violence”.
- ³⁴ For the most significant examples: Hansen, *Al Shabaab in Somalia*; Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenyan Youths*; Haynes, “Islamic militancy”, 1312-39; Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 24-38; Kfir, “Islamic radicalism,” 829-55; Ndlovu, “The politicization of Muslim organizations”, 25-53; Rabasa, *Radical Islam*, 39-70; Vittori, Bremer and Vittori, “Islam in Tanzania and Kenya”, 1075-99.
- ³⁵ As exemplified in the best-selling book on Somalia, Fergusson, *The World’s Most Dangerous Place*.
- ³⁶ Menkhaus, “Political Islam in Somalia”.
- ³⁷ Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs*.
- ³⁸ Marchal, “A tentative assessment”; Menkhaus, “Political Islam in Somalia”.
- ³⁹ Menkhaus, “Political Islam in Somalia”; de Waal, *Islamism and its Enemies*.
- ⁴⁰ Menkhaus, “Political Islam in Somalia”, 112-13.
- ⁴¹ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, ch 2; ICG, *Somalia’s Islamists*.
- ⁴² Marchal, “A tentative assessment”; Le Sage, “Somalia: sovereignty disguise.”
- ⁴³ ICG, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*; Menkhaus, “Political Islam in Somalia”; Le Sage, “Prospects for al-Itihad”.
- ⁴⁴ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 12-14.
- ⁴⁵ Menkhaus, “The crisis in Somalia”, 10; Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 11.
- ⁴⁶ ICG, *Somalia: To move beyond a failed state*.
- ⁴⁷ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 14-18.
- ⁴⁸ See Marchal, “A tentative assessment”; Marchal, “Warlordism and terrorism”; Menkhaus, “The crisis in Somalia”; and ICG, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*, for the context.
- ⁴⁹ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 16-17.
- ⁵⁰ Menkhaus, “Violent Islamic extremism”.
- ⁵¹ ICG, *Somalia: The Transitional Government*; Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”.
- ⁵² Gordon and Mazzeti, “US used base in Ethiopia”. For a recent overview of US activity in Ethiopia and Somalia, Turse, *Tomorrow’s Battlefield*.
- ⁵³ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement.”
- ⁵⁴ Hansen, *Al Shabaab in Somalia*, 4.
- ⁵⁵ Menkhaus, “Violent Islamic extremism”.
- ⁵⁶ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 17-18.
- ⁵⁷ Anderson and McKnight, “Kenya at War”, 4-8.
- ⁵⁸ Hansen, “An in-depth look”, 9-12.
- ⁵⁹ Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*.

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- ⁶⁰ ICG, *Somalia's Divided Islamists*.
- ⁶¹ Bryden, *Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, 3-4; Hansen, "An in-depth look"; Menkhaus, "Al-Shabaab's capabilities".
- ⁶² Botha, "Political socialization", 895-919; Hassan, "Understanding the drivers", 18-20; Hansen, "Mis-spent youth"; Thordsen, "New Muslim Activism".
- ⁶³ Anderson, *Why Mpeketoni*, 3-4; Hidalgo, "Kenya's worst enemy", 1-3; HRW, "Kenya: halt crackdown against Somalis".
- ⁶⁴ Lind, "Counter-terrorism", 335-53; Lochery, "Rendering difference visible", 615-39; Carrier and Lochery, "Missing States?", 334-51.
- ⁶⁵ Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement", 46-50.
- ⁶⁶ Nzes, "Terrorist attacks", 13-15; Rabasa, *Radical Islam*; Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenya Youth*; Thordsen, "New Muslim Activism".
- ⁶⁷ Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa*.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Hansen, "Mis-spent youth"; Gartenstein-Ross, "The strategic challenges", 25-36; Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenyan Youth*.
- ⁷⁰ Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement"; Le Sage, "Prospects for al-Itihad", 472-77.
- ⁷¹ Figures from Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement", 42.
- ⁷² Compagnon, "Somali armed units", 84. See also, Adam, "Somalia: militarism, warlordism, or democracy".
- ⁷³ Compagnon, "Somali armed units", 90.
- ⁷⁴ Menkhaus, "State collapse in Somalia", 410-11.
- ⁷⁵ This paragraph draws upon Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement", 39-51.
- ⁷⁶ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2013*.
- ⁷⁷ Marchal, "The rise of a jihadi movement", 40-41.
- ⁷⁸ Rabasa, *Radical Islam*; Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenya Youth*; and Thordsen, "New Muslim Activism" provide between them a very full historical coverage.
- ⁷⁹ Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Center", 9; Shinn, "Al Shabaab's foreign threat"; Lind, et al, *Tangled Ties*, 18. According to the UN Monitoring Group, the Kenya contingent was amongst the best organized and most efficient of al-Shabaab's units: UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2010*, 140.
- ⁸⁰ Interviews, conducted in Isiolo and Eastleigh, May and June 2010.
- ⁸¹ Hassan, "Understanding drivers", 18.
- ⁸² Nzes, "Terrorist attacks", 14-15.
- ⁸³ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2011*, 25-6; UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2010*, 25-7.
- ⁸⁴ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2010*, 25-7.
- ⁸⁵ Anon., "Uganda trial resumes".
- ⁸⁶ Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 8.
- ⁸⁷ Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Center", 12-13.
- ⁸⁸ Pantucci, "Bilal al-Berjawi", 14-17.
- ⁸⁹ Interviews, Eastleigh district, Nairobi, September 2011.
- ⁹⁰ See, for example, Gisesa, "Portrait of a jihadist".
- ⁹¹ Anon., "Police: Militant-trained Kenya youth a threat".
- ⁹² Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Centre", 9-10.
- ⁹³ Nzes, "Al-Hijra", 24-26. Activists from within the MYC were believed to be among Al-Hijra's principle agents.
- ⁹⁴ *Critical Threats*, "Linda Nchi – Timeline"; Nzes, "Al-Hijra", 24-26.
- ⁹⁵ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2012*, annex 3.1.
- ⁹⁶ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group 2013*, 15.
- ⁹⁷ Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Centre", 9-10.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 80-81.
- ⁹⁹ Anzalone, "The Nairobi attack", 1-6; Anzalone, "Al-Shabab's tactical and media strategies", 12-16.
- ¹⁰⁰ ICG, *Kenya: Al-Shabaab*, 4-5; Al-Kataib Media Foundation, "The Westgate siege – retributive justice."
- ¹⁰¹ All four issues of *Gaidi Mtaani* are available from <<http://jihadology.net/>>.
- ¹⁰² *Gaidi Mtaani*, Issue 1 "Operation Linda Uislamu", 4.
- ¹⁰³ See the Al Jazeera documentary film, *Inside Kenya's Death Squads*, available at <<http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/KenyaDeathSquads/>>, last accessed 3 August 2015.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Gaidi Mtaani*, Issue 3, "Sheikh Aboud Rogo – Chanzo cha Mabadiliko". See also, Swaleh, "The radicalization of Sheikh Aboud Rogo".
- ¹⁰⁵ *Gaidi Mtaani*, Issue 2, "The Long Road to Kismayu".

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- ¹⁰⁶ Gaidi Mtaani, Issue 4, “Special Edition – Westgate”. For further discussion, see Anderson and McKnight, “Kenya at War”, 20-23.
- ¹⁰⁷ Marchal, “The rise of a jihadi movement”, 44-45.
- ¹⁰⁸ Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest*.
- ¹⁰⁹ Botha, *Assessing the Vulnerability of Kenyan Youth*, charts this very clearly.
- ¹¹⁰ Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life*, describes the Christian character of Kenya’s state.
- ¹¹¹ Lind et al, *Tangled Ties*, 17-19.
- ¹¹² Schlee, “Customary law”, 258-71.
- ¹¹³ IPOA, *Operation Sanitization Eastleigh Report*.
- ¹¹⁴ Straziuso, “Bombings Kill 10.” This was typical of other attacks over the previous year: Gartenstein-Ross and Appel, “Al-Shabaab’s insurgency.”
- ¹¹⁵ For a fuller account of this incident, see Anderson, *Why Mpeketoni*, 1-4. Also, IPOA, *Report Following the Mpeketoni Attack*.
- ¹¹⁶ Gettelman, “Gruesome attacks.”
- ¹¹⁷ *Al Jazeera*, “Al-Shabaab claims deadly bus attack.”
- ¹¹⁸ Ndurya, “How squatters became landowners in Lamu”.
- ¹¹⁹ Abdullahi, “To prevent more Mpeketonis”.
- ¹²⁰ Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 9.
- ¹²¹ Musumba, “Uhuru blames massacre on tribalism”.
- ¹²² Government of Kenya, “Flagship Projects: Lamu port and new transport corridor”.
- ¹²³ For the background, see Willis and Gona. “*Pwani C Kenya?*”, 48-71, and Brennan “Lowering the Sultan’s flag”, 831-61.
- ¹²⁴ Abdullahi, “To prevent more Mpeketonis”; Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 9.
- ¹²⁵ Anon., ‘Police Unveil Names Behind Coast Killings’.
- ¹²⁶ Anon., ‘Governor Roba had Warned of Imminent Attack’.
- ¹²⁷ Anon., “Al-Shabab massacres non-Muslims at Kenya quarry”.
- ¹²⁸ Lind et al, *Tangled Ties*, 31.
- ¹²⁹ Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 9.
- ¹³⁰ Lind et al, *Tangled Ties*, 32.
- ¹³¹ Three Kenya soldiers and three police officers were also among the dead.
- ¹³² See the analysis by Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 9.
- ¹³³ Anon., “Somalia’s Shabab warn Kenyan public of ‘long gruesome war’; Anon., “Kenya arrests five”.
- ¹³⁴ Anon., “Al Shabaab group formed to cripple Kenya”; Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 9.
- ¹³⁵ Bryden, *Decline and Fall*, 1.
- ¹³⁶ Bryden, *Reinvention of al-Shabaab*, 3-4; Hansen, “An in-depth look”, 9-12; Menkhaus, “Al-Shabaab’s capabilities”, 4-9; Williams, “After Westgate”, 908-9.
- ¹³⁷ See, for example, Le Sage, “The rising terror threat in Tanzania”, 11.