The Impact of Al-Shabab Terror Activities on Kenya-Somalia Boarder Security: A Case of Wajir County

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Abstract: *Terrorism and terrorist activities continue to threaten national, boarder and international security not only in the region but also globally. The study is aimed at determining the impact of Al-shabab terror activities in Kenya and Somalia. The objective of the study was to establish how informal militant administration, insurgent road side bomb attacks, suicidal attacks and disruption of government operations affect the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security. The study applied the Constructivist Model of Radicalization and The 3N theory of radicalization to understand the concept of radicalization that explains the Alsh-baba terrorist activities. The researcher adapted a descriptive research design as there are variables which cannot be quantified but can only be described in descriptive statistics. The study population is 74 respondents that included the government of Kenya and Federal Government of Somalia officials at the border towns, the Kenyan and Somalia Police at the Boarder and the Public Administration at the border towns of Kenya - Somalia, boarder immigration staff and the members of joint security committee (Kenya). The study sample was derived from the target population through Slovin's (2006) formula for sample determination. Stratified sampling method was applied by the study and was select 63 out of 74 targeted respondents. Primary data were the main data used by the study and was collected through the administering of questionnaire to the respondents. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and used mean, mode and standard deviation. Quantitative statistics was analyzed through inferential statistics that included Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. This helped to draw conclusion on the relations between variables and the nature of relationship. Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS 23) was used to analyze the collected data while tables, charts and percentages graphs was used for data presentation through the help of Microsoft Excel package. The results from a multiple regression model used in the study indicated that Al-shabab terror activities factors significantly (P<0.000) affected Kenya-Somalia boarder security in Wajir County and that insecurity at the border towns along Kenya-Somalia can be attributed to Al-shabab terror activities. The study recommended that there is need for psychological and theoretical approach to Alshab attacks as it is related radicalization which is as a results of major invalidation of an individual's construing, there is also need of tightening security loopholes that continue to be taken advantage of by the Alshabab and that there is need for both governments to have a collective policy approach in dealing with Alshaba in the border towns of the two countries.*

Keywords: Terrorism; Terrorist Activities; Al-Shabab; Boarder Security; Kenya; Somalia

1. Introduction and Background of the Study

Terrorism and terrorist activities continue to threaten national, boarder and international security globally. Terrorism is defined as a form of violence targeted against unarmed civilians with the aim of achieving a political and/or religious goal. The aim of Al-Shabaab is to pressure regional governments to withdraw troops from Somalia, where an African Union mission has been battling the militants since 2007. The group also uses its attacks in East Africa to raise its profile, seek new recruits and solicit funding (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Terrorist groups are blamed for carrying out major deadly attack across the other parts of the world among them the deadliest twin tower attack in October 2017, where the major capital city suffered its worst terrorist attack to date when twin truck bombings killed more than five hundred people and injured more than three hundred. Though al-Shabab never claimed responsibility, the group is widely believed to have carried out the attack (Hussain and Sarma, 2016).

As foreign terrorist threats grow, the home homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) influenced by the ideologies and messages of FTOs also continue to grow in Europe and United States of America (Homeland Security, 2019). While Africa faces similar threats of terrorism like the rest of the world, it seems that the continent is more vulnerable in the fight against terrorism due to several reasons ranging from weak governments, porous borders and weak security organs among others. Some of the terrorist groups that operate in Sub-Saharan Africa, include, Al- Shabaab operating in Somalia, Boko Haram operating in Nigeria, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb operating in the Sahara (AQIM) and the Lord's Resistance Army operating in Uganda (Kaufman, 2012). The situation is not any different in the region as the terrorist group of Al-Shabaab currently considered to be the biggest threat to the security of the horn of Africa after cattle rustling.

With most of its coordination done from the failed state of Somalia, the Al Qaida affiliated group has been behind several suicide and bomb attacks in the region, particularly in the past five years. In Kenya, the effects of terrorism on the security of Kenyan society have affected the economic, political sectors, social activities, delivery of essential services such as health, education and the destruction of infrastructural structure in the affected areas. The main terrorist threat in Kenya is transnational emanating from the Al-shabaab Militia group with a home based in the neighboring Somalia. Terrorism has perpetrated population

displacement, Political dissents, economic challenges, religious conflict among other detrimental effects.

2. Statement of the Problem

Attacks from such terrorist groups as Al-shabab have had serious impact on boarder security as these attacks not confined to only certain countries, but spreading to other countries. The security challenges caused by Al-shabab have also affected boarder activities continue to be a major regional threat, caused challenges to regional peace, integration and relation. The activities hamper government administration and disrupting government operations across the Kenya-Somalia boarder security. Additionally, Al-shabab terrorist activities have contributed to the destruction of infrastructure, slowing down of socio-economic development, to loss of foreign investment in social and economic sectors. Evaluating the impact of Al-shabab terror activities of Kenya-Somalia boarder security may help in addressing security challenges in boarder counties such as Wajir County. This study therefore sought to evaluate the impact of Al-shabab terror activities of Kenya-Somalia boarder security.

Objective of the Study
To evaluate the Impact of Al-shabab terror activities of Kenya-Somalia boarder security: A case of Wajir County.

Specific Objectives
a) To establish the effects of informal militant administration on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.
b) To determine the effects of insurgent road side bomb attacks on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.
c) To evaluate the effects of suicidal attacks on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.
d) To establish the effects of disruption of government operations on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.

3. The Theoretical Framework

The study was based on two theories, The Constructivist Model of Radicalization and the 3N Theory of radicalization.

3.1 The Constructivist Model of Radicalization

The Constructivist Model of Radicalization originated from Winter and Feixas (2019). The theory proposes that the personal construct concepts of validation and invalidation are particularly relevant to processes of identity change such as radicalization and deradicalization. Therefore, they argued radicalization occurs when major invalidation of an individual's construing is followed by the development of a new radicalized view of the world that provides a turning point in his or her sense of identity and a more structured and certain view of the world. Coolsaet (2019) applied Constructivist Model of Radicalization to explain the Critical Perspectives on Violence and Security caused by radicalization in Belgium and the Netherlands and explained that radicalization was spreading as a because of a group of Muslims were said to become increasingly angry as a result of a wide variety of 'root causes.

3.2 3N Theory of radicalization

The theory posits that the 3N theory of radicalization happen as a result of three elements coming together: the individuals' needs, the narrative to which they are exposed, and the networks in which they are embedded. The first N, the need element that pertains to individuals' quest for personal significance that is the desire to matter and to have respect. The second N is the ideological narrative to which individuals are exposed and that essentially identifies the means to the end of significance. This is portrayed as extreme violence against perceived enemies of one's group, which lends the status of heroes and martyrs to individuals who joined the fight. The third N on the other hand is the social network in which individuals are embedded and that validates the means–ends relations between violence and significance as well as dispenses status and veneration to individuals who implement the ideological injunctions and commit the requisite violence. The study applies this theory in identifying the causes of radicalization then continue to be a security challenge in the border towns of Wajir County among others.

4. Study Methodology

The study was guided by positivism research philosophy that uses existing theory in developing hypotheses that is tested. The study employed descriptive research design as there are variables than cannot be quantified but can only be described through descriptive statistics. The target of the study were 74 respondents and included 36 Government of Kenya and Federal Government of Somalia officials,6 Local administration at the both sides of the border towns, 20 Kenyan and Somalia Police at the Boarder and 12 Members of joint security committee (Kenya) that operate in border towns of Konton, Khorof ,Gerilley,Hambalash ,Diif and Dhajabula. Stratified random sampling was used to select the study sample determined through Slovin's (2006). Data was collected through structured questionnaire and interview guides for key respondents. Descriptive statistics techniques and inferential statistical analysis methods were bused to analyze quantitative data from structured questionnaire while qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis based on the study objectives.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Informal Militant Administration

One of the strategies that Al-shabab uses is asserting authority in the areas that they dominate. This includes setting up of informal administration with tax collection system to fund their activities and informal legal systems to deliver alleged justice working in their favor and their supporters. Sami and Khattak (2017) observed that Al-shabab have been use to suppress business competitors through exploitive illegitimate administration and illegal taxation. Available literature also indicated that cross-border business monopolies have lured young people to engage in violence to eliminate business rivals from other clans and to continue illicit business operations and that cross-border business relied on al-Shabaab who are paid to secure their

business interests and eliminate whoever did not support them (Sahgal *et al.,* 2019).

Kumssa and Jones (2014) noticed that Al-Shabaab controlled most of Somalia and imposed Sharia law and illegal taxation for all both business persons and NGOs operating across the borders of Kenya and Somalia. In addition to Al-Shabaab banning most international organizations from gaining access through neighboring countries to large parts of the country during the devastating famine in 2011, leading to the deaths of thousands of Somalis, the Islamist groups have formed informal administration and authorities on both sides of the border since the 1990s(Muketha, 2021).

5.2 Insurgent Road Side Bomb Attacks

This is one of the commonly used attacks by the terrorist groups. Insurgent road side bomb attacks continue to be experienced all over the world**.** Empirical review in Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro indicated that insurgent road side bomb attacks, terrorist bombing and small arms attacks, insecurity in the border towns that are planned in Serbia-Montenegro, often involving Croatia nationals who were trained in Serbia-Montenegro, have been an ongoing problem in Serbia-Montenegro and especially in the border town (Krause, 2017).

Sometimes, the insurgent road side bomb attacks that happen in other countries are organized in Somalia. Akwiri (2018) noted that the terrorists who conducted the attacks at Garissa University, in the border county of Garrisa, came from Somalia and ostensibly acted under the direction of Al-Shabaab leadership in Somali. Additionally, the insurgent road side bomb attacks have been carried out by Alshababa to achiev different objectives. Sami and Khattak (2017) revealed that the attrition strategy has underpinned Al-Shabaab's major terrorist attacks (large-scale events) whilst their minor terrorist attacks (small-scale events) have been motivated by the provocation strategy, aimed at eliciting a repressive state overreaction against Kenya's Somali and Muslim minorities.

5.3 Suicidal Attacks

Sucidal attacks is another strategy that have been widely used by the Al-Shabaab.The suicidal attacks as highlighted by Winter and Feixas (2019) remain the greatest threat to Western interests regionally and internationally. Sympathizers of this group through suicidal attacks have launched small but deadly attacks against government and civilian targets across the world. Fearing the increase number of these attacks from terrorist groups, in mid-2015 as Hungary and other European Union (EU) countries erected barrier walls along their borders in an effort to keep out thousands of refugees fleeing chaos in Syria, Iraq, Somalia and any possible influx of terrorism (Cannon and Pkalya (2019).

In Kenya and the neighboring countries to Somalia, the fear of suicidal attacks continue to assert credible fear of a larger terror attack that have been tried to undermine Kenyan security. Following fears of possible Attacks, the country

resolved in a responsive security crackdown that was to drive more Somalis, and perhaps other Muslims, into the movement's especially among the Kenya-Somalia boarder communities further complicating security challenges in the volatile areas (Muketha, 2021). Notably also, the Kenyan government responded by invading Somalia and while the number of terrorist border attacks has declined, during the first days that KDF entered Somalia the number of Al-shabab's attacks was higher before attack compared to now (Ibrahim and Hersi (2019).

5.4 Disruption of Government Operations

Cannon (2020) while carrying a study on the Kenya's Proposed Border Wall and its effects on the Somalia Terrorism and Geopolitics highlighted that the construction of the security wall along the Somali Boarder feared that although the border wall was to keep terrorists out of Kenya, it would in itself disrupt the government operations even more that the terrorist groups themselves. Therefore, even though the idea of the security walls remains a solution to the disruption of government operations by terror groups such as the Alshabab, there is need of exploring the efficacy of border walls, particularly Kenya's wall with Somalia (Nyadera,Shihundu and Agwanda ,2021)..

Since the Kenyan intervention against the group in Somalia in 2011, attacks have regularly been staged on security forces, government interests, and local communities in rural areas of the border counties of Mandera, Wajir, and Lamu disrupting government operations in the affected boarder zones (Gardaworld Report ,2020). the disruption of government operations includes attacks on security apparatus themselves. a police post in the Khorof Harar area of Wajir County reportedly came under mortar and automatic weapons fire shortly before dawn, forcing police officers to retreat. although there were no casualties from the incident, local reports claimed that weapons and equipment were looted from the police station. a nearby communications mast is also reported to have been sabotaged in the attack, a common tactic of Al-Shabaab militants operating along Kenya's porous border with Somalia(Akwiri,2018).

6. Study Results

The findings of the study indicated that out of the 63 respondents sampled for the study, 96.8% responded while 3.2% of the respondents did not respond to the study. The response rate was considered a very adequate response rate for statistical study representation. This is supported by Arora and Arora, (2003), who stated that a questionnaire based study that produces 75% response and above, is rated as extremely well participated. The study further covered the Effects of Al-shababa activities on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security and the relationship between Al-shababa activities and the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.

Effects of Al-shababa activities on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security

Table 1: Effects of Al-shababa activities on the Kenya – Somali Boarder Security

Al-shababa activities	SA&A %	Neutral %	SD&D %	Mean	STDV
Informal Militant Administration	67.6	18.5	13.9	3.41	1.212
Insurgent Road Side Bomb Attacks	71.7	17.2	11.1	3.095	1.097
Suicidal Attacks	72.1	15.2	12.7	3.14	1.17
Disruption of Government Operations	75.8	17.6	6.6	3.06	1.17

The findings of the study indicated that informal administration had the highest effect on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security, followed by suicidal attacks while disruption of government operations had the least effect on Kenya –Somali Boarder Security. The results also indicated that Informal Militant Administration had the highest variation in response followed by suicidal attacks and disruption of government operations while insurgent road side bomb attacks had the least variation in response.

The relationship between Al-shababa activities and the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security.

Table 2: Relationship between Al-shababa activities and the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security

ANOVAª						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.747	4	4.937	25.333	.000ᵇ
	Residual	10.913	56	.195		
	Total	30.660	60			
a. Dependent Variable: Boarder Security						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Informal Militant Administration, Insurgent road attacks, Suicidal Attacks ,Disruption of Government operations						

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.445	.243		5.942	.000
	Informal Militant Administration	.294	.096	.362	3.053	.011
	Insurgent road attacks	.211	.108	.268	1.955	.000
	Suicidal Attacks	.113	.105	.147	1.075	.000
	Disruption of Government operations	.541	.085	.702	6.327	.000

The study indicated that Al-Shabab activities have a significant influence on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security. The results also indicated that informal militant administration factors, insurgent road attacks factors, suicidal attacks factors and disruption of government operations factors (X_1: β_1 =.294, $P<.011$), (X_2: β_2 =.211, $P<.000$), (X_3: β_3 =.113, $P<.000$) and (X_4: β_4 =.541, $P<.000$) had a significant influence on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security. This means that dealing with Ab-shabab activities would significantly reduce insecurity at the Kenya –Somali Boarder.

$$Y= 1.445+.294X1+.211X2+.113X3+.541X4+e$$

This indicates that a unit increase of.294 in informal militant administration factors of. 211 in insurgent road attack factors, of. 113 in suicidal attacks factors and of .541 in disruptions of government operations factors would influence a unit change in security situation at the Kenya –Somali Boarder.

7. Conclusion

All the Alshabab activities covered by the study (informal militant administration factors, insurgent road attacks factors, suicidal attacks factors and disruption of government operations factors) had a significant influence on the Kenya –Somali Boarder Security. This means that dealing with Ab-shabab activities would significantly reduce insecurity at the Kenya –Somali Boarder.

8. Recommendation of the Study

8.1 Theoretical Recommendation

There is need for psychological and theoretical approach to Alshab attacks as it is related to radicalization which is as a results of major invalidation of an individual's construing that is then followed by the development of a new radicalized view of the world that provides a turning point in his or her sense of identity and a more structured and certain view of the world.

8.2 Security Recommendation

The security forces from both Somalia and Kenya boarders need to review their security approaches in tackling Al-Shabaab insurgency in the area. There is also need of tightening security loopholes that continue to be taken advantage of by the Alshabab militia groups. Lastly, there is need for common and collective approach by security forces from both sides in dealing with Alshabab attacks. While the individual countries may have the autonomy to make their security decisions concerning Alshabab, there is need for joint regional approach to the matter. There is also need of effective involvement of IGAD and other East African bodies in dealing with Alshabab attacks.

8.3 Policy Recommendation

In relation to policy, there is need for both governments that share the border towns to have a collective policy approach in dealing with Alshaba in these area. Additionally, in order to encourage the desired security outcomes, there is need to

establish strategic approaches at both individual and collective countries on how to approach Alshabab security challenge in the region. This should be done by evaluating the current strategic approaches and establish their effectiveness and weaknesses.

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