

The Price of Instability

Terrorism and Africa's Development¹

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Abstract:

Africa's problems are compounded by terrorism — the use of violence to attain certain objectives, including but not limited to armed insurgency, and secessionist agitations. Terrorism is a consequence of the prolonged state of instability across the nook and cranny of the continent. Put simply, terrorism and underdevelopment are the prices that Africa pays for treating with levity the need for stability. Africa cannot continue this way. There needs to be a holistic approach to combatting terrorism. African states must adopt a united regional approach to combatting terrorism as insular national approaches have failed, even as new and expanding frontiers of cyber terrorism are fast gaining ground.

Keywords:

Africa; Nigeria; terrorism; insurgency; regional approach to combatting terrorism; secession.

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Introduction

I applaud this event's organisers for continuing to oppose the tide of discouragement brought by the pandemic — they have put up a platform that convenes thinkers and change-makers from across Africa and the rest of the world to discuss urgent topics that affect our shared society. Despite the disruptions from current events, we have remained resilient. In this era of the new normal, we have to resume where we left off and continue to champion a positive course for our society's growth and development.

I am delighted to be here today, lending my voice to discussions about improving the African continent. Africa is my home, and I have never hidden either my love for it or my readiness to discuss progressive ideas that will bolster its growth and development. When I was invited to be the keynote speaker for this event, I recognized a terrific opportunity to rub minds with progressives from different spheres of life. Like me, they will stop at nothing until Africa truly reaches its zenith.

Although it gladdens my heart to be invited here to speak about the cost of Africa's continued instability, terrorism, and their effects on the continent's development, a part of me feels withdrawn and sad. We have returned to another forum that discusses Africa's ongoing problems, but we should have crossed this bridge long ago. However, I remain hopeful for our people's future, and I recognize that we must all come to terms with Africa's reality. Something as crucial as the safety of life and property is not something any nation or continent should handle with levity. After the September 11 terror attacks, states have focused their attention on ensuring a more secure society, and no African country should be left behind.

I am delighted that we are here today to crack open, evaluate, and proffer solutions for terrorism's menace, addressing how this threat has impaired Africa's growth and development. My duty here is simple, but it is not easy — this task must be clearly understood and handled with great caution, because Africa's development and growth depend on getting it right.

I am delivering this keynote address in two parts. The first part will address the current situation with terrorism and its different facets in Africa, discussing their continued predatory effects. The second part will address the current capacity of African countries and their ability to handle the multifaceted problems created by terrorism. It will consider how the continent can win the war against terrorism through other methods that complement conventional approaches.

I urge you all to follow closely. This discussion, unlike many others, goes to the root of Africa's developmental problems.

Different definitions have been used to describe what states, policymakers, citizens, and scholars consider to be terrorism. Like acts of terrorism themselves, this amorphous concept defies a single, encompassing explanation of its idea and acts. However, different scholars

have made some informed attempts that serve as a compass to make sense of activities that can rightly be called terrorism. This definition by Bandyopadhyay, Sandler, and Younas seems to offer some insight into understanding terrorism:

Terrorism is the intended use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups against non-combatants to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond the immediate victims. (Bandyopadhyay, Sandler and Younas, 2011).

Their definition accommodates different perspectives about what terrorism might be. First, it suggests that terrorism, unlike some other crimes, is not an impulsive act. It is a deliberate, strategically planned and orchestrated crime committed against a country and its people. The active nature of terrorism and the advance planning involved are some of the many reasons why the institutions and militaries of African states have had such a difficult fight.

Many of the unconventional methods adopted by terrorists involve sophisticated approaches that have become prevalent in many of Africa's developing countries (Spulak, 2015). Such countries find it difficult to respond with equal levels of activity and sophistication. This imbalance makes it much more challenging to fight these terrorists head-on.

The definition also notes that terrorism has an objective, which is normally political and religious. These objectives may not always be immediately evident, but they motivate every act of terrorism committed by a terrorist group. Terrorists want results from their actual or threatened destruction of life and property (Mertes et al., 2020).

The legitimacy of terrorist demands is the central point of conflict. The recurring objectives of many ideologically motivated terrorists often involve government takeover, the establishment of a religious state, the eradication of Western education, or control over a country's economic and political decisions (Mertes et al., 2020).

These demands are far beyond anything that either democratic or military governments can accommodate. At the very least, they ask that the administration of a state, its policies, laws, and the relationships among its citizens be handed over to outside forces that recognize no legitimately established authority. They threaten the basis of a government's authority and challenge its legitimacy and integrity. It is no wonder that terrorism is always addressed as war between governments and terrorist groups, and each state addresses terrorists directly to eradicate them and secure its national integrity.

State combat normally provokes aggressive responses from terrorist organisations, which has deadly and destructive outcomes that impair a country's growth and development. These effects, driven by the existence of terrorism and the fight against it, have raised recurring concerns about Africa's growth.



Considering the rapid growth of terrorism on the continent, one is compelled to examine the possibility that African countries might inherently foster an ideal environment for the development of terrorist groups. To what extent has the African continent become fertile ground for terrorism?

The growth of terrorist activity is often ascribed to the instability that is prevalent in many African countries (Asongu et al., 2018). Recurring political upheaval combines with deplorable living conditions and the absence of basic social amenities to lay a foundation for terrorism in Africa. Political instability has weakened legitimate institutions and state security forces, encouraging citizens to take up arms either for defense against aggression from state forces or to demand the dividends of democracy from their country's government.

One such example is Libya, after the death of General Gaddafi. Incidents of civil unrest occurred due to human rights abuses before the General's demise, but the country was plunged into political turmoil and instability after his death. Conditions have continued to deteriorate into the present day, with active terrorist groups causing mayhem within the country (Kawczynski, 2011). A similar situation played out in Burundi under the reign of Pierre Nkurunziza, who unconstitutionally championed a third term in office and drove the country into a state of unrest (Nkurunziza, 2018).

Asongu has shared his own thoughts on the issue. He writes:

The African terrain is also fertile for breeding terrorism because it is characterised by recurrent political strife and instability. Some recent cases for illustration include Burundi, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The South Sudanese civil war and political crisis that began in December 2013 has resulted in hundreds of thousands of citizens being displaced across the country and thousands of death. (Asongu et al., 2019).

Monumental cases of chaos and civil unrest have been recorded in the African countries of Libya, Burundi, Congo, Sudan, and others (Asongu and Nwachukwu, 2015). There are many stories of African countries that collapse into states of unrest, and the source of these problems can be identified by looking in the right place.

It has been argued that political instability is not the sole source of terrorism — some remarkable arguments have suggested that good governance combined with unfettered freedom of expression can actually motivate terrorism (Elu and Price, 2015). That evidence has been generated by studies based on countries outside of Africa (Thompson, 2011) and it seems less applicable when considering African nations. Our experiences have shown that turbulent politics, economics, and other sources of instability precede the rise of terrorism in Africa (Cox et al., 2010). A large part of the fight against terrorism on this continent can be won by dealing with the political and economic disasters that serve as a supply chain for terrorism.

Asongu has shared his own thoughts on how political stability and good governance can help to curb, eradicate, or reduce the possibility of rising terrorism:

In so far as ordinary citizens have access to peaceful channels of resolving conflicts, they are not very likely to contemplate terrorism options as practical means to settling disputes. Within this framework... countries that promote good governance offer a peaceful environment for the settlement of conflicts. In other words, an atmosphere of good governance is not very conducive for domestic terrorism because citizens with grievances have peaceful options to making their voices heard (Asongu, 2019).

The sobering reality is that African countries are in their current predicament due to poor governance and political instability. These shortcomings have been a key driver of terrorism on the continent that has affected its ongoing development. These crushing influences must be addressed before Africa can see any reasonable improvement.

PART A

Faces and Facets of Terrorism

The September 11 terror attacks took place outside of Africa, but they marked a new evolution of terrorism around the world (Paulson, 2002). It was elevated to become an issue of significant concern, but this national and international focus simultaneously strengthened the resolve of individuals behind terrorist attacks. They felt emboldened and encouraged to use lethal force, recognizing that their threats and deeds would draw the attention they sought from the people running political and economic affairs (Walsh, 2010).

Terrorism today has grown through an unbelievable geometric progression. Statistics from the 2020 Global Terrorism Index show that three African countries are among the worst hit by incidents of terrorism. They have suffered from a cumulative total of 863 incidents of terrorism, with 2,373 deaths and 1,287 injuries in 2019 alone (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). These countries are caught in a spiral of violence, with attacks and counter-attacks that have endemic consequences on societies, economies, and individuals directly and indirectly (Global Terrorism Index, 2020).

Three of the four deadliest terrorist organisations in the world — the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, Boko Haram, and Al Shabab — operate in different parts of Africa and carry out multiple attacks. Boko Haram alone saw a surge in the level of inter-state terrorism in 2019 (Global Terrorism Index, 2020).

Terrorist acts have affected many regions in Africa, interfering with economics, healthcare, education, and security. It harms the ability to conduct business, making investors reluctant to commit funds that could ensure meaningful national development. In heavily affected regions, such as the northeast part of Nigeria, these activities have displaced



millions of people and disrupted normal daily activities (Salleh, M. A., Ahmad, A. A., and Jamil, S., 2018). Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons in Africa have been an underlying concern for the continent even as nations consider the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (Apanews, 2019).

Terrorism continues manifest in Africa through many different dimensions that pose problems for economic, structural, and human development efforts. African countries must all rise and answer the urgent call to oppose terrorism directly.

Beyond conventional terrorism: Cyber-terrorism and its Growing Impact

Many African countries have become familiar with terrorist activity that regularly results in actual or threatened attacks (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). These deplorable conditions show the sad state of security in Africa, but there seem to be even more problems ahead.

African countries already experience coordinated terrorist efforts that combine human resources and intellectual prowess to cause chaos in the country. However, a gradual escalation in methods and mechanisms have benefitted from technological innovation that can cause far more significant damage to economic, social, and human progress (Wilkinson, 2012).

Even now, terrorists in Africa have moved beyond the conventional methods of suicide bombings, raids on villages, brutal attacks where people are hacked to death, and bringing down airplanes and blowing up buildings. They are now believed to be actively involved in cyber-terrorism. This should keep us all awake at night, because these acts can be conducted on a scale that leaves everyone vulnerable. We all are potential victims of these new forms of terrorist attack.

The rapid technological developments in different parts of Africa have raised concerns that formerly beneficial internet connectivity could be deployed to achieve a terrorist agenda. These concerns have been strengthened by incidents showing that attacks around the world have moved beyond conventional terrorism. New terrorist acts might be committed from behind a computer screen with merely a keyboard and an internet connection.

Authors who have discussed cyber-terrorism have not come to a consensus about its definition. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation offers some insights to understand the term in the context of this address:

Cyber-terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated attack against information, computer systems, computer programs and data which result in violence against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents. [The FBI offers this definition via its official website on <https://www.fbi.gov/quickfacts.htm>.]

This definition explains how anti-state agents can affect data, internet, and computer infrastructure. Cyber-terrorism is every bit as premeditated as conventional methods, but it employs other tools to attack state institutions and private data. This has raised concerns over the possibility of African terrorists adopting technology to carry out their destructive plans. There is some disagreement about the time required to adopt this new technology, but few can argue that terrorists will not adapt and begin using these methods.

My point is that terrorists, although brutal and often fearless, make cognitive assessments of risk. They understand how security forces might foil their efforts. Their operations continuously reflect a desire to cause greater chaos without assuming increased risk (Wilkinson, 2012). As some countries see success against conventional terrorism, groups will switch to other methods for wreaking havoc. Cyber-terrorism offers that option.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has explained how conventional terrorists might switch to cyber-terrorism as they suffer defeats in other venues.

Success in the “war on terror” is likely to make terrorists turn increasingly to unconventional weapons, such as cyberterrorism. Moreover, as a new, more computer-savvy generation of terrorists comes of age, the danger seems set to increase (Weimann, 2004).

This emerging method of terrorism offers many benefits that are missing from conventional terrorist methods. What is more disturbing is that the reach of such acts can be far greater than conventional methods. USIP has explained that cyber-terrorism has more attractive features than conventional terrorism. They write:

Cyberterrorism is, to be sure, an attractive option for modern terrorists, who value its anonymity, its potential to inflict massive damage, its psychological impact, and its media appeal. (Weimann, 2004).

Cyber-terrorism offers anonymity, impact, and affordability that is missing from conventional methods. When it is too risky for physical operations like blowing up a shopping mall, it becomes a contest between the government and the terrorists to determine whether superior cyber expertise can carry out damaging attacks on state infrastructure. This also offers anonymity to terrorists who might not even need to be within the jurisdiction of the affected area's authorities before committing terrorist acts.

The interconnected nature of the internet might allow a terrorist to plan a cyber-attack in Kenya while on vacation in Zimbabwe and then carry out the operation in Egypt. It is possible as long as a cyber-savvy terrorist has access to a computer and the internet. In these kinds of operations, it is almost impossible to trace the attacker. It is a herculean task to trace the attacker's identity. USIP has described the potential shocks that can be caused by such events:



The growing dependence of our societies on information technology has created a new form of vulnerability, giving terrorists the chance to approach targets that would otherwise be utterly unassailable, such as national defence systems and air traffic control systems. The more technologically developed a country is, the more vulnerable it becomes to cyberattacks against its infrastructure (Weimann, 2004).

Cyber-terrorism also offers the ability to harm a larger range of victims in a single attack. Internet connections are reaching farther into many African countries every day. Greater numbers of people have access to the internet (Chukwu, 2018) especially after the Covid pandemic drove digitalisation across every sector and greater connectivity through the internet of things. This implies that successful cyber-attacks have far-reaching implications.

A well-planned cyber-terrorist attack could bring down government agencies and destroy data (Chukwu, 2018). It could affect the military, different intelligence and security agencies, and parastatal organizations (Chukwu, 2018). Private companies could be attacked by these terrorists, and ordinary people might be victimized by these attacks. This kind of large-scale destruction — or threat of destruction — is a highly manipulative tool for terrorists that can allow them to influence government decisions to get what they want.

The relatively low cost of cyber-terrorism is another factor that makes it appealing to potential terrorists. It requires less money and fewer human resources than conventional methods (Weimann, 2004). This is an appealing opportunity for terrorists, and few would hesitate to seize it.

These points are not meant to dwell on the reasons why terrorists will adopt these novel and sophisticated methods of attack — and they almost certainly will — but to ask how robust Africa's technological infrastructure is. Can Africa's counter-terrorism forces defend against such a strike if there were actual plans for attack?

The answer to this question should inform the actions that must be taken by African leaders in response to terrorism.

Predatory impact of terrorism on Africa's Development

Terrorist threats and acts have a predatory impact on Africa's development. These crimes are directly responsible for death, destruction, and displacement across the continent. The effects of this death and destruction have a negative multiplier effect on the Gross Domestic Product of afflicted countries. In researching the cost of war in Darfur Sudan, Ali found that the war in Darfur cost Sudan 171% of its GDP in 2003 alone (Ali, 2013).

The lingering presence of terrorism in any country will always take its toll on growth and development. In explaining how terrorism affects Foreign Direct Investments, Bandyopadhyay states that terrorists understand the many ways in which their activity harms an economy. They exploit this weakness without remorse because it helps them achieve their political or economic agenda:

Terrorists are well aware of the potential economic harm their attacks can cause and view these consequences as pressure besieged governments to concede to their demands (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2011).

Chuku et al. have explained that the economic impacts of terrorism are most prevalent through four different channels. First, there is a direct impact on the economy of a terrorist-afflicted country through vast destruction of life and property. Second, every government's need to combat terrorism leads to counter-terrorism expenditures that are primarily considered to be non-productive. This money is drawn from other developmental budgets, diverting funds from "production-related activities to defence-related activities."

The third effect is that terrorist activity creates economic risk and uncertainty, lowering the income of citizens and reducing their consumption, savings, and investments. The risk and insecurity in a country targeted by terrorists will force foreign investors to redirect their investments to places where the risks are much lower. The fourth and final effect of terrorist activity hurts critical sectors of the economy, including tourism, agriculture, and the financial sector (Chuku et al., 2019).

Recent statistics from the Global Terrorism Index show that terrorism's impact has decreased across the globe for the past five years, but this has not ameliorated terrorism's continued impact on economies. Despite this decrease, the 2019 Global Terrorism Index still says that five of the ten countries most affected by terrorism's economic costs are in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded a 47.1% increase in the economic impact of terrorism (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). There is still a long way to go to salvage the continent's economy, and efforts to combat terrorism must be increased.



PART B

Fighting terrorism in Africa; capacity of the individual state as a core challenge (Raymakers, 2020)

The counter-terrorism methods pursued by many African governments do not appear to be effective. For every step forward taken by governments and their counter-terrorism strategists, the terrorists and their cohorts take three steps ahead. A more strategic approach is needed to combat terrorism in Africa. The current approach has come up short, especially when it comes to fighting terrorists while protecting the lives and properties of innocent civilians. Chuku has explained this dilemma:

The mechanisms underlying the activities of these terrorist groups suggest a strategic tactic. They often try to exploit the government's counter-terrorism dilemma using violence to provoke governments into harsh and indiscriminate counter-terrorism responses that often affect society, including the innocent population (Chukuet al., 2019, p. 6).

This terrorist strategy has played out in the fight against terrorism in Africa. The physical and economic damage done by the Covid-19 pandemic has strained many African countries, and vast amounts of funds are being re-allocated to address threats to public health and national economies, hoping to absorb the massive shock of an extended free fall. Allocations to security and counter-terrorism efforts have decreased, with sobering consequences for governments, people, and their properties. These changes require African countries to re-think the methods they are using to address terrorism. Terrorists will identify and exploit weakened armies and counter-terrorism strategies, tightening their grip on state authorities and wreaking havoc with relative ease (Asongu et al., 2018).

The economic effects of Covid-19 have put individual African countries at a disadvantage in fighting terrorism. To make headway in their battles while acknowledging the realities of Covid-19 in Africa, there must be collaboration between African countries — an alliance to fight the common enemy that has debilitated the continent's development.

Presenting a united front against terrorism in Africa; a call for tactful continental leadership

The experiences of many countries over the past several decades have established that individual African governments cannot win a decisive victory against terrorism. However, some countries have seen modest successes. To determine the status of the continent as a whole, we must compare the recorded successes with the increasing number of bottlenecks for African development. Without diminishing the efforts of individual states, we must ask whether enough successes have been recorded to ensure a safe society where lives and

properties are protected. Unfortunately, they have not. African countries have actively fought against terrorism, but there is more that must be done.

Africa's fight against terrorism must become more collaborative if it is to be successful. Individual efforts cannot prevail against the geometrically growing strength and influence of terrorism. Our countries must adjust and adopt rapid, robust, and collaborative methods to fight it.

This is especially important for African countries. Other continents do not offer such favourable conditions — such as developmental stagnation and weak security forces — that accommodate terrorists looking to expand and create havoc. The Boko Haram group, which started in Maiduguri, Nigeria, more than a decade ago, has easily expanded its reach into countries along Nigeria's borders, including Chad, Mali, Niger, and some parts of Cameroon (Isaac, 2015). This growth is enabled by the porous borders existing between these countries. The expansionist agenda of terrorist groups does not recognize national boundaries, which puts other African countries at risk of actual or threatened terrorism.

The current situation makes a case for proactive counter-terrorism measures that use the collaborative strength of African countries. Every like-minded, progressive African country should come together and present a united front against terrorism on the continent. If African leaders fail to adopt a discreet, strategic counter-terrorism plan, lives and properties will continue to be at risk. This is not the time for fighting terrorism alone.

Experience has shown that little can be done through the individual efforts of African countries. Instead of surrendering or continuing to see feeble results on their own, African leaders should unite to address this continental crisis directly. A united front can make great gains in the fight against terrorism. The strength of each nation can be merged into combined counter-terrorism operations that consider the unique characteristics of different African countries, equitably allocating military forces and counter-terrorism strength across countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and places where terrorist groups threaten peace and stability. These joint measures could also prevent brutal terrorist groups from infiltrating other African countries that are not currently threatened.

It would be counter-productive, or at least ineffective, for African governments to be the exclusive actors in the fight against terrorism. The collaborative effort must include the private sector and national industries. A united front against terrorism can create fertile ground for cross-industry cooperation and private–public partnership across African countries. Terrorism affects the length and breadth of development in Africa, and it has particularly affected the growth of the private sector. It seems appropriate for entities in the private sector to collaborate with state governments to defeat a common foe.

This collaboration will only be possible with a corresponding commitment from the continent's leadership. It will allow Africa to leverage the private sector's strategic expertise and financial muscle to gain an advantage in the fight against terrorism. These efforts would



be more effective than the slow-paced achievements that individual states have recorded in their fights against terrorism. The united front will go a long way to address the continent's struggles with terrorism, but the methods that it uses will also determine how quickly they see victory.

African countries in the 21st century, either on their own or collectively, cannot rely solely on conventional methods to tackle unconventional terrorist threats. The methods adopted by African countries must reflect the realities of the 21st century to robustly engage terrorism in Africa. It is crucial to improve the state's capacity to deploy technology in collaborative counter-terrorism efforts.

The point of collaborative efforts are to rapidly respond to and arrest the over-arching menace of terrorism, not to replace each African country's ability to handle its own security issues. These countries should adopt a united, collaborative response strategy, but each African state will always be the most effective at tackling its own internal problems and maintaining its territorial integrity. No African country should see the call for a united front as an opportunity to neglect its own development.

The Way Forward: Technology to the Rescue

The war against terrorism cannot be won with conventional means. Terrorism is strategically planned, deploying unconventional methods to achieve massive destruction of life and property. If the strategic plans of African states continue to rely on conventional methods, they will fail to achieve victory. The effects of terrorism will linger, and more destruction will continue to sabotage Africa's development. Collaborative measures offer the hope of incremental progress, but this progress can be accelerated and expanded by adopting technological methods to fight terrorism.

The rapid advancement of internet connectivity and its increasing penetration into the African continent has paved the way for the adoption of advanced technology. The path to victory in the fight against terrorism runs through the conscious adoption of technological devices and systems. Protective measures for state combatants can defend the front-line forces, preventing fatalities and offering rapid treatment for battlefield injuries. Surveillance systems and advanced methods for detecting explosives should be adopted to identify improvised explosive devices and aspiring perpetrators of terrorist acts. Deploying these advancements will help prevent terrorist acts and reduce the number of fatalities due to terrorism.

Automated systems are essential in the fight against terrorism, but they must be guided by human activity. Human and automated approaches must be merged to draw on their unique advantages. For instance, the strategic deployment of robots can make massive headway in identifying and eliminating terrorist devices such as explosives and other weapons. They can also neutralize enemy targets. However, such robots are only as effective

as their designers' programs, which is why continued human involvement is necessary to complement their activities.

More is required than the mere deployment of technology; states must collaborate with internet technology companies. As the internet penetrates further into Africa, more people rely more heavily on the internet for conducting their daily activities. The same behaviour applies to terrorist organisations, not only in Africa but around the world. Different organisations have explored the internet space to propagate doctrinal messages that target youths to be recruited into terrorist organizations (Freiburger and Crane, 2008). This raises enormous concern for Africa's vast population of young people, who are the primary users of this internet (Ephraim, 2013); they can easily be targeted and recruited to commit anti-state violence.

The terrorist exploitation of the internet demands enhanced conscious engagement with internet technology companies and social media platforms to combat terrorism in Africa. This partnership would allow internet companies and other big technology firms to help filter public conversations on their platforms, detecting conversations or ideologies that champion actual or threatened terrorism. After detection, the removal of such comments and the identification of the people behind it can be undertaken by security operatives working hand-in-glove with internet and technology companies.

This sounds easy, but real challenges must be addressed when fighting the threat of terrorism with technology and the internet. One such challenge is the protection of crucial human rights. The emergence and application of these anti-terrorism technologies brings accompanying risks to human rights, specifically the rights to privacy, expression of self, and dignity. African governments and internet and technology companies must carefully regulate the content on their platforms. A fragile line separates the removal of content that promotes terrorism and the suppression of free speech.

This delicate boundary demands the implementation of strict measures to protect human rights. Clearly defined procedures must be followed to program automated devices that combat terrorism or identify and remove terrorist ideologies from public discussion. Answers must be provided that can guide the moral compass of state-supported actors to ensure that human rights are not surrendered under a pretext of fighting terrorism.

At what point should social media content be flagged for instigating terrorism? It is also important to consider context when dealing with perceived terrorist acts. Humans are more capable than automated devices when it comes to contextual understanding — if the latter are deployed, how can we ensure that legitimate content is not flagged or removed under the mistaken conception that it promoted terrorism?

What measures will protect individual privacy while ensuring that terrorist acts and ideologies are properly identified? These concerns must be solved before we can take the practical steps necessary to deploy technology in the fight against terrorism. In providing



clear answers to these questions, we can assure citizens that their rights will remain protected, securing their support in the fight.

It would be a good start to address these concerns, but it would not be the end — African countries cannot yet shout Uhuru. The deployment of technology in the war against terrorism is multifaceted; it must be addressed from multiple angles before African countries can declare victory.

Another area of concern is the proliferation of advanced technology and automation; no one can say that it is exclusively restricted to governments and other legitimate authorities in Africa. The current lax attitudes of African states regarding their security and their porous borders raises the concern over what could happen if terrorist groups had disruptive A.I. technology. It is a legitimate question to ask whether terrorists can acquire these devices and employ them against states. Terrorists who acquire advanced robotics can program them to massacre civilians independently, and self-driving automobiles can be loaded with explosives to carry out destruction and oppose the state.

These methods can make operations anonymous and untraceable. It reduces the possibility of casualties among terrorists, and they benefit from absolute or nearly absolute anonymity. The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant has already carried out attacks with A.I. technology, and it has announced that it is willing to deploy autonomous aircraft to destroy lives and properties (Brundage et al., 2018). If these possibilities become reality — and Africa's current state of affairs makes that seem plausible — it will be a nightmare for the entire continent.

This imminent danger requires robust legislation allowing African authorities to police the legitimate use of lethal weapons in the fight against terrorism. Ethical frameworks are necessary to regulate the deployment of lethal weaponry or automated technology for the fight against terrorism in Africa. These necessary measures will ensure that technology is deployed effectively, and that it will not be compromised to allow the proliferation of automated weapons that put innocent lives at risk.

The final concern that must be raised is the capacity of African countries for managing these systems. There are questions regarding their ability to integrate this technology with their existing counter-terrorism efforts, especially in the light of the previous argument: many African countries cannot effectively apply conventional methods in a direct fight against terrorism. The nature of these technological systems requires advanced expertise, capacity, funding, and commitment from African governments. It is sad that African countries are still in a position where they must endure valid criticism and questions about their capacity to handle technological advancements in this struggle.

This lack of capacity has been recognised as a potential bottleneck for progress among individual African countries, slowing the continent's development. There is an immediate need for a collaborative agreement between African countries to make progress in the fight

against terrorism. An argument can be made that this counter-terrorism collaboration should also involve the expertise of the private sector and industry experts. These actions should address concerns regarding the lack of capacity to deploy different technologies and innovations in the fight against terrorism in Africa.

Technological advancements are changing the way wars are waged, and Africa must change the way it wages war against terrorists. Africa has much to do in order to realize genuine development and growth. Although this journey is excruciatingly long, it will be nearly impossible as long as terrorism threatens the continent. African countries should continually evaluate counter-terrorism methods and engage in the active use of technology while retaining legitimate safeguards. Terrorism might not be eradicated through the deployment of technology — no matter how robust — but technology can drastically reduce its menace, dismantle its chain of causation, and help African countries forge ahead with development.

Conclusion

This keynote address has examined the political economy of terrorism in Africa, paying careful attention to the way that a country's political state is intertwined with its economy and development. I have covered three germane areas, which can be described as the Cause, Consequence, and Solution trajectory.

The cause is instability, which stems from the political management and affairs of African countries. The consequence of this instability is the existence and operation of terrorists, which has affected development and undermined the health of economies and the growth of countries. For a solution, this address is pushing for collaborative efforts from African leaders, development of state capacity for counter-terrorism, and the adoption of technology to make headway in the fight against terrorism.

The continued existence of terrorism will remain a barrier to development until conscious efforts are made to combat, suppress, and win the war against terrorist groups and their acts. Political and economic stability is the cornerstone of growth and development — in Africa, it is important to achieve this state of stability, because the development of any nation demands adequate planning through conscious efforts that are free from distraction. States cannot perform these vital tasks when the majority of their focus and resources are devoted to fighting terrorism.

To achieve national development, Africa must first eradicate, or at least greatly reduce, the menace of terrorism on the continent. When this is done, sanity can be restored to countries that are besieged by terrorism, formal and informal sectors can resume their daily operations, investor confidence can be restored, and the citizens can be assured of a society where their lives and properties are safe from violent attack and destruction.



Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

Professor Toyin Falola has written 130+ books on Yoruba, Nigerian, and African history, culture, religion, and politics. An editor of numerous academic book series and on the editorial boards of world's leading Africanist peer reviewed journals, Toyin Falola has shaped African Humanities on a global scale since 1981, when his PhD degree was taken at the University of Ibadan. He joined the University of Texas in 1991, and since then, he has been one of the world's best known experts on African decolonial history.

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