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Terrorist Insurgencies, Rebels and Militias in Asymmetric Conflicts in Africa

The use of terror, including the slaughtering of infidels and apostates, kidnappings of civilians and mass abductions, forced marriages and gang rapes of girls and women, is an expression of deeply held contempt for the extant social order.

By Ademola Araoye

The new terrorist insurgencies globally, as well as in Africa, are defined by the exclusivity of their highly partisan "sectarian objectives", as opposed to the "public good" and the deviation of their methodologies from humanistic underpinnings to the expression of hatred of apostates who do not share their fundamentalist spiritual craze. In essence, these sectarian insurgences defy all conventional definitions of revolutionary praxis and struggle.

The emergence of the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIL) epitomises this state of affairs and represents the clearest challenge to the concept of a harmonic convergence drawn on the limited experience of Euro-America. ISIL claims religious authority over all Muslims across the world and aspires

to bring much of the Muslim-inhabited regions of the world under its political control, beginning with Iraq, Syria and other territories in the Levant region, which includes Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus and part of southern Turkey. The global implications of the horror that such movements as al-Qaeda and its off shoots, the ISIL, whether in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Libya, Mali or Nigeria, has awakened the world to the sheer futility and falsity of denominating the grand narratives of the evolution of human society as an exclusively a Euro-American affair.

The world of the totality of humanity matters. This global society must count in any propagation of any perceived harmonic convergences that must undergird global stability and order. For Africa, the consequences of this have not brought happy news. In Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, this intersection with al-Shabaab has had a worrisome impact. Nigeria, in its debilitating confrontations with Boko Haram, is the poster image of Africa's continuing dangerous rendezvous with global history. It is a nation in double jeopardy emanating from the continuing denial of establishment Euro-America to the reality that although immediate local conditions, as in most of the Islamic world, may have enabled the rise of Boko Haram, its emergence is undeniably a part of the instability of the global landscape.

Danjibo elaborates on fundamentalism in relation to Boko Haram and other extremist insurgencies. He defines fundamentalism as an eclectic concept that can be viewed from three perspectives: (i) from a cognitive understanding where the work is associated with a closed type that expresses exclusivity, particularity, literality and moral rigour; (ii) from a cultural theological framework where the work expresses opposition to religious and cultural liberalism in defence of orthodoxy and religious traditions; and (iii) from a social movement perspective, fundamentalism denotes organisational and ideological uniqueness from other types of religious movements. Religious fundamentalism is a microscopic but also a literal understanding of religious practices and teachings, especially in

its relation to the direct transliteration of the Holy Scriptures and its insistence on the sacred perpetuation of the traditions. In other words, fundamentalists stress "authority of scripture and the necessity of righteous living". They also place great emphasis on "right doctrine and the necessity of organised warfare against the forces of modernism". It is in this context that the Maitatsine and Boko Haram may be understood as fundamentalist reactions to the Nigerian state and the global order that it perceives to be dominantly western and by implication, Christian.

Danjibo stresses the global nexus of Nigerian religious practice and organisation. He is emphatic that Nigerian Muslim organisations and the Christian counterparts are linked to the Middle East and the West respectively. The former look up to the Arab world

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for religious alliance while the latter tilt toward the Euro-American pole.[1] This broad polarisation of Nigeria was demonstrated in the sharp divisions that the American invasion of Iraq elicited in the country. In northern Nigeria some youth were explicitly supportive of Saddam Hussein, while local militias rose from parts of the south as volunteers for the American side.

African religious bodies, including fundamentalist Muslim and Christian groups, are tightly linked to global, mainly western and mid-eastern, religious networks and tend to become local extensions of the theological predilections and orientations of their metropolitan guides and allies. Boko Haram and al-Shabaab typify this. They draw much of their inspiration

and adopt and adapt tactics from the fundamentalist directions of such organisations as al-Qaeda and ISIL.

ISIL is a radical Islamist group noted for its extremely brutal tactics - including mass killings and abductions of members of religious and ethnic minorities, as well as the beheadings of soldiers and journalists. It has seized large swathes of territory in eastern Syria and across northern and western Iraq that it has declared an Islamic state. Its brutal methods have sparked fear and outrage across the world and prompted western military intervention.[2] Boko Haram has deepened its connection to ISIS by forming an information and material-support alliance and have been sharing military strategy. With the same basic ideology and similar objectives as ISIS, Boko Haram has been integrated into the larger global jihadist agenda to impose shariah law everywhere through the creation of caliphates in the Muslim world. They share the same operational philosophy in the use of terror to advance their fundamentalist cause and the more violence they can inflict on the infidels, the better, as far as they're concerned.[3]

The use of terror, including the slaughtering of infidels and apostates, kidnappings of civilians and mass abductions, forced marriages and gang rapes of girls and women, is an expression of deeply held contempt for the extant social order. These shocking tactics are also aimed at breaking infidel communities and demonstrating their powerlessness in the face of the unimaginable aggression of the Islamic extremists. These horrendous crimes are associated with the asymmetric warfare that they unleash at all levels of their campaigns; against the individual, community, national armies or international coalitions arrayed against their insurgencies. Their wars are not mediated by any rules. It is war unlimited in the middle-east, in Africa, in Asia and across Europe and America.

The charismatic Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. Boko Haram's official Arabic name is Jama'atuAhlisSunnaLidda'awatiwal-Jihad, which in English means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad".

Translated from the Hausa language, that is spoken across northern Nigeria, Cameroun, Niger Republic, Ghana and Tchad, Boko Haram means literally "Western education is forbidden". The organisation draws its fighters mainly from the Kanuri ethnic group, which is the largest in the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe that are the epicentres of their operations in Nigeria. But the group recruits from and operates in northern Nigeria and Cameroon from where Mohammed Marwa, the leader of Boko Haram's antecedent group, Mai Tatsine, hailed, Niger and Tchad. However, its main theatre of operations has been in north eastern Nigeria which has common borders with Cameroon where the group has declared an Islamic Caliphate. Boko Haram's main political objective is to upend the Nigerian social order, overturn the secular character of the Nigerian state that it has repudiated in favour of the institution of an Islamic fundamentalist society in a theocratic state.

Boko Haram was reincarnated from the ashes of an earlier violent religious sect, Mai Tatsine. Mai Tatsine is translated from Hausa as "people who curse". The group got its name from the notoriety of its preaching that were mainly diatribes and insults to the social, traditional and political establishment as well as the community at large. Indeed, it was reputed for its hatred of the immediate community in which the sect was founded and based. The spiritual leader of the movement was Muhammad Marwa a.k.a. Mai Tatsine.

The origins of the movement are shrouded in some controversy as some claimed that Muhammed Marwa was one of five Christian students sponsored by the Christian Association in the northern Nigeria, in Jos, in 1954 to study Islamic studies in Sudan. Their mission was to come back to Nigeria as Muslim clerics, use their Islamic knowledge to preach violence, distort original Islamic teachings and, if possible, cause riots and chaos in northern Nigeria. Two of the five provocateurs, this version goes, returned to execute the original plan; Muhammad Marwa deployed in Kano, in northern Nigeria, while the second,

simply identified as Birema, settled in Niamey in neighboring Niger Republic.

Mai Tatsine, which began its reign in the late '50s in Kano and some other parts of Northern Nigeria, is the forerunner of Boko Haram. Their ideologies are similar. In their fundamentalist orientation they forbade what Islam allowed, and allowed what Islam made haram. They claimed western education is sin, they rejected anything brought by technology, they were constantly saying things like "wearing a wrist watch is haram, using radios and television is haram"..[4] Notwithstanding the very tenacious engagement to propagate fundamentalist Islam in Nigeria the loss of lives in radical and militant confrontations with the government, some indeed still believed Mohammed Marwa remained a Christian until his death. In the often strange contortions that Nigeria's political process can take, whatever his true belief, Marwa's influence remains indelible in the character of Islamic fundamentalist insurgencies that has emerged in the country.

Meanwhile, Boko Haram has developed strong global networks that have complemented its fundamentalism with a murderous mindset that has been demonstrated in its genocidal proclivities.

The Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin – commonly known as al-Shabaab, is in the same category. Al-Shabaab is a clan-based insurgent and terrorist group and was the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts that took over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006. Al Shabaab was co-founded by Adan Hashi Ayrow, its first spiritual leader, and Ahmed Abdi Godane, under whom the hard-line Islamic militant group linked with global jihadist movements. Although most of its fighters are alleged to be predominantly interested in the nationalistic battle against the Somali Federal Government, al-Shabaab's senior leadership is affiliated with al-Qaeida and are believed to have trained and fought in Afghanistan. The merger of the two groups was publicly announced in February 2012 by the Emir of al-Shabaab and Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of al-Qaeida.[5] Its

most recent leader, Abdi Godani, 33, was killed in an American air raid on 1 September, 2014. Personifying the religious extremism of the group, he declared that had been sent "ahead of the hour with the sword so that Allah will be worshipped alone without partners". He became Emir [an Arabic word for leader] of al-Shabaab, a title that conferred him great spiritual clout. He became in effect the chief ideologue, custodian and interpreter of the 'pure' Salafi jihadi doctrine.[6]

Yet, against this background is the irreconcilable lifestyle of the leadership of the fundamentalist groups, whether in the Middle East or Nigeria, with the fundamentalist and anti-western preachments. In Nigeria, it was observed that Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, rode in exotic cars, including expensive jeeps, and enrolled his children in choice private schools and was attended to by private lawyers and doctors. Boko Haram is distinguished by both its objectives of establishing a fundamentalist exclusivist state and by its brutal methods. It is its inhuman methods that qualify it as a terroristic movement even if its objectives are to delegitimise an extant order or status quo.

Unlike Africa's classic revolutions, terrorist insurgencies are inhuman and positively inhumane. A salient conclusion is the dehumanisation and brutalisation of those who are perceived to be infidels or apostates in the terrorist campaigns by extremist Islamic insurgencies. This separates extremists from authentic African revolutionary movements that promote humanistic tenets as core to the integrity of the ultimate transformation of society that they seek to attain. Rebellions often have certain affinities or claims to revolutions but they belong to different classes in the scope and depth of their challenge to the status quo. In fact many rebellions are integral to the status quo, but have specific grouses. A rebellion is often relatively limited in the ends it may seek to attain. The scope of the changes that are sought may not necessarily lead to the birth of a new order. Indeed it may be the search for accommodation by the rebels in the status quo.

A coup d'etat may be a rebellion,

PRESIDING OFFICERS FOR THE FIFTH TERM OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Section 111 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, provides for the appointment of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker and also allows the Legislature to appointment Presiding Officers to assist them. The Legislature has adopted the Standing Rules that allows for the appointment of the Chairperson ad Deputy Chairperson of Committees. The four office bearers are collectively referred to as Presiding Officers.

THE ROLE OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

Presiding Officers oversee and ensure that the proceedings of the House during the sittings are adhered to.

The Speaker of the Legislature, as the political head and Presiding Officer of the House, is responsible for the running of the Legislature. The primary responsibility of the Speaker is to ensure integrity, independence and impartiality of the institution. The Speaker presides over meetings and debates and ensures that the Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) can freely participate in debates while keeping to the Rules of the House.

The Speaker is assisted by a Deputy Speaker who takes these responsibilities whenever the Speaker for any reason is unable to preside. The Deputy Speaker is generally also responsible for the welfare of the Members. Presiding in the House is done in a fair and impartial manner, ensuring fairness of debates in the House.

A Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Committees support the Presiding Officers by coordinating the effective functioning of the committees in the Legislature. They help to ensure that the programmes of the committees are in line with the legislative business.
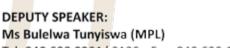
The Presiding Officers are also responsible for political management of the Legislature, overseeing adoption and implementation of policies and implementation of decisions of the House and Rules Committee. They put systems to follow up on petitions. They also bring cohesion among various political parties of the Legislature. The administration of the Legislature under the stewardship of the Secretary accounts to the Presiding Officers.

WHO ARE THE PRESIDING OFFICERS?

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but a secessionist bid comes closer to a revolution, while a liberation war such as the process led by the South Sudan Liberation Army (SPLA) represents a revolutionary process, particularly if the vision of post liberation society is based on radically different ideational premises.

The goals envisaged by the use of political violence determine the nature of the process, including the intensity of the force that the process may apply. A revolution is thus a rebellion in extreme dedicated to the complete overthrow of a hegemonic order, which may include armed struggle for independence by colonial peoples from a colonising regime or secession by a people who seek to free themselves from an oppressive authority. A coup d'etat is often a minimalist rebellion whose limited goals may range from the total disavowal of the extant political, social and economic order to seeking radical restructuring of the order, to even a mild reform of the status quo. These goals may be described as minimalist, since they do not seek to reject the foundational principles underpinning the prevailing systemic order. A revolution is an absolute rejection of the very principles undergirding an existing order and often entails intense violence to overthrow the entrenched order.

Revolutionary and rebel movements sometimes may bring together, at least at the core of the leadership hierarchy, rational actors who have a clear set of political goals that are perceived to be best attainable through the application of force. In the least, therefore, revolutionary and rebel movements must be able to project force. They must also convince the status quo that they possess such capabilities to be credible. Revolutions seek systemic power transitions, social transformation and transformations in economic relations of power. Rebellions may aim for less having failed in the deployment of persuasive means to achieve change or reform.

The legion of rebel movements in West Africa include the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and its splinter group the Independent National Patriotic

Front of Liberia (INPFL) as well as United Liberia Movement (ULIMO) or the Liberia United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) as well as the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) in Liberia, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone and the Force Nouvelles in Cote d'Ivoire that transformed itself into Cote d'Ivoire's post conflict national army.

The trajectory of the Forces Nouvelles from a clannish rebel force to becoming the rechristened national army, Force Republicaines du Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) presents a classic example of the evolution of a contemporary rebel organisation against the state with its international backers; the neo–colonial power deploying the rebellion as a proxy to achieve its strategic objectives. It started as a band of disgruntled non-commissioned

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officers led by I. B. Koulibali, later to be murdered by the pro-France, pro Blaise Compaore Guillaume Soro faction of the rebellion, that acting with the support of the Burkinabe government, mutinied in September 2002 and sought the overthrow of the emerging neo-nationalist Laurent Gbagbo Ivorian state. Pushed out of the capital Abidjan, the group was, with the encouragement of French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villipen, officially transformed into a formal rebellion by the help of French forces 23rd BIMA based in Abidjan, which created a buffer zone to protect the rebels. The French sabotaged sub-regional efforts to negotiate a resolution of the crisis. It put in place a Linas-Marcoussis process designed to advance its planned strategic objective

of installing a French local proxy and overseer of its Ivorian affairs. This came to fruition in the controversial takeover of the country a decade after through elections that were clearly lost by the local patron of the rebellion and the proxy of France, Alhasane Ouattara.

Again in neighbouring Liberia, rebels were on hand to advance France's agenda to the detriment of Africa. Charles Taylor's horrendous NPFL was aided by the collusion of Burkinabe and Ivorian governments to overthrow the brutal regime of Samuel Doe. The role of Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire under Houphouet Boigny was partly to derail gains in what was perceived as the Nigeria led regional integration project of ECOWAS. The political objective of the two states was to align the geo strategic interests of France to consolidate its formal hegemonic status in Africa. Toward this goal, it was crucial to keep the Francophone/Anglophone divide in West Africa and strengthen exclusivist Francophone socio/political and economic platforms against the Anglophones. The price of support for Charles Taylor was the deployment of its forces to assassinate Thomas Sankara, the revolutionary and charismatic young leader of Burkina Faso, who was betrayed by his deputy Blaise Compaore. Charles Taylor in turn was on hand as an accomplice to the genocidal war of Fonday Sankor's RUF against Sierra Leone. Cote d'Ivoire under Houphouet Boigny and Blaise Compaore's Burkina Faso had been the centres of the strategic destabilisation that tore apart the social fabric of West Africa for two decades.

From the early sixties, political violence has gradually escalated both in its intensity and the frequency of its occurrence across the sub region. In Nigeria, it is estimated that 10,000 people have been killed in political violence in the last three years. Since the last decade, West Africa has been characterised by an unbroken arch of conflicts that stretches for over a thousand miles from the West to the East of the sub region. This arc begins from Senegal through Guinea Bissau across Sierra Leone, Liberia to Cote d'Ivoire. In more recent times, Mali and Nigeria have been linked to this arc of sub-regional instability. The

countries share close proximity and three of them have contiguous borders. Cultural affinities of the various peoples of the sub region also flow across international frontiers. These affinities have had implications for the spread of political violence.

The prominent use of violence to achieve political ends in the region began in 1963 with the assassination of Togolese premier Sylvanus Olympio by ex-soldiers that toppled his government. In neighbouring Ghana in February 1966, President Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by Colonels Afrifa and Kotoka. Massive violence in western Nigeria foreshadowed the military insurrection of majors that overthrew the Tafawa Balewa government in 1966. By 1967, the federal government was embroiled in a civil war to put down the Col Odumegwu Ojukwu led self-declared state of Biafra. That conflict is reputed to have claimed over 1 million lives. The Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC), led by Abbe Augustine Diamacoune Senghor, launched a secessionist bid from Senegal in 1982. Thirty-two years later, a low intensity conflict still simmers in that province.

In 1999, civil conflict in Guinea Bissau, which had fought a historic revolutionary war of liberation for over 12 years, led to the violent overthrow of the General Bernandino Vieira regime by his Chief of Defence Staff, General Ansumane Mane. In a stark deviation from the revolutionary guidelines of Amilcar Cabral, General "Nino" Viera had exploited racial antipathies to overthrow Louis Cabral from office in 1980. Vieira, a Papel, who returned to office through the ballot box in 2005, was killed by renegade Ballanta soldiers on 2 March 2009, apparently in retaliation for a bomb blast that killed Guinea-Bissau's military chief General Batista Tagme Na Waie, a Ballanta. Viera was accused of planting the bombs. The troubled Lusophone country in the sub region shares contiguous borders in the north with the South of the Casamance, and it was admitted that the civil conflict was perceived as directly related to the international politics of the insurgency in the Casamance. In November 2000,

head of the military junta, General Ansumane Mane took up arms against the democratically elected President Kumba Yala. In September 2003, remnants of the old military junta finally deposed the President.

In spiralling violence in the sub region, by November 2003, Liberia had been at war for over 24 years. It began with the Samuel Doe's bloody "revolution" in April 1980 that resulted in the assassination of President William Tolbert at the hand of private Harrison Pennoh.[7] Within one month of taking over the entire cabinet of President Tolbert had been put to death. Thereafter many others were brutally eliminated including General Thomas Quinwokpa on charges of coup plotting. In December 1989, the Charles Taylor led National Patriotic

> ❝ The proliferation of militias in unstable states may lead to the emergence of warlords who delineate their territorial spheres of control and stake their claims as the political sovereigns of those states. ❞

Front of Liberia (NPFL) invaded Nimba county of Liberia from Cote d'Ivoire.[8] Since then, the Liberian state has imploded and had been reconstituted through mainly sub-regional efforts. Doe's death sparked hellish tribal and factional fighting.[9] As a result of new insurgency from another rebel movement, Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Charles Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria and the country has imploded again. The intractable crises spawned numerous militias and chaos elements that controlled different parts of the country. The post Taylor transitional administration was protected by the ECOWAS sub regional intervention force and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until a democratically elected government led by President

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came into office.

In Sierra Leone, from 1991 army corporal Fonday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with the unwavering support of Charles Taylor,[10] took up arms against the government of Major General John Saidu Momoh. This was in retaliation for President Momoh's hosting of Liberia rebels in Sierra Leonian territory. In fact, the United Liberia Movement of Alhani Kromah and later the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy, both Mandingo aligned rebel movements, were funded and created by Mandingos in Sierra Leone and Guinea, both sharing contiguous borders with Liberia. Two other coups, and continuous bloodletting from Fonday Sankoh's armed elements, preceded the democratic elections that brought John Tejan Kabbah into office. The RUF came to the notice of the international community by unleashing mind-boggling violence against the people of Sierra Leone. In September 2002, in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire, after a very bloody attempt to unseat President Laurent Gbagbo, the Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire retreated to the central town of Bouake where the movement has consolidated its control over 65% of the national territory. Like Charles Taylor before them, the MPCI set up an embryonic state within Cote d'Ivoire. As a result of the pervasive violence, security became a concern in the sub region,[11] as it was awash with rebels, militias and chaos elements.

Yet, it is possible, as witnessed in West Africa, that legitimate revolutionary processes and political rebellions, in the hands of unsophisticated and crude actors, decay. The decay of revolutions may be marked by the gradual retrenchment of the hitherto lofty original humanistic and altruistic goals. In its stead, violence becomes a norm and chaos an end in itself. Was that the case with Charles Taylor and the NPFL that were established to end a monstrous dictatorial regime? Could also his predecessor Sergeant Samuel Doe who, egged on by the progressive movement of Liberia, rose from the margins of society to challenge an illegitimate century and half old internal apartheid social order superintended by the True Whig party,

lost the will to pursue a constructive revolutionary path?

Further still, it is critical to delineate between rebellions and militias and chaos elements. Rebel movements are characterised by their amorphous structure. While a tightly knit corps of conspirators may serve as the nucleus, the nature of the enterprise cannot sustain a formal and institutionalised organisation in the very beginnings of rebellion. While a hierarchy may exist, it is the exigencies of the struggle that determines the distribution of responsibilities and power within the organisation. The leadership may be constituted by mostly non-commissioned officers taking important decisions, often with only a few commissioned officers.

Rebel armies are risk acceptant, largely because their operations are opportunistically determined and have no distinct political control. The political leadership is fused with military command. There is therefore no superintending higher political authority with oversight. This implies that rebel armies are not accountable. The lack of control and accountability is more acute at the beginning of the campaigns of the movement. One reason for this is that rebel armies, by their very aims, seek to destroy the basis of the social contract and the subsisting social order between the governing elite and the governed. While the goal of the military establishment may be to protect the integrity of the state, the territory and its institutions, the goal of the rebellion is to destroy this.

Generally conflict in Africa is impacted by transnational sociological affinities across the continent. The crisis crossing of cultural affinities across national frontiers implies that while rebellion may have been motivated by both political and economic interests and developments internal to one country, the internal interests may impact on groups that are not direct participants in the process. The conflicts thus invite the attention of ethnic cousins across the borders. In this scenario that may be described as intermestic, transnational interest groups may be motivated to join a rebel movement across the border to protect perceived corporate interests

of the transnational ethnic or religious groups in the political contentions of the conflict. So a significant percentage of combatants in rebel movements operating in any one country in the sub region may come from neighbouring states. This is sometimes with the connivance of the governments of those states. There is thus wide extra territorial catchment area for rebel groups in the West African sub region.

These facts were demonstrated in Cote d'Ivoire where Burkinabes dominated the Ivorian rebel Forces Nouvelles, and the Kru/Krahn group from Liberia, transnational ethnic cousins of Gbagbo Bete group, fought on the side of the Laurent Gbagbo administration. This situation leads to the beginnings of mercenary activities as was amply demonstrated by the rebel movement RUF in Sierra Leone and the incursions of Liberian fighters on different sides in the Ivorian civil war. If the rebel movement manages to discover an internal source of generating revenue, a new political economy of the war may threaten the political focus and may lead to the decay of the rebellion. In this case, the political economy of the war may lead to factionalisation of the rebel movement that further complicates the intervention process and negotiations to bring the conflict to an end. Militias often emerge from such further splintering of rebellions in decay.

Militias are fairly unstructured rabble-rousing armed social groups that are often motivated by a very narrow agenda, which may not necessarily be political. They are often the nucleus of military formations in the service of one person or at the command of one person or an ethnic chieftain. The proliferation of militias in unstable states may lead to the emergence of warlords who delineate their territorial spheres of control and stake their claims as the political sovereigns of those states. Somalia presents an extreme example of a failed state carved out among war lords backed by heavily armed militias.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a surfeit of groups that typify militias in Africa. It has coined the term Mai Mai or Mayi Mayi to refer any kind of community-based militia group formed to defend their

local territory against other armed groups. Many were established to exploit the unending conflicts and war for their own advantage by looting, cattle rustling or banditry. They also extort monies from artisanal miners prospecting for minerals in many areas where state authority is tenuous or non-existent. Small bands of armed forces led by warlords, traditional tribal elders, village heads, and politically motivated resistance fighters fall under the term "Mai Mai". Because Mai Mai are loosely structured owing loyalty to the person of the band leader, internal cohesion is fragile.

Importantly though, different Mai Mai groups are allied with a variety of domestic and foreign government and guerrilla groups at different times. The Mai Mai were particularly active in the provinces in the east bordering Rwanda, North Kivu and South Kivu (the "Kivus"), which were under the control of the Rwanda-allied Banyamulenge-dominated rebel faction, the Rally for Congolese Democracy-Goma (RCD-Goma). The two most powerful and well-organised Mai Mai groups in the Kivus were led by Generals Padiri and Dunia, but now there is another Mai Mai group which is called Mai-Mai Yakutumba which was organised in 2007 by General Yakutumba. Other less prominent Mai Mai groups, include the Mudundu 40/Front de Résistance et de Défense du Kivu (FRDKI) and Mouvement de Lutte contre l'Agression au Zaïre/Forces Unies de Résistance Nationale contre l'Agression de la Républíque Démocratique du Congo (MLAZ/FURNAC), were reported to be cooperating with the Rwandan military and RCD-Goma.[12]

Meanwhile asymmetric wars have become the hallmark of extremist movements such as the Boko Haram and ISIL. In the last decade, in northern Uganda and South Sudan as well as along the borders of Congo Kinshasa there is the elusive Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In Nigeria, it is Boko Haram. The defining trait of groups engaged in asymmetric warfare is their operational resilience, their resoluteness and impermeability to sentimental pleadings from their enemies that they only despise. Unlike rebellions and quasi-revolutionary movements that

often decay, especially in Africa, those mobilised on theocratic foundations often fight to the last man standing. It is also of note, even if ironically, that these violent movements, whether in Iraq, Pakistan, Uganda, Somalia or Nigeria, also recruit, abduct and indoctrinate women and girls to do battle. This completes their defiance of orthodoxy in all realms.

Asymmetric warfare is, paradoxically, described as conflicts where opposing protagonists have starkly unequal military resources, and the so-called weaker fluid insurgent uses unconventional weapons and tactics. The unconventional tactics of the extremists integrate every conceivable form of atrocity; as terrorism, rape of men and women alike, abduction and conscription and use of child soldiers who are indoctrinated, as default instruments of conflict. Executions of captured enemies and mass slaughter of innocent civilians, often tagged as unbelievers or apostates, are frequently undertaken.

It appears that abductions, for which the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) first and now Boko Haram have become notorious, are important to replenish the combatant forces and also to build the human infrastructure and logistics of the insurgency. They also hold hostages to extract resources to buy weapons and humiliate their victims as proxies of their enemy population that they despise. Importantly, they are also to express contempt for the target society that they aim to destroy. Given the history of the stout resistance of the Chibok community to the penetration of Islam all around its locale, the humiliation of that target community is a plausible explanation for the unusual cruelty meted to them by Boko Haram. They also exploit the vulnerabilities of the enemy, including probing opportunities offered by the spatial distribution of enemy population, exploitation of local affinities, deployment gaps and infrastructural deficiencies in the opposing army. The enemy, the apostate, is then defined as anyone, including women, children and civilians, who does not profess the fundamentalist credo of the mad terrorists. Perceived as the "weaker" combatants, they use strategy to offset deficiencies relative to the larger conventional army in quantity or quality of military assets.

In a classic scenario, these ferocious small forces have often metamorphosed from modest beginnings, mobilised by fundamentalist religious theology, Islamic or Christian, to which they are passionately committed and which they violently seek to entrench in areas under their control. For these groups, coercion, preferably gruesome death, is the ultimate weapon for the propagation of the faith. In their confrontations with armies, the strategies employed by the terrorist side may not necessarily be military in form. It is terror inflicted on both the uniformed enemy and the civilian population that drives home the seriousness of the mission for which

> ❝Transnational interest groups may be motivated to join a rebel movement across the border to protect perceived corporate interests of the transnational ethnic or religious groups in the political contentions of the conflict.❞

they are ready or indoctrinated to die.

It is important to observe that in all cases, the engagements that are elicited are not structured as conventional rebellions. This new kind of unlimited war has become the dominant form of conflict in the last decade or so mostly in third world theatres. In almost all cases, the covert and overt coordination of international effort from interested parties on both sides has been required to advance the cause of and also to contain the non-state armed movements that are involved in asymmetric warfare. This is because every one of these conflicts is also located within a certain sub regional and the larger international geo-strategic context.

Within the larger context of unmediated and unlimited violence generated by the imperatives of clashing dominant global systems of thought, including incongruent theological orientations internal to the so called hegemonic faiths, the African state, as currently constructed, fractious and factionalised, is archaic and unsuited to survive. The complexities of the internal structure of the African state, the configuration of its states system and the alignment of transnational sociological affinities in this states system leave room for opportunistic interventions of emergent destructive and centrifugal forces; imported forces of darkness. Could then this challenging reality serve as the motif force to drive the formulation of the contours of an agreeable post-Mandela continental order that should begin with a reformed African social ferment undergirded by an Africanist afrocentric thought system? Could these be distilled as the legitimising parameters of a new African age? Could all these renaissant strides be interventions integral to the definition of an inclusive concept of a global harmonic convergence within the framework of an unending grand narrative of the evolution of human society? ∎

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