History and root causes of terrorism in Africa

Samuel M Makinda

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is fourfold. First, it explains briefly why it is difficult to find a universally acceptable definition of terrorism. Second, it describes how history is crucial to any explanation and understanding of terrorism in Africa. Third, it discusses how and why socio-economic factors, lack of social justice, porous borders and poor governance mechanisms and structures have triggered , and could still trigger, disaffection that could lead to terrorism in some parts of the continent. Fourth, it suggests three ways of responding to the threats of terrorism in Africa, bearing in mind the primary responsibility to protect the people and preserve their values, norms and institutions.

Terrorism, in its various incarnations, has plagued Africa for many decades. It has manifested itself in various forms, depending on time and space. For this reason, the history of terrorism in Africa should not be seen as a single progression from one point or level to another. It is variegated and nuanced. Similarly, the root causes of terrorism in African states should not be assumed to be identical or straightforward. For example, the causes of terrorism in Algeria in the 1950s/60s, when Algerian nationalists were fighting the French colonial authorities for independence, vary immensely from the causes of terrorism in the same country in the 1990s, when some Muslim groups took up arms after the 1992 general elections were annulled. Even if we were to focus on the 1950s or the 1990s, the causes of instability and insurrections in various parts of Africa differ. For example, the causes of an insurrection such as the Mau Mau in Kenya in the 1950s were not similar to those that underpinned the Algerian resistance during the same period. Similarly, the causes of the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) in the 1990s differ from the circumstances that caused Muslim militants to take up arms in Egypt during the same period.

While it is misleading to assume that the history of terrorism in Africa is a smooth progression, it is possible to make certain generalisations about history and terrorism, not the history of terrorism, in Africa. Moreover, while it is tempting to separate the occurrences of terrorism in Africa from those in the Middle East, this separation is unsustainable given that several African countries also belong to the Arab League and the Islamic Conference Organisation. Indeed, a former Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, stated that Egypt belonged to three circles: Islamic, Arab and African. Applying Nasser's logic, one could argue that terrorist attacks in countries such as Egypt, Morocco or Algeria could have impacts on Africa, the Arab countries and the Islamic world.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Many people use the word 'terrorism' frequently, but they do not all refer to the same thing. Indeed, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism.[1] In simple terms, one can say that terrorism is a technique of warfare that is as old as human society. Over the years, the word 'terrorism' has been used and abused by policy-makers and analysts. Those who seek to delegitimise the goals or tactics of their opponents often label them 'terrorist'. Hence the claim that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter.

To appreciate the difficulty of defining terrorism, one needs to look at the following exchange between Ned Walker, then Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East, and Congressman Lee Hamilton, then chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the US House of Representatives:[2]

> *Hamilton:* Well, how do you define terrorism, do you define it in terms of non-combatance?
>
> *Walker:* The State Department definition, which is included in the terrorism report annually, defines it in terms of politically motivated attacks on non-combatant targets.
>
> *Hamilton:* So an attack on a military unit in Israel will not be terrorism?
>
> *Walker:* It does not necessarily mean that it would not have a very major impact on whatever we were proposing to do with the PLO.
>
> *Hamilton:* I understand that, but it would not be terrorism.
>
> *Walker:* An attack on a military target. Not according to the definition. Now wait a minute; that is not quite correct. You know, attacks can be made on military targets which clearly are terrorism. It depends on the individual circumstances.
>
> *Hamilton:* Now wait a minute. I thought that you just gave me the State Department definition.
>
> *Walker:* Non-combatant is the terminology, not military or civilian.
>
> *Hamilton:* All right. So any attack on a non-combatant could be terrorism?
>
> *Walker:* That is right.

Hamilton: And a non-combatant could include military?

Walker: Of course.

Hamilton: It certainly would include civilian, right?

Walker: Right.

Hamilton: But an attack on a military unit would not be terrorism?

Walker: It depends on the circumstances.

Hamilton: And what are those circumstances?

Walker: I do not think it will be productive to get into a description of the various terms and conditions under which we are going to define an act by the PLO as terrorism.

The above exchange suggests that the meaning of terrorism cannot be fixed in time or space. Even governments have problems formulating a working definition. For example, the Australian government's 2004 white paper on terrorism declares that "even the United Nations has been" unable "to achieve consensus" on the issue, thereby compelling individual states "to develop their own definitions for the purposes of enacting legislation to counter the threat".[3]

Some of the activities that have been canvassed under this term include assassinations, kidnappings and bombings.[4] The meaning of terrorism is historically contingent, and the activities it describes may stem from political, religious, social, cultural, economic, or environmental factors. Even global norms such as the right to self-determination have given rise to terrorism.

Terrorist organisations differ widely in their goals, strategies and tactics. For example, the goals and tactics of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, which has been in existence since the mid-1980s, are quite different from those of al-Qaeda's supporters who destroyed the American diplomatic missions in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998.

Different labels have been used in the past to describe what is now called terrorism: insurgency, guerrilla war, revolutionary war, and subversive war.[5] In the 1970s and 1980s, terrorist groups gained media publicity through high-profile kidnappings, assassinations and aircraft hijacking. This emphasised that terrorism involves the indiscriminate or arbitrary use of violence. Terrorists may also seek to intimidate a people, society, state or government so that they give in to their demands. Indeed, a thread that runs through the entire tapestry of terrorism is the terrorists' lack of responsibility towards the innocent people that die as a result of their actions. Without taking responsibility towards fellow human beings, terrorists ensure their actions have little chance of being justified on ethical grounds.

HISTORY AND TERRORISM

While history is an important source of data and information about the past, it does not provide a value-free and accurate picture of the entire past for several reasons. First, the past is known only because some facts were recorded or can be remembered by those who witnessed them. Those who record the facts do not record everything, so they must select. Selection of facts involves interpretation of what is significant and what is

not. Even those who recollect what they witnessed often select some facts and ignore others. So, historical analysis is, to some degree, a selective endeavour. Second, the historians and others who seek data from archives or from interviews with those who witnessed the past make prior assumptions about what they want to look for. In so doing, they subject the past to re-interpretations of prior interpretations, which, in turn, makes it difficult to produce value-free history. Indeed, by sifting through historical records, historians re-interpret the past. However, not all interpretations are equally valid. To be valid, an interpretation needs to be predicated on the prevailing global norms, rules and institutions, and, at the same time, ought to comply with existing methodological and epistemological assumptions.

An interpretation of past terrorist activities in Africa is likely to reveal at least four waves or categories of terrorism: the pre-independence nationalist movements; the post-independence civil war problems; the transplantation of the Israeli-Palestinian issue to the continent; and the emergence of the al-Qaeda network, with its headquarters in an African country (Sudan) in the 1990s. Al-Qaeda-supported terrorism is the most dangerous form of political violence to come out of Africa. These four waves are interrelated. For example, the nationalist phase was implicated in the civil war stage. Similarly, the transplantation of the Israeli-Palestinian issue to the continent had a bearing on the creation of the infrastructure that the al-Qaeda network later exploited.

Nationalism, the liberation struggle and other wars of independence in some parts of Africa involved political violence. African leaders and their supporters encouraged revolutionary wars as an antidote to the institutionalised violence of colonial authorities or white minority regimes. However, whether this revolutionary violence could be termed terrorism depends on who is interpreting the history in question. Any study of the history of African nationalism in South Africa, for example, would be nothing but a re-interpretation of the records of how those who controlled the apartheid regime understood their role in society (an interpretation) and how the African nationalists viewed their roles as liberators (another interpretation). Was Nelson Mandela of the early 1960s a terrorist or a legitimate fighter struggling for the liberation of the black majority? Based on the rules that existed at the time, it is plausible to argue that he was a terrorist. He was among those who sought to use violent means to bring an end to the system of government that obtained in South Africa, albeit a governance system that was universally condemned.

However, if one looks at Mandela's role from the point of view of a people's right to self-determination, which is enshrined in international law, he was a legitimate fighter seeking to improve the political, economic and social conditions of his people.[6] If one searched the news reports in the South African newspapers at the time, one would perhaps not find any report that interpreted his activities in terms of international law or the right to self-determination. This is why we need to recognise that in the majority of cases, history is basically a reinterpretation of prior interpretations. Nevertheless, a re-examination of the Mandela case, through the lenses of the dominant global norms, rules and institutions, would suggest that the valid interpretation is one that portrays him as a legitimate liberator.

What has been said about Nelson Mandela could be said of other cases of nationalist resistance in Africa, including the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya in the early 1950s, the Algerian war of liberation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the Frelimo resistance struggle against the Portuguese colonial authorities in Mozambique in the 1960s and 1970s. The African nationalist liberation movements throughout the continent had a broad base of support, as they were perceived as legitimate representatives of the colonised people. Many of the leaders executed their actions in the name of the people that they represented. Owing to the nature of Pan-Africanism, most of them built cross-national networks that utilised violence against colonial and white minority regimes.[7] As stated above, they were legitimate in the eyes of the colonised people. Their activities were variously described as insurgencies, guerrilla wars, civil wars or revolutionary wars by the colonial or white minority regimes, but in view of the prevailing norms, rules and institutions, international society would regard them as legitimate.[8]

If nationalist forces constituted the first wave of terrorist forces in Africa, protagonists in African civil wars constituted the second wave. These included the Biafran secessionists in Nigeria in the 1960s, the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (Unita) in Angola from the 1970s to the 1990s, various political groups in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo) in Mozambique in the 1980s, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Sudan from the 1980s. Of the governments that were battling civil wars, the Ethiopian regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam was the only one that admitted it was using terror against its opponents: borrowing the Soviet language of the early 1920s, the Mengistu regime claimed it was using 'revolutionary red terror' against 'counter-revolutionary white terror'.

In much of Africa, there were major differences between the political violence of nationalist movements and of post-independence organisations. While pre-independence nationalist forces were regarded as legitimate liberators, the post-independence guerrilla forces, many of which were supported by their own ethnic groups, did not enjoy the same level of legitimacy among the African masses. Unlike the nationalist liberation movements which targeted Western or white minority regimes, civil war meant that Africans targeted fellow Africans. Indeed, some of them were seen as traitors to the Pan-African ideal of integration. However, some of the post-independence insurgents waged legitimate struggles to try to rid their countries of authoritarian rulers.

Terrorism in Africa was not always restricted to continental African issues. For example, from the 1970s, African states, some of which are members of the Arab League and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, took sides on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. It was not long before some of these countries served as platforms for Palestinian hijacked airlines. The hijacking of a French Airbus from Athens to Kampala, Uganda, in 1976, for instance, marked the first violent intrusion of the Arab-Israeli conflict in Eastern Africa. This appeared to reflect a collaborative effort between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Idi Amin's Uganda. The hijacking came to an end when the Israeli Defence Forces, making use of Kenyan facilities, launched a daring rescue effort. By this time, Idi Amin had embraced the Palestinian cause by invoking Islamic solidarity, but he also saddled Eastern Africa with the baggage of transnational terrorism. The repercussions of the Entebbe episode worsened already strained relations between Kenya and Uganda. Even though the Israeli rescue mission contributed to the weakening of the Idi Amin regime, in December 1980, in revenge for the Israeli rescue, a Palestinian-linked terrorist group bombed the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, killing several people. Moreover, the hijacking of a Lufthansa flight to Mogadishu in October 1977 by a Palestinian group highlighted the reality that Africa was increasingly becoming involved in Middle Eastern-generated terrorism, over which it had no leverage. This was confirmed by Libyan complicity in the mid-flight bombing of a UTA airliner over Niger in 1989 that killed 171 people.

In the 1990s, African states started to be affected by the fourth and most dangerous wave of terrorism emanating from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network. For example, the *Groupement Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group, GIA), which was formed in Algeria in December 1992, was inspired by al-Qaeda. Unlike the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which took up violence after the annulment of the 1992 Algerian general elections, the GIA saw itself as a Muslim force waging war against infidels and apostates.

The African dimension of al-Qaeda is attested to by a number of factors. First, one of the network's leaders, Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, is an Egyptian and therefore an African. Most press reports refer to al-Zawahiri as bin Laden's deputy, but this appears to stem from a misunderstanding. As Rohan Gunaratna argues, it was al-Zawahiri who transformed bin Laden "from a guerrilla into a terrorist".[9] In other words, it was an African who turned bin Laden into the most feared person around the world and helped to turn bin Laden's ideas into reality. The second African dimension of al-Qaeda is that in the mid-1990s Sudan, an African state, not only hosted bin Laden, but also allowed him to establish al-Qaeda's headquarters there. It was the leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front (NIF), Dr Hassan al-Turabi, who invited bin Laden to Sudan after he had fled Saudi Arabia to Pakistan.[10] At the time, Turabi, who built up his Islamic fundamentalist network in Sudan from the mid-1960s onwards, was very close to Sudan's military ruler, General Omar Hassan al-Beshir. From Sudan, the NIF and al-Qaeda hoped to destroy the predominantly Christian SPLA and to spread fundamentalist Islam to other parts of Africa. Indeed, since the 1990s, al-Qaeda supporters have carried out terrorist attacks in a number of countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco and Tanzania.[11]

A brief interpretation of history shows that terrorism in Africa manifested itself in four forms. First, it was restricted to African issues, especially the liberation struggle. This form of political violence, which was directed at forces of foreign occupation, was justified in terms of self-determination. Second, terrorism in Africa manifested itself in the form of civil wars in various countries, including Angola, Congo, Rwanda and Sudan. In this incarnation of terrorism, the struggle took the form of African against African, and one ethnic group against another. Third,

African governments embraced the Palestinian cause and transplanted the Israeli-Palestinian problem to the continent. Fourth, the emergence of al-Qaeda into a feared network was helped by an African Muslim scholar and an African country. The simultaneous terrorist attacks on American diplomatic missions in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998 by al-Qaeda supporters could be interpreted as a culmination of the transplantation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Africa, but it was also the start of the most dangerous wave of terrorism in Africa to date.

CAUSES OF TERRORISM

Terrorism may be based on political, religious, social, cultural, economic or environmental factors, but not all these factors have been behind every terrorist attack in Africa.

The four waves of terrorism in Africa emanated from different sources. For example, nationalist liberation movements were largely driven by the desire for self-determination. In this case, the root cause was Western colonialism and its racial, disempowering and discriminating policies. The nationalists sought to end the humiliation to which colonialism had subjected them.[12] In other words, the first wave of terrorism was underpinned by the need to empower African peoples politically, economically, socially and culturally. Kwame Nkrumah described it as the restitution of the African personality.[13]

The second wave of terrorism, which was associated with various civil wars, was driven by a multiplicity of factors, such as failure to deliver the political and economic benefits promised during the liberation struggle, dissatisfaction with colonial boundaries, and differences in ideology. For example, in Ethiopia, the civil war was driven partly by the desire of Eritreans for self-determination, and partly by ideological struggles and power ambitions among other groups, such as the Tigrayans and Oromos. In other countries, such as Angola, Unita was in large part driven by ideological differences and personal ambitions. In other parts of Africa, civil wars have been caused by corruption in high places, the use of public institutions to benefit only one or two ethnic groups, the manipulation of technical services, including intelligence analyses, for selfish ends, and the lack of transparent, accountable and responsible governments.

These problems have bred discontent and, in some cases, compelled people to take up arms to fight for justice and equality. Indeed, political mismanagement and marginalisation of some ethnic groups has been one of the causes of civil wars and instability in Africa. At the socio-economic level, one could point to misguided macro-economic policies, a lack of employment opportunities, corruption in the awarding of government tenders and other economic benefits, worsening poverty and the economic marginalisation of some groups.[14]

The third wave of terrorism in Africa, which was associated with the Israeli-Palestinian problem, was underpinned by the perceived injustices in the Palestinian territories. The lack of self-determination and social justice in the occupied Palestinian territories and the failure of the international community to implement various United Nations Security Council resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967, persuaded African states to embrace the Palestinian cause in the 1970s.

The main causes of the fourth wave of terrorism in Africa, which is associated with the al-Qaeda activities, partly stem from inadequate security and governance institutions. The emergence of al-Zawahiri and his supporters in Cairo could be explained in terms of the tensions that have existed for many years between some religious groups and the Egyptian government. Beyond this, the existence of porous borders in much of Africa fosters an environment that is amenable to exploitation by extremist and criminal groups. Indeed, border security is so inadequate in many African states that governments cannot keep out foreigners, including al-Qaeda elements. There is hardly any African country that has the capability to police its coastline, whether it is on the Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea or Red Sea. In addition to a lack of adequate border security, African states rely on poorly trained and corrupt intelligence personnel. Without substantial capacity building in the areas of analysis, detection and prevention, African states will increasingly find it difficult to keep out al-Qaeda elements.

Moreover, the extent of corruption in the civil services of many countries means that the governments of these countries cannot prevent foreigners from acquiring their passports. For example, Eastern European mercenaries were able to infiltrate the highest levels of government in Kenya in early 2006 simply because of their relations with the daughter of one senior politician in the country. In other words, unless African states establish effective, transparent, accountable and responsible governments, they will continue to leave themselves open to exploitation by non-state actors, including terrorists.

Another factor that might create conditions that could make terrorism possible is the phenomenon of state failure or collapse. There is no clinical definition of failed, failing, disrupted or collapsed states.[15] However, policy-makers and commentators often use these terms interchangeably to refer to African and other developing countries that have experienced or may be experiencing different levels of governance problems.

Although there is recognition that international society has a moral responsibility to help its poorer members, these terms partly stem from the mistaken belief that all states, regardless of time and geographical location, are expected to exhibit similar characteristics. Commentators and policy-makers have frequently referred to Somalia as a failed state, but if one looked carefully, one would wonder whether Somalia is a failed state or simply a society that never became a state. When did Somalia start to fail as a state? During the colonial period, Italian Somalia and British Somaliland were governed as different entities and did not constitute a single functioning state. When the two sides came together in 1960 following independence, the new Somali Democratic Republic was not united, as various clans competed ferociously for power. These clans united temporarily whenever they wanted to pursue irredentist claims against Ethiopia and Kenya.

Prior to Siad Barre's military coup of 1969, Somalia was virtually ungovernable, with more than 60 political parties representing different clans and vying for political power. As a dictator, Siad Barre established a one-party dictatorship and

made no efforts to nurture state institutions. For several years before Siad Barre was driven out of office in 1991, Somalia's cabinet was divided and functioned like a federation of clans. The national army was also divided along clan lines, with new army recruits going to the sectors controlled by their clansmen. But whereas Somalia is currently going through anarchy, it cannot be accurately described as a failed state, because it was not a unified state with well-developed institutions that most states take for granted.

Nonetheless, the anarchy in Somalia, like that which has plagued other African countries such as the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, potentially creates a haven for criminal gangs, drug traffickers, pirates and terrorists.[16] Therefore, there is a need for international society to intervene and help restore stability where order has evaporated. However, the key to success lies in asking the right questions, listening to the people affected, and delivering solutions that have meaning, not for the helpers, but for those people being helped. Through such an approach, international society can help failed, disrupted or collapsed states back to their foundations and thereby prevent terrorists from exploiting them.

RESPONDING TO TERRORISM

The key challenge for African states is to establish institutions that address the root causes of terrorism, particularly the last three waves of terrorism discussed above. The ideal situation is for individual African states to develop the capacity to address terrorist threats effectively. However, given the lack of expertise and institutional infrastructures in much of Africa, there is need for collective action at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional levels. National action is important, but it is insufficient to address the three waves of terrorism effectively. This section will not address the bilateral, sub-regional and regional mechanisms for addressing terrorism. It simply focuses on the issues that need to be considered after sub-regional and regional mechanisms have been established.[17]

There are many ways of tackling terrorism in Africa, but this article looks at only three of them: the traditional, institutional and developmental approaches. The 'traditional' counter-terrorism approach relies on the use of intelligence agencies, the police and the judiciary. It does not address the root causes of terrorism, as it offers only a band-aid solution. In the past, this approach was effective in containing terrorism in Germany, India, Italy, Britain, and other countries, but it did not involve the erosion of civil liberties. Some scholars and policy makers might argue that in the aftermath of the events of September 2001, the traditional approach does not work. Those who would make this point would be ignoring the fact that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were possible partly because of the failure of US intelligence agencies to share information. Unfortunately, the US and other governments over-reacted and instituted far-reaching counter-terrorism measures even before the cause of 9/11 had been fully investigated. The legislative measures that have been undertaken undermine democratic governance and fundamental freedoms, and inconvenience the citizens of democratic states.

The use of the traditional approach would have several advantages. First, it would demonstrate that governments have not panicked or been intimidated by the terrorists to inconvenience their own citizens. Second, it would create an atmosphere for enhancing democratic governance and basic freedoms, while combating terrorism. In other words, the use of the traditional approach would be consistent with efforts to enhance security: that is, the protection of people as well as the preservation of their values, norms, rules and institutions.

The 'institutional' counter-terrorism option is based on the understanding that institutions can reduce the likelihood of terrorism in various ways. First, institutions constitute the identity and regulate the behaviour of actors, including governments and terrorists. Without institutions, there would be no sense of order, security and justice. Second, to the extent that institutions also constitute terrorism, the challenge is for policy makers to devise ways of promoting those institutions that promote human solidarity and encourage the 'self' to respect the 'other'. Keohane argues that one of the functions of institutions is to limit the use of large-scale violence and 'to provide a guarantee against the worst forms of abuse ... so that people can use their capabilities for productive purposes'.[18] Disseminating and enhancing institutions that promote human solidarity can help remould the identities of would-be terrorists and modify the behaviour that leads to terrorism. Such efforts may include providing education, showing respect for cultural, ethnic and other differences, and supporting the struggle for self-determination and the promotion of democratic governance. Thus, the institutional approach would meet the ethical requirement of the 'self' assuming responsibility for the 'other'.

The 'development and social justice options' are the most appropriate in Africa. Development and poverty alleviation have been part of the global normative structure since the 1940s. However, the meaning of 'development' has evolved. After World War II, it was associated with self-sustained economic growth and measured in GDP figures. Development also referred to attempts to redistribute resources between countries. Since the 1980s, the term 'development' has come to refer to qualitative and quantitative changes in a variety of areas: economic, environmental, political, cultural, social and human. At first, this effort to expand beyond economic-oriented development included provision of basic needs such as shelter, water, sanitation, education and health, which are a part of social justice. Social justice has been defined as 'a morally justifiable distribution of material or social rewards, notably wealth, income and social status'.[19] The expanded definition of development is reflected in the UNDP's *Human Development Report*, which, since 1990, has listed maternal and infant mortality rates, access to health, education and safe water, as indicators of a country's development.

Development has further expanded to include human empowerment, especially increased participation by the people in the management of their economic, political, cultural and social affairs. As Boutros Boutros-Ghali argues, development 'can only succeed if it responds to the needs of the people, and if it articulates these needs into a coherent policy framework'.[20]

Development includes capacity building in its broadest sense, thereby implying the introduction of new ideas, standards, institutions, norms and techniques of overcoming obstacles to human progress. It also includes democratisation, an independent judiciary and an open, responsible and accountable government. Thus, development provides the basis for security.

Moreover, development, poverty alleviation and social justice can reduce the chances of terrorism by facilitating human empowerment while at the same time eliminating the conditions that produce political discontent. As Wolfensohn says:

> The international community has already acted strongly, by confronting terrorism directly and increasing security. But those actions by themselves are not enough. We will not create that better and safer world with bombs or brigades alone.[21]
>
> ...
>
> We must recognise that while there is social injustice on a global scale – both between states and within them; while the fight against poverty is barely begun in too many parts of the world; while the link between progress in development and progress toward peace is not recognised – we may win a battle against terror but we will not conclude a war that will yield enduring peace.[22]

Poverty per se does not cause terrorism, but it can combine with other factors to ignite political violence. Wolfensohn says: 'Poverty is our greatest long-term challenge ... poverty which, while it does not necessarily lead to violence ... can provide a breeding ground for the ideas and actions of those who promote conflict and terror.'[23] Moreover, poverty, combined with the politics of identity, can fuel terror. People such as those who masterminded the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 do not have to come from poverty-stricken homes in order to identify with the poor. These terrorists might have been rich, but they defined their identities in terms of the aspirations of those who had been denied justice in the Middle East. Development, poverty alleviation and social justice can help people redefine their identities and refocus their interests and energies, and, thereby, reduce the chances of terrorism.

CONCLUSION

Mapping the history of terrorism in Africa requires an understanding that the past does not reveal itself to researchers. It is the researchers who employ various methods to try to understand what they seek to uncover. In so doing, the researchers re-interpret the past from archives and records, which are basically previous interpretations of phenomena. Only interpretations that are based on the prevailing norms, rules and institutions, and are, at the same time, consistent with universally recognised methodological and epistemological assumptions are considered valid. This paper's interpretation has included the African liberation struggles and civil wars in the history of terrorism on the continent.

If the political violence unleashed in the course of nationalist struggles constituted terrorism, the root causes of terrorism on the continent must have included the oppressive and discriminating policies of the colonial and white minority regimes. In other words, by describing African liberation fighters as terrorists, this paper accuses Western powers and white minority regimes of planting the seeds of terrorism. If the battles waged by civil war protagonists constituted terrorism, the root causes of terrorism have included the authoritarian and misguided political and economic policies of the post-independence regimes.

The latest wave of terrorism in Africa has been inspired by the global al-Qaeda network which was founded by the Saudi-born Osama bin Laden. While al-Qaeda may be regarded by many African leaders as a foreign or non-African entity, it was at one time headquartered in Sudan. Moreover, al-Qaeda's foremost ideologist, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was born and bred in Egypt, an African state. In a sense, al-Qaeda has a strong African link.

The best counter-terrorism approach for African states should be based on political and economic empowerment, social justice, development, creative institutional designs and capacity building. These values would undermine the root causes of terrorism, guarantee stability and security in the long term, and enable Africans to take responsibility for the security of their fellow Africans. In other words, a values-based counter-terrorism strategy would be ethically sound.

NOTES

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2   Hearings and Markup before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 101st Congress, First Session, p 66.

3   Australian government, *Transnational terrorism: The threat to Australia*, Canberra, 2004, p 3.

4   See Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the liberal state*, Macmillan, London, 1977, pp 47-68.

5   See, for instance, Che Guevara, *Guerrilla warfare* Pelican, 1966, chapter 1; Geoffrey Fairbairn, *Revolutionary guerrilla warfare*, Penguin, 1974, chapter 1; and Amilcar Cabral,

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8   On the link between liberation and revolutionary warfare, see Kwame Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary warfare*, Panaf Books, London, 1968.

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21 J D Wolfensohn, A partnership for development and peace, <http://wwics.si.edu/NEWS/speeches/wolfensohn.htm> (8 March 2002).

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.