International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT
CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation

I. OVERVIEW

Somalia's growing Islamist radicalism is spilling over in-to Kenya. The militant Al-Shabaab movement has built a cross-border presence and a clandestine support network among Muslim populations in the north east and Nairobi and on the coast, and is trying to radicalise and recruit youth from these communities, often capitalising on long-standing grievances against the central state. This problem could grow more severe with the October 2011 decision by the Kenyan government to intervene directly in Somalia. Radicalisation is a grave threat to Kenya's security and stability. Formulating and executing sound counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation policies before it is too late must be a priority. It would be a profound mistake, however, to view the challenge solely through a counter-terrorism lens.

Kenya's North Eastern Province emerged as a distinct administrative entity dominated by ethnic Somalis after independence. It is, by most accounts, the worst victim of unequal development. A history of insurgency, misrule and repression, chronic poverty, massive youth unemployment, high population growth, insecurity, poor infrastructure and lack of basic services, have combined to produce some of the country's bleakest socio-economic and political conditions.

Two decades of conflict in neighbouring Somalia have also had a largely negative effect on the province and Kenyan Somalis. The long and porous border is impossible to police effectively. Small arms flow across unchecked, creating a cycle of demand that fuels armed criminality and encourages clans to rearm. Somali clan-identity politics, animosities and jingoism frequently spill over into the province, poisoning its politics, undermining cohesion and triggering bloody clashes. The massive stream of refugees into overflowing camps creates an additional strain on locals and the country. Many are now also moving to major urban centres, competing with other Kenyans for jobs and business opportunities triggering a strong official and public backlash against Somalis, both from Somalia and Kenya.

At the same time, ethnic Somalis have become a politically significant minority. Reflecting their growing clout, Somali professionals are increasingly appointed to impor-

tant government positions. The coalition government has created a ministry to spearhead development in the region. A modest affirmative action policy is opening opportunities in higher education and state employment. To most Somalis this is improvement, if halting, over past neglect. But the deployment of troops to Somalia may jeopardise much of this modest progress. Al-Shabaab or sympathisers have launched small but deadly attacks against government and civilian targets in the province; there is credible fear a larger terror attack may be tried elsewhere to undermine Kenyan resolve and trigger a security crackdown that could drive more Somalis, and perhaps other Muslims, into the movement's arms. Accordingly, the government should:

❑ recognise that a blanket or draconian crackdown on Kenyan Somalis, or Kenyan Muslims in general, would radicalise more individuals and add to the threat of domestic terrorism. The security forces have increased ethnic profiling but otherwise appear relatively restrained – especially given past behaviour; still, counter-terrorism operations need to be carefully implemented and monitored, also by neutral observers;

❑ develop effective, long-term counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation strategies. A link exists between radicalisation and terrorism, but counter-terrorism tactics aimed only at stopping Al-Shabaab and other militant groups should not become the only official response. Counter-radicalisation – reducing the appeal of radicalism – and de-radicalisation – persuading people who are already in radical organisations to leave them – are long-term processes that require tact and patience.

❑ allocate, along with donors, additional state and development resources to North Eastern Province and elsewhere to rectify decades of neglect and end some of the social problems that drive radicalisation;

❑ study madrasas, perhaps through a local university, to learn which are most radical and influential, both to better understand the problem of their radicalisation and to moderate extremist teachings; create a Muslim Advisory Council of respected leaders, open to hardliners, but representing all Kenyan Muslims, that is responsive to the community's concerns and aspirations, able to articulate its message to those in power and competent in formulating the reform measures needed to improve its well-being; and

❑ develop a process, with community input, for selection of a Grand Mufti: Kenya, unlike many African countries, has no supreme Muslim spiritual leader whose primary function is to provide spiritual guidance, and when necessary, make binding pronouncements on vexed issues by issuing edicts (*fatwa*). It would be difficult, of course, to find a unifying figure, given the sectarian and regional tensions, but it should be feasible.

Because of the policy immediacy relating to Kenya's intervention in Somalia, this briefing focuses on Kenyan Somali radicalisation. The growth of Islamic extremism among Kenyan and Tanzanian Muslims on the coast will be the subject of a future study. The recommendations, nonetheless, apply to all of Kenya.

II. A TROUBLED HISTORY

Before independence, the North Eastern Province was part of the Northern Frontier District, a much larger (twice the size of England) administrative region. Throughout much of its history, it remained an arid, desolate and obscure corner of the greater Horn of Africa, inhabited by nomadic tribes.[1] Prior to European colonisation, the area was nominally controlled by the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose administration was based in the coastal cities.[2] In 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company leased about 150 miles of coastline from him, from the River Tana to German East Africa (Tanganyika, now Tanzania). However, the company failed to prosper, and in 1895 London proclaimed a protectorate and turned the administration over to the foreign office. What is now North Eastern Province and southern Somalia was of marginal economic interest, and in 1925 Britain transferred a large chunk,

Jubaland and the port of Kismayo, to Italian Somalia, as part of the reward for Italy's World War I alliance.[3]

A. THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT

The formation of a Somali nation state from the union of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia raised the issue of the status of Somali inhabited areas in neighbouring states, including the Northern Frontier District of British Kenya. With Kenya's independence imminent, many Kenyan Somalis agitated for merger of their region into Somalia, a call supported by the Somali government.[4] Although the majority opinion in the Northern Frontier District favoured secession, the Regional Boundaries Commission, set up in 1962, recommended that the predominantly Somali-inhabited areas remain in Kenya as the North Eastern Province.[5] Kenya's Somalis saw this as betrayal. They boycotted the 1963 elections to select the government that would take over from the British after independence on 12 December and began a rebellion.

B. THE SHIFTA WAR

An acute sense of injustice and anger at the colonial fiat nourished a Somali perception that they had no stake in independent, multicultural and "Christian" Kenya. This triggered a series of armed irredentist insurrections in the early 1960s that came to be known as the Shifta War. Newly independent Kenya sent in its security forces, which brutally suppressed the rebellion, and declared a state of emergency in the province that lasted for almost 30 years.

The insurrections espoused pan-Somali nationalism, largely inspired by Somalia – a heavily-armed Cold War client of the Soviet Union keen to replace Ethiopia as the dominant Horn power. President Siyad Barre fomented rebellion in neighbouring Somali-inhabited regions primarily to weaken those regimes rather than annex territory. The plight of ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya was his pretext to meddle (Kenya) or intervene (the 1977-1978 Ogaden War with Ethiopia).[6]

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[1] These were mainly the Hamites and Nilo Hamites (Samburu, Turkana and Rendille) and Cushites (Somali, Boran and Oromo). Frequent clashes over pasture and water were generally brief. Somali clans rose to dominance in the north east by gradual conquest and migrations over three centuries, displacing some earlier inhabitants, mainly Boran (an Oromo sub-ethnic group), Samburu and Rendille (the latter with close physical, cultural and linguistic resemblance to Somalis). Migration patterns and settlements were largely dictated by livestock and disease. Cattle-keepers (mainly Ogaden clans) – moved south to perennial water (Juba and Tana Rivers); camel-keepers (Hawiye and Dir clans) moved to more arid regions in the north. Ian M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 18-32; Gideon S. Were and Derek A. Wilson, *East Africa through a Thousand Years* (London, 1984), pp. 61-63.
[2] Although the Sultan still nominally ruled much of the East Africa coast, the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 granted Britain a "sphere of influence" along the coast and inland across the future Kenya, including parts of now southern Somalia.

[3] Responsibility was transferred from the foreign to the colonial office in 1902, Ian M. Lewis, *A Modern History*, *op. cit*.
[4] Ibid, pp. 183-201.
[5] David D. Laitin, *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience* (Chicago, 1977), p. 75.
[6] Somalia gave arms and other support to the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which emerged in the turmoil after the 1974 coup that toppled Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie and imposed the Derg (military council). Trying to capitalise on continued discord, Siyad Barre invaded in July 1977 and quickly captured much of the Ogaden. However, its Soviet patron switched sides, and Ethiopia, aided by thousands of Cuban troops, quickly reversed those gains. The defeat initiated the

The Shifta War was Kenya's invisible conflict, waged in a remote corner when human rights reporting was in its infancy and mass media state controlled. The rest of the country was unaware of much of its horrors. A highly-sanitised official account cast the conflict as one between a treacherous community of *shifta* (bandits), backed by Somalia, and a new nation striving to create a democratic, just and multi-ethnic society. Mogadishu portrayed it as a struggle by an oppressed people to regain freedom and rejoin *Somaliweyn* (Greater Somalia). The war left a powerful legacy that continues to disfigure politics, perception and discourse. Its history and aftermath have given rise to instrumentalised narratives – by one side to radicalise, by the other to justify policies of exclusion and repression.

The insurgency was ended through military means, with no formal peace agreement or closure to the grievances. Many underlying political issues were left to fester, with neither dialogue nor reconciliation. Consequently, no meaningful disarmament took place. Hostilities simply assumed a different character and turned internecine. Remnants of the rebellion regrouped into armed gangs engaged in highway banditry, livestock theft and poaching. The criminality served as Nairobi's justification to maintain emergency laws and continue brutal security operations. The Somalis considered the latter to be motivated by a desire to "deal with unfinished business"; the period is symbolised for them by the 1984 Wagalla Massacre, in which hundreds if not thousands were killed during an operation to seize weapons.[7] To many, the sense of anger, helplessness and alienation generated by the post-war security operations was worse than during the conflict itself.

III. GOVERNMENT MISRULE AND NEGLECT

While much of Kenya suffered varying degrees of misrule, especially under Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi, few regions have been as badly governed as North Eastern Province.[8] The process to extend the central government's writ over the troubled region was gradual and complicated by history, its huge size, arid geography, dispersed population, insecurity and lack of infrastructure. The first rudimentary civilian administration took shape in 1965 and then only after hefty allowances were promised to the first wave of officials, soon to be absorbed into a new department called the Provincial Administration.[9]

Most in the top tier – the Provincial Commissioner, district commissioners and district officers – were not natives of the province, and central Kenyans were overrepresented. The thinking was that posting civil servants and other administrators outside their home regions would foster national cohesion and patriotism. This ideal was undermined by growing nepotism and an unofficial policy of sending troublesome administrators to the region as punishment.[10] In those early days, many officials lacked education and training.

No single institution has been as central as the Provincial Administration to the decades of misrule. It was essentially designed to consolidate and maintain the Kenya African National Union (KANU) one-party dictatorship.[11] Unelected, equipped with extensive powers, operating its own Administration Police and loyal to no arm of government but the office of the president, it quickly evolved into a power centre whose members were widely perceived as arrogant, insensitive and above the law[12] Their conduct

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slow collapse of Barre's regime, from which Somalia is yet to recover.

[7] Crisis Group interview, civic leader, Wajir, North Eastern Province, September 2011. The current Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya is investigating gross human rights abuses it calls the North Eastern Massacres (including the Wagalla Massacre) committed in the 1970s and 1980s. "Grave Violations in NEP: Kenyans Expect Justice", in the web-published newsletter "The NEP Special Pull-out". Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, August 2011. Billow Kerrow, "The Wagalla Massacre was a crime against humanity", *Daily Nation*, 9 February 2010; "Kenya: Wagalla massacre survivors testify", BBC News, 18 April 2011. Al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Mohamud Rage has played to Kenyan Somalis' sensitivities by reminding them of the Wagalla Massacre. Hamsa Omar and Sarah McGregor, "Somali rebels threaten to carry out attacks against Kenya", 28 February 2011.

[8] Human development indicators are much lower in North Eastern Province than in other provinces in Kenya. "5th Kenya Human Development Report", UN Development Programme (2006), p. 15.
[9] This included a "hardship allowance", as well as cheap alcohol and cigarettes from the AFCO (the Armed Forces Canteen Organisation – a subsidised retail outlet that sold exclusively to the security services). Crisis Group interview, district officer and ethnic Somali, Nairobi, October 2011.
[10] Avery Burn, "Feeling the Pinch: Kenya, Al-Shabaab, and East Africa's Refugee Crisis", *Refuge*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2010).
[11] KANU was the party of both Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi. Kenya was a de facto one-party state between 1969 and June 1982, when it became a de jure one-party state; it reverted to a multi-party state in November 1991.
[12] The Provincial Administration openly used state resources to support incumbents and routinely stuffed ballots. It transformed the *Harambee* ("all pull together" in Swahili), a fundraising event aimed at encouraging self-reliance, into an extensive ex-

reinforced old fears, fed alienation and stoked mass discontent. Implementation under the 2010 constitution of a decentralised government that replaced the Provincial Administration with elected governors and county officials was long overdue.

1. The Moi regime – brutal if slightly more inclusive

Daniel Arap Moi became president in 1978, after Jomo Kenyatta's death. His first official act was to unveil his new political slogan – *fuata nyayo* (follow in the footsteps) – primarily aimed at reassuring Kikuyu elite, who had prospered under Kenyatta, and Western allies.[13] It also signalled that the new president did not intend major domestic policy shifts. This was a huge disappointment to many who hoped he would tackle some of the serious socio-economic and political grievances that had accumulated since independence.[14]

In North Eastern Province, state neglect continued, living standards deteriorated and repression and insecurity worsened. The security services continued to perpetrate abuses, including the Wagalla Massacre, but a subtle change began in 1982. A coup by junior Luo and Kikuyu military officers, most from the air force, was foiled by loyalist soldiers under the command of an ethnic Somali army major, Mohamoud Mohamed Borrow. He was promoted, put in charge of a revamped air force and soon appointed chief of general staff, becoming in a short time one of Moi's most trusted allies and a key beneficiary of his vast patronage system.[15]

Moi had other aims beyond rewarding a loyal officer and his family. He was feeling increasingly insecure. An underground political movement, Mwakenya, was fomenting unrest in the universities. Domestic and international pressure for political reforms, especially an end to the one-party model, was mounting. To shore up his position and maximise support, he reached out to previously marginalised communities, including by appointing some of their leaders to key posts.[16] Subsequent political developments, notably the decision to adopt the multiparty system in 1991, made Moi even keener to court Somalis. Leaders of the newly-emergent political parties had the same idea.

The collapse of the Somali state in 1991 diminished Nairobi's fears of a cross-border conflict or a foreign-sponsored rebellion, allowing Moi greater ambition and flexibility in his Somali outreach within the province and beyond. Keen to project himself as a regional statesman, he used North Eastern Province connections to convince Somali leaders to accept Kenya as a venue for their 2002-2004 peace negotiation (first in Eldoret, then Mbagathi). He also forged close business links with Somali tycoons.[17] His outreach strategy collapsed around 2002, when he began actively campaigning for Uhuru Kenyatta, son of the first president, to succeed him. The province voted overwhelmingly for the opposition, led by Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki, and Kibaki became the next president.[18]

2. The Kibaki administration – new "soft" style without much substance

The Kibaki administration has been more sensitive to the province's needs. The modest steps taken have been well received by the public.[19] Much of the change in popular attitudes is due to the "soft" style adopted, even though it has not delivered on many campaign promises, such as restitution for past injustices and addressing underdevel-

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tortion racket. Many administrators became very rich. Henry Amandi, "Persistence and Change of Neo-patrimonialism in Post-Independence Kenya", research paper prepared for the project "Persistence and Change of Neo-patrimonialism in Various Non-OECD Regions", July 2009.

[13] Moi is Kalenjin. The Kikuyu tribe, from central Kenya, tended to dominate politics and business, even before independence.

[14] Kenya's first development policy was to invest in high potential areas in the belief that the results would trickle down to less productive areas. That never happened. Places that received government investment advanced, while the low-priority areas remained impoverished. Many areas that benefited were those to which the president had ties. See, "Sessional Paper No. 10 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya" in "Readings on Inequality in Kenya, Sectoral Dynamics and Perspectives", Society for International Development Eastern Africa Regional Office, 2006, p. 4.

[15] General Borrow became a very wealthy real estate developer. Emman Omari, "Tycoons who hold wealth of the country and wield power", *Daily Nation*, 1 September 2011. His brother, Hussein Maalim, held various cabinet portfolios over two decades. Many others in the extended family (the Mahamed Zubeyr

sub-clan of the Ogaden) were rewarded by the state. Ibid. Its great wealth was resented in the province and became a major factor in KANU's diminishing influence there.

[16] Moi significantly increased the number of Somalis in the Provincial Administration. One, Yusuf Haji, now defence minister, was a provincial commissioner who served for nearly two decades in the Rift Valley.

[17] This was partly motivated by a desire to attract Somali investment to his home region. Eldoret Airport was for a period a central aviation hub for Somalia. During that time many goods were smuggled from Somalia into Kenya. David Okwembah, "Corruption rules as illegal imports flood Kenyan market", Sunday Nation, 11 July 2009.

[18] The 2002 elections brought the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government to power. Its principals were the National Alliance Party of Kenya (itself a coalition), headed by Kibaki, and the Liberal Democratic Party, headed by Odinga.

[19] Crisis Group interviews, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, September 2011.

opment. An affirmative action education policy has increased the number of students from the region at public universities, and a northern Kenya development ministry has been created, but not well funded.[20] Controversy still simmers over the 2009 census, which allegedly undercounted the Somali population. There are also hard to substantiate claims that Kenya continues to support the U.S.'s extraordinary-rendition policy.[21] Finding a credible solution to past abuses, such as the Wagalla Massacre, and addressing concerns about the census and counter-terrorism policies would help advance healing and normalisation in the province, but the intervention in Somalia complicates this process.

IV. ISLAMISM AND RADICALISATION

The Islamic radicalisation that is observable in many Muslim societies has its roots in revivalist movements that emerged in the 1950s.[22] Kenyan Muslims are no exception. They have become more observant, and a small portion has become radicalised. The Kenyan Muslim community – 4.3 million of the country's 38.6 million population according to the 2009 census – has been exposed to various strains of radical Islamism in the last four decades, much of it based on an amalgam of Salafi theologies, the best supported of which has been Wahhabism. Salafi radicalisation was gradual and unfolded in three distinct phases, each complementing the one before.

The first wave occurred in the late 1970s and coincided with Saudi Arabia's emergence as an oil power keen to export its brand of Islam. It was essentially theological and driven by an unstated proselytising agenda. The aim was to subvert the traditional Shaf'i *mazhab* (sect) and related Sufi orders and convert their adherents to Wahhabism. The proselytising drive was initially reliant on organisations run by Indian and Pakistani expatriates, most of them adherents of conservative sects popular in the Indian subcontinent, such as Deobandism and Tabligh Jemaat.[23]

Dissemination of Salafi ideas and values had a lasting impact on the community. Conservative Muslims resent the dominance of Western-style entertainment and consumerism, and the Salafi quest for doctrinal "purity" and "authenticity" fomented discontent with modernity and the secular state. The community grew more insular, puritanical and conservative; sectarian animosities escalated, and traditional support for moderation and coexistence waned.

The second phase started in earnest in the early 1980s. It was overtly political, rested on the Salafi creed and unfolded against the backdrop of Iran's Islamic Revolution.[24] The political message of the new generation of Salafi radicalisers[25] was simple, but compelling: "pure" and "authentic" life was impossible under a secular state, not least because it did not allow Muslims to live in conformity with Sharia (Islamic law). Muslim minorities had no business seeking accommodation with the state. Short of overthrowing the state, the only options were to emigrate – as the Prophet Muhammad did – or struggle for separatism.

The third stage unfolded in the 1990s, entirely driven by a new generation of Salafi Jihadi militants and groups. This added a deeply militant layer on top of small but influential radicalised institutions, based on a distinct puritanical theology and a potent political narrative.

The jihadis neither invented a new language nor a new theology but simply built on the solid foundation established by their predecessors. The novelty of their world

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[20] According to the assistant livestock and development minister, Aden Duale, the ministry was only allocated Ksh 400 million (about $5.3 million) for development in the 2008/2009 budget. "Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)", 12 August 2009. The official government figures state that the ministry was provided in total Ksh 2,395 million in 2008/2009; 2,975 million in 2009/2010; and 3,155 million in 2010/2011. See www.northernkenya.go.ke.
[21] "Turning Pebbles: Evading Accountability for Post-election Violence in Kenya", Human Rights Watch, December 2011.
[22] For more, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005.
[23] The chief exponents of Salafism in the 1980s and 1990s were mainly the Islamic Foundation, the Young Muslim Association

and WAMY (World Assembly of Muslim Youth), all Saudi-funded. The first two were run by expatriate scholars and technocrats recruited from India and Pakistan. They built a vast network of charities, madrasas and health clinics in Muslim-dominated areas. Madrasa graduates obtained full scholarships to study in Saudi and Pakistani Islamic universities. Magazines and newsletters in English and Swahili were launched, often targeting the educated and professional classes. Tabligh Jemaat is a conservative missionary movement that is often castigated by salafis for its practices. In most parts of the world, it is apolitical and not involved in violence, but in part because of similarities of appearance, it is frequently used as a cover by more extreme groups.
[24] Iran strove to export its Shia faith and brand of radicalism to Kenya, which has a tiny Asian Shia community that has traditionally stayed out of politics. A member, Naushad Merali, is among the country's wealthiest businessman. The community showed no signs of radicalisation despite close links with Iran. Attempts to radicalise Shia were intense in the 1980s and early 1990s, but have petered off. The targets were communities in Nairobi and Mombasa. These activities triggered serious sectarian tensions with Wahhabi groups; Jamia Mosque (Nairobi's largest) was the battleground.
[25] Like counterparts elsewhere in the Muslim world, they were influenced by Sayyid Qutb, Abu al-A'la Maudoodi and other Islamist ideologues.

view and discourse lay in the elevation of jihad to a supreme act of faith, promotion of the cult of martyrdom and justification of terrorism. The *umma* (Islamic community) had failed because it had been co-opted by *kuffar* (unbelievers), was fragmented and sought to achieve its aim by secular methods. The Muslim condition was the same everywhere, their grievances and rage commonly shared. Jihad was an apocalyptic imperative: to emancipate the *umma* in preparation for the day of reckoning. It had to be waged simultaneously locally and globally.

The chief proponent of this violent millenarian message was al-Qaeda. It had by the early 1990s forged links with a number of groups in the Horn of Africa, principally al-Ittihaad al-Islami (AIAI), an armed Islamist movement that waged a violent campaign in south-western Somalia until militarily defeated in the mid-1990s by Ethiopia.[26]

A. AL-ITTIHAAD

AIAI was an early prototype of an Islamist group that is both a product of radicalisation processes and a radicalising agent in its own right. Its rise, fall and ideological longevity offer lessons indispensable to understanding the nature of Salafi Jihadi Islamism and radicalisation within the Somali-speaking region. Most important, military defeat did not lead to the demise of its extremist ideology. If anything, it added to its virulence, increased its force and inspired the emergence of Al-Shabaab. Nor was organisational disintegration total, as most accounts suggest. Key members scattered over the Somali-speaking Horn of Africa – Kenya included – and beyond, blending in and even regaining political and business influence. A decade later they formed the leadership nucleus of the Union of Islamic Courts and later Al-Shabaab.[27] This suggests sophistication and resilience and also the level of societal collusion. AIAI was not a chance occurrence but the product of a radicalised society. It is only fringe in so far as it acted out the Salafi values and ideas passively accepted and embedded in wider society.

AIAI maintained a formidable clandestine support network in North Eastern Province throughout the 1990s and beyond. It actively recruited jihadis, raised funds and kept a low-level presence along the border districts of Man-

dera and Garissa.[28] It infiltrated the influential Wahhabi clerical establishment that controls most mosques in the province;[29] gained control of charities and funnelled *zakat* (Islamic tax) money to support its activities and start commercial ventures for its members; and radicalised and recruited Kenyan Somalis.[30] There is little evidence it made any serious attempt to radicalise other Muslim communities in Kenya. Its primary target was ethnic Somalis in North Eastern Province and Eastleigh, a Somali-dominated enclave in Nairobi, though this does not mean it did not seek to cultivate ties with Salafi jihadis elsewhere in the Horn – mostly those in the Ethiopian Ogaden region, but also in Kenya's Coast Province. It likewise forged links with an al-Qaeda cell active along the East African coast that attacked the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998.[31]

AIAI's brand of Salafi jihadism had a distinctly pan-Somali nationalist flavour. Leaders such as Hassan Dahir Aweys considered a pan-Somali state an important first step on the long march towards reestablishing the Islamic caliphate.[32] This agenda enabled it to gain tactical advantage and attract wider support (though no groundswell among ethnic Somalis in North Eastern Province) but strategically was a blunder that gave Ethiopia the excuse to crush it. The biggest mistake was to assume irredentism was an immutable fact, that pan-Somali nationalist slogans and clichés could trigger an uprising. The ground had shifted. Somalia was no longer a political and cultural point of reference. There was growing resentment among Kenyan Somalis at the unequal relationship with Mogadishu characterised by a deeply-ingrained political paternalism, and Moi's modest attempts to rehabilitate the province were slowly easing tensions. AIAI misread the public mood in

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[26] Crisis Group Africa Report N°45, *Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State*, 23 May 2002; Andre Le Sage, "Prospects for Al Itihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia", *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 27, no. 89 (September 2001).
[27] Crisis Group interviews, Islamist figures in Nairobi, Garissa and Mandera, September 2011. The Union of Islamic Courts was an Islamist-dominated organisation that briefly controlled all of central and southern Somalia but was destroyed by the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006.

[28] Hasan Turki, a leading Al-Ittihaad commander and later head of the Ras Kambooni faction of Al-Shabaab, was among senior figures who routinely crossed into Kenya, once reportedly nearly being captured by Ethiopian and Kenyan agents. Crisis Group interviews, Islamist figures in Nairobi, Garissa and Mandera, September 2011.
[29] A number of Kenyan ethnic Somali clerics joined the Al-Ittihaad campaign in Gedo, south-western Somalia, and died in combat. The relationship with the Wahhabi clerical establishment also gave Al-Ittihaad an opportunity to use the pulpit to radicalise and attract public support for its cause.
[30] Crisis Group interviews, 2008-2011.
[31] For more on Al-Ittihaad's links to al-Qaeda, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°95, *Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?*, 11 July 2005, pp. 6-9. The two alleged masterminds – Mohammed Fazul and Saleh Nabhan – escaped to Somalia and remained there for over a decade under the protection of former Al-Ittihaad figures, until one died in a U.S. special operations attack and the other in a reported shootout with troops of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).
[32] Crisis Group Report, *Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State*, op. cit.

the province and failed to adapt its global message to local needs.

B. AL-SHABAAB RADICALISATION

Al-Shabaab's swift rise to relative dominance in southern Somalia since early 2009 has added to concerns about radicalisation in Kenya and beyond.[33] Despite recent military setbacks, growing internal schisms and public backlash, it remains a major threat to Somalia's and the region's security and stability. In the last four years, it has built a formidable and secretive support infrastructure in Kenya. A tiny, but highly radicalised, close-knit and secretive Salafi Jihadi fringe looks up to Al-Shabaab as a source of emulation (*marja'iyah*), supports its jihad, funnels money and recruits[34] and is the primary agent of radicalisation. Even without the physical threat posed by Al-Shabaab, Kenya would have to contend with this small but dangerous, homegrown threat.

Many Somali sources suggest Al-Shabaab-inspired radicalisation (though not more theological Salafi radicalisation) is on the decline in North Eastern Province and Eastleigh, but counter-terrorism experts caution against hasty conclusions.[35] Anecdotal evidence does suggest a drop in traditional jihadi propaganda activities in and around the major Salafi mosques. Friday sermons – often important in gauging clerical establishment views – appear less inflammatory and devoted more to spiritual matters.[36] With exceptions, the jihadi pamphlets given to congregations during prayers have either disappeared or cover issues beyond the region. The "toning down" of sermons, how-

ever, may simply be a result of the routine surveillance most major mosques reportedly now receive.

Another plausible explanation is that jihadi radicalisation may have gone underground. Most mosques in Eastleigh now look deserted during the "off-peak" times between the five mandatory prayers. The special *muhazara* (lecture) and *halaqa* (study group) sessions conducted by clerics for select students appear few and far between. According to some sources, these "master classes" are being conducted away from mosques, usually in homes or in the dozens of madrasas that have sprung up.[37] No place has as many madrasas per square kilometre in Kenya as Eastleigh.

A mosque in Pumwani, a district adjacent to Eastleigh, until recently handed out jihadi pamphlets with articles and speeches by Anwar al-Awlaki, an extremist Yemeni-American cleric killed in a U.S. drone attack in Yemen in September 2011.[38] It was said to have been an important Al-Shabaab recruitment centre throughout 2010.[39] Youths with potential were reportedly often sent to Kiunga, Lamu (Coast Province) for further vetting at an Al-Shabaab "holding" facility, their IDs, birth certificates and other documents confiscated and burned.[40] The founder of the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC), based at the Pumwani mosque, Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali, was recently named Al-Shabaab's leader and coordinator in Kenya. He allegedly commands a force of some 200-500 fighters, most of them Kenyans.[41]

Al-Shabaab radicalisers and recruiters have for some time been actively looking beyond the Somali community for potential jihadis, and in line with its regional agenda, Kenya's (and Tanzania's) coastal Muslims are an increasingly important target.[42] There is growing evidence to suggest that attacks in North Eastern Province are joint oper-

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[33] Al-Shabaab began as a militia in the Union of Islamic Courts and grew to prominence fighting the Ethiopian "occupation" from 2006 to 2009. When Ethiopian forces withdrew, it seized most of southern and central Somalia. Were it not for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), it would likely have toppled the TFG in Mogadishu.

[34] See, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 1916 (2010)", S/2011/433, 18 July 2011, pp. 140-179; "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1853 (2008)", S/2010/91, 10 March 2010, pp. 25-35.

[35] Crisis Group interviews, officials, clerics, civil society leaders, Garissa, Mandera, Wajir and Nairobi, September 2011; security experts, Nairobi, September-October 2011.

[36] The caveat is that the radical sting may come at the end of a sermon or between the two short standard Friday *khutba* (sermons), in the form of a prayer. The prayer is normally short, but the imam can extend it. It is not uncommon to end this prayer by asking Allah to "help the mujahidin". The term is used in the generic sense, and it is often up to the worshiper to interpret which group is deserving. Much field research for this report was conducted during Ramadan, which may also explain the increased spiritual content of sermons.

[37] Crisis Group interviews and observations, Nairobi, September 2011.

[38] One, on file with Crisis Group, had a headline: "Jihad Is Our Religion".

[39] Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Nairobi, September 2011; "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 1916 (2010)", S/2011/433, 18 July 2011, p. 24.

[40] Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Nairobi, September 2011.

[41] Jay Bahadur and M.H.D., "Al-Shabaab names Kenyan leader: Appointment of Sheikh Ahmed Iman could signal coming terror attack", *Somalia Report*, 10 January 2012. For more on foreign fighters in Al-Shabaab, see "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 1916", op. cit., pp. 140-146.

[42] Some experts believe that most serious radicalisation has moved to the coast. Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September-October, 2011. There are also allegations Al-Shabaab increasingly targets non-Muslims in urban slums and other poor areas.

ations of Kenyan Swahili and Somali jihadis.[43] Swahili members are easily able to evade security by posing as locals and counting on outdated profiling by Kenyan security officers that all Al-Shabaab members are Somali-looking. There also is growing speculation some may have returned to Coast Province and that recent abductions at tourist resorts may be part of an elaborate Al-Shabaab plot to destabilise the region.[44] Even if not, the prospect of Somalia jihad veterans returning should be a cause of concern.

C. MEDIA AND MISSIONARIES

The Muslim community operates a number of media outlets officially to propagate Islam (*Da'wah* - missionary activities), but also to disseminate political ideas. Radio Iqra[45] and Radio Rehema[46] are the two most important electronic outlets. Radio Iqra in particular has been accused of giving too much airtime to radical Tabligh preachers from Tanzania, some of them new converts and regarded as "bible scholars". Their extreme polemical language has at times resulted in tensions between Christians and Muslims.[47] The practice of inviting radical preachers to Kenya is increasingly controversial. Riots erupted in Nairobi in January 2010, as radicalised young Muslims protesting the deportation of a Jamaican cleric caused serious violence in the central business district, and Christian onlookers joined the police in beating them back. At least five people were killed and four police officers were wounded.[48]

"The Friday Bulletin", published by the influential Jamia Mosque Committee, has been cited as a medium for radi-

calisation.[49] Throughout the 1990s, it consistently supported Islamist radical groups in Somalia. It only began to soften its stance recently, possibly after complaints from the Kenyan government and some Western embassies.

D. MIGRATION

Kenya is now officially home to over 500,000 refugees from Somalia. This will increase as more victims of the famine and conflict there cross the border.[50] The Dadaab refugee camps in the north east are severely overcrowded. Set up some twenty years ago to host 90,000, they are today one of the world's biggest refugee settlements, with a population of over 400,000. This influx has imposed tremendous strains. Nairobi is deeply alarmed at the fast-growing refugee population and that the camps are now quasi-permanent settlements. But the problem is not simply the crisis in the camps. The government is uneasy about the security threat posed by Islamist militants, the growth of the native ethnic Somali population (nearly 2.4 million according to the 2009 census) and the increasing economic clout of Somalis. It is also aware of growing anti-Somali sentiments in the major urban centres.[51]

There is no easy solution. The country has acceded to the 1951 refugees convention, so is obliged to offer refuge and protection to those fleeing conflict. Documentation is a big problem. A large but unknown number have obtained Kenyan documentation illegally, largely due to corruption, but also because it is often difficult to distinguish between Kenyan ethnics and other Somalis. The more the authorities tighten procedures for passports and IDs – often by adding new vetting layers – the more difficult it becomes for bona fide citizens to acquire these important documents. The bureaucratic hurdles many young Kenyan Somalis face is a source of anger often exploited by radical Islamist groups. Another concern is the movement of Somali refugees into Nairobi and Mombasa. The Somali population of Eastleigh, originally an Asian neighbourhood, is now estimated at over 100,000.[52] Demographic changes are warily watched, not least because they have direct political implications, a point brought home recently when an ethnic Somali won the parliamentary seat in Eastleigh.[53]

[43] Crisis Group email correspondence, Somalia terrorism expert, 20 January 2012.

[44] Crisis Group interview, Nairobi, October 2011.

[45] Radio Iqra, the oldest Muslim station, is based in Nairobi and now reaches most of the country. It began a decade ago, with equipment donated by Libya, which probably funded it for a time. Under its first head, Ahmed Khalif, an ethnic Somali politician who was in the first Kibaki cabinet and died in a plane crash, it was mildly pro-establishment, avoided radical Islamist politics, and had diverse religious programs. It is now distinctly sectarian, giving Salafi preachers exclusive coverage.

[46] Radio Rehema is based in Mombasa and heard all over the province. It is exclusively devoted to religious programmes.

[47] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September-October 2011.

[48] Otto Bakano, "Five killed in Kenya mosque riots", *Nation*, 15 April 2010. A small group of Al-Shabaab sympathisers joined the demonstrations, one holding the group's black flag, another Osama bin Laden's portrait. The deported cleric was Abdullah al Faisal. Interfaith relations are steadily worsening, partly fuelled by media messaging and radicalisation on both sides. Media outlets belonging to Christian evangelical groups such as Family TV routinely air programs overtly hostile to Islam.

[49] Crisis Group interview, Muslim media observer, Nairobi, September 2011.

[50] The famine is not expected to end before the summer of 2012. The conflict in the south may prolong it further.

[51] Yusuf Ghazzali, "Kenya: Don't use Linda Nchi Operation to demonise Somalis", *The Star* (Nairobi), 26 October 2011.

[52] Manuel Herz, "Somali Refugees in Eastleigh, Nairobi" (no date), at http://roundtable.kein.org.

[53] Yusuf Hassan, a former senior UN official and ex-BBC journalist well-regarded in Eastleigh and Kenya generally, was a late entrant for the Kamukunji constituency and defeated Ibra-

Political victory is unlikely to translate into wider acceptance. If anything, unreasoned anti-Somali sentiments, discrimination and harassment may get worse, not least because powerful constituencies are fuelling public alarm and unease. "Somalis are taking over the country" is a refrain in Nairobi and elsewhere.[54] With the war against Al-Shabaab and a highly-charged political atmosphere, some may seek to milk the palpable fear of Somalis for advantage in the hotly-contested elections anticipated in late 2012. The community may be demonised – much like Kenyan Asians were in the 1970s and 1980s – with a "non-indigenous" minority portrayed as greedy and exploitative, wallowing in wealth as the country sinks ever deeper into poverty.[55]

E. EASTLEIGH

The remarkable entrepreneurial energy that has transformed Eastleigh from a rundown shantytown into a vibrant commercial hub has its origins in the remittance boom of the early 1990s. It is also partly driven by a close-knit community of Wahhabi entrepreneurs, linked to similar networks in Mogadishu, Dubai and the Gulf.[56] Nevertheless, despite progress and improvement on many fronts, there is a deep-seated feeling of uncertainty, vulnerability and insecurity throughout its population. A palpable fear of victimisation cuts across the wealth divide. The poor live in perpetual fear of the police,[57] the rich for the long-term security of their investments, especially in real estate.[58] More than any other factor, this fear and insecurity explain the opaque nature of the business culture

that is at the source of suspicion by the authorities and the wider public. Greater openness and regularisation is resisted by many businessmen, because there is widespread concern clever individuals may use better understanding of the system and of the government bureaucracy to take their businesses and physical assets.[59]

Statements by the authorities to reassure Somalis about the safety of their investments and facilitating regularisation of businesses would substantially assuage fears and help in community integration. More important, it would be the best way to curb the growth of a grey economy and expand the government's tax base. Improving Eastleigh's terrible physical infrastructure would also be meaningful, removing a grievance that reinforces the perceived neglect and marginalisation.

F. SOCIAL CONSERVATISM AND INTOLERANCE

If radicalisation, especially the jihadi variant associated with Al-Shabaab, is less visible, the social conservatism and intolerance fostered by decades of Wahhabi proselytisation in Eastleigh and North Eastern Province has, if anything, intensified. Wahhabi mosques and madrasas are dominant. The few Sufi madrasas have closed; the one mosque under the sect's control is almost empty. North Eastern Province is increasingly conservative. In 2010, a number of sheikhs called for a TV ban.[60] Small bands of informal moral police try to shut down bars, ban cigarette sales and enforce dress codes.[61] Since the intervention in Somalia, there have been sometimes deadly grenade attacks on bars in Garrissa and Mandera.[62] The hope of a moderate, tolerant and progressive form of Islam, celebrating diversity, emerging in Eastleigh as a spin-off from commercial success and in North Eastern Province is remote, because there is no effective counter-movement to Wahhabism. This does not mean these areas are a seething cauldron of jihadi anger about to explode, only that there is need for increased effort by Muslim leaders and

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him Mohammed "Johnnie", a young politician who has failed several times to win the seat. Some suggest the result was due to a backlash against Islamists. Johnnie is affiliated to Islamic organisations and is believed to be a supporter of Islamist causes. Crisis Group interview, Eastleigh, September 2011.
[54] The mostly Asian and Kikuyu business community is alarmed by inroads into telecommunications, real estate and transportation sectors it controls. Paul Goldsmith, "Forget piracy, Somalia's whole 'global' economy is booming – to Kenya's benefit", *EastAfrican*, 10 May 2010. Farah Abdulsamed, "Somali Investment in Kenya", Chatham House, March 2011.
[55] It is widely believed that much Somali wealth is illicit, from piracy or unscrupulous practices like tax evasion.
[56] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September 2011. See also, Farah Abdulsamed, "Somali Investment", op. cit.
[57] Over the years, security crackdowns in Eastleigh, ostensibly against illegal Somali immigrants, have invariably swept up many innocents. Police also extort money from Somalis. Mary Harper, "Somalis in Kenya: 'They call us ATM machines'", African Arguments (www.africanarguments.org), 7 December 2010. Since the Kenyan intervention, police in Eastleigh have reportedly been more targeted and restrained. Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, October-December 2011.
[58] Many Somali businessmen said they suffered in Dubai's real estate crash. Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September 2011.

[59] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September 2011.
[60] A prominent North Eastern Province cleric, Sheikh Khalif Mohammed, shut public video halls in Mandera, saying they exposed children to bad influence. "Anger in Kenya over Mandera World Cup TV video hall ban", BBC News, 26 April 2010.
[61] It is a largely urban phenomenon. Crisis Group interviews, Garrissa, Wajir, Mandera, El-Waq, August-September 2011.
[62] The attacks began in November 2011, a month after Kenyan troops went in. The deadliest was on a pub and disco in Garissa on 1 January 2012 that caused six deaths. In December there were more than ten deadly grenade and IED blasts across several towns in the province. See "Kenya Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin", UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), at http://reliefweb.int/ sites/ re-liefweb.int/files/ resources/Full%20Report_447.pdf.

authorities to de-radicalise society and engage in more effective counter-radicalisation.

V. COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS AND OPERATION LINDA NCHI

While most Kenyan Somalis no longer identify more with Somalia and even see some progress in their inclusion into society, Nairobi's counter-terrorism policies are alienating some of them as well as other Muslims.[63] An observer noted, "It is painful for Somalis living and working in Kenya to have their loyalty to the country being constantly questioned and doubted".[64] If these policies continue, they will increase communal tensions and the risk of "homegrown" terrorism.

Ever since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Nairobi embassy, which killed 225 and wounded over 4,000, and the 2002 attack on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel resort on the coast, which killed fifteen and injured about 80, countering terrorism has been a major priority. The government has greatly increased its capabilities, with substantial foreign help.[65] Since 11 September 2001, Kenya has actively assisted Western efforts to identify, arrest and detain suspected terrorists. This became very significant with the fall of the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia in December 2006, when Kenyan officials arrested and detained more than 150 individuals fleeing that country, a number of whom were ultimately handed over to Ethiopian military forces.[66] This policy was extremely unpopular among Kenyan Somalis and Muslims in general. In part due to lack of resources, government counter-terrorism efforts continue to focus on policing and border security, rather than programs designed for counter-radicalisation or de-radicalisation of those who have joined radical groups.

The decision in October to deploy thousands of troops in Somalia's Juba Valley to fight Al-Shabaab is the biggest security gamble the country has taken since independence. Operation Linda Nchi (Protect the Country) is risky, because the potential for getting bogged down in Somalia is very high; the likelihood of an Al-Shabaab retaliatory terror campaign is real; and the prospects for a viable, extremist-free and stable polity emerging in the Juba Valley are slim, at least in the short term.[67] If it costs many Kenyan lives or triggers a mass terrorist attack, it will precipitate a backlash against Kenyan Somalis and further radicalise the community.[68] It has already triggered a number of attacks, on both civilian and government targets, in North Eastern Province.

The war against Al-Shabaab has led to an increase in ethnic profiling and discrimination against Somalis in particular and Muslims in general.[69] Kenyans have historically been suspicious of the Somali community, and police harassment and discrimination in the name of "Global War on Terror" continue deep-rooted trends dating back to the Shifta War. Somalis are often without distinction labelled "Al-Shabaab".[70] Hostility toward them is exacerbated by their commercial success in Nairobi and other major urban areas, as well as their assumed but unproven association with piracy, extremism and terrorism.[71] Though the government has repeatedly urged Kenyans not to ste-

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[63] Jeremy Presthold, "Kenya, the United States and Terrorism", *Africa Today*, vol. 57, no. 4 (summer 2011).
[64] Yusuf Ghazzali, "Kenya: Don't use Linda Nchi Operation to demonise Somalis", *The Star*, 26 October 2011.
[65] The Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), created in 2003, gets several million dollars in U.S. support each year. See also Lauren Ploch, "Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The U.S. Response", Congressional Research Service, 3 November 2010.
[66] Some detainees were reportedly tortured by men in Ethiopian military uniforms in both Somalia and Ethiopia. "Why Am I Still Here? The 2007 Horn of Africa Renditions and the Fate of Those Still Missing", Human Rights Watch, October 2008.

[67] Kenya formed a controversial plan in 2009 to create a local administration, initially Jubaland now Azania, as a buffer in Somalia between it and Al-Shabaab territory. It included training some 2,500 militia and establishing a structure headed by then TFG defence minister and current "President" of Azania, Mohamed Abdi Mohammed "Gandhi". Much opposition to it and Kenya's intervention stems from concern it may not work. According to cables released by WikiLeaks, the U.S. refused support because it would compete with the TFG. Washington feared failure would rally clans behind Al-Shabaab, producing "a lose/lose situation". Robert Young Pelton, "Kenya modified invasion to suit US concerns", *Somalia Report*, 11 November 2011. Azania forces have performed poorly against Al-Shabaab. Nairobi also supports another Ogaden militia leader and ex-Al-Shabaab ally, Ahmed Madobe, even though his Ras Kambooni faction once was backed by the Ethiopians, who sought to use him as a counterweight to Gandhi. While Madobe is militarily more active than Gandhi, his forces also have failed to make much headway against Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia.
[68] It is estimated that more than 250 Kenyan troops may have died in the operation. David Throup, "Regional Implications of the Conflict in Somalia", Presentation at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, 24 January 2011.
[69] Crisis Group observations; "Kenya: Security Forces Abusing Civilians Near Somalia Border", Human Rights Watch, 12 January 2012. Al-Shabaab is now taking advantage of Kenyan security officers' outdated belief that all Al-Shabaab are Somali looking by infiltrating non-Somali members into the province to carry out attacks. Crisis Group email correspondence, Somalia terrorism expert, 20 January 2012.
[70] Guled Mohammed, "Hounding Somalis hurts terror fight", *The Star*, 2 November 2011.
[71] Campbell, Crisp and Kiragu, " Navigating Nairobi: A review of implementation of UNHCR's Urban Refugee policy", UN High Commissioner for Refugees Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), January 2011.

reotype or discriminate against Somalis, politicians' statements and media rhetoric risk further demonising them. Deputy Defence Minister Joshua Orwa Ojode, for example, likened Al-Shabaab to a snake with its tail in Somalia and head in Eastleigh.[72]

VI. COUNTERING RADICALISATION

Kenya's ability to craft effective long-term counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation strategies is dependent on the degree to which it is able to better understand the phenomenon of radicalisation. There is a tendency to conflate radicalisation and terrorism. There is a link, but counter-terrorism tactics should not be the only official response to radicalisation. Counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation are long-term processes needing tact and patience. Radicalisation will be a problem long after the physical threat of terrorism subsides. Islamist radicalisation is at the heart of the contest to shape the future of Islam and Muslim societies. The struggle against it will only be won if truly Muslim-driven. Foreign "meddling" would be counterproductive. There is room for donors to encourage moderation, but it must be done discreetly and in partnership with Muslim organisations that have wide support.

A. MADRASAS

Kenya's madrasas have been dominated by well-resourced Wahhabi charities and foundations since the late 1970s. Primary- (*idadi*) and secondary- (*thanawi*) level madrasas, teaching Arabic and the Wahhabi creed, have existed in all major urban centres for decades. Some operated relatively good health facilities or served as orphanages and feeding centres, improving impoverished Muslim communities in North Eastern Province and Coast Province. Some also taught vocational skills such as tailoring and carpentry. But the primary aim was to proselytise; they absorbed thousands of students from poor families who had dropped out of the mainstream state-run schools, the brighter of whom were often sent to elite Wahhabi institutions of higher learning, Al-Falah Islamic Centre in Isiolo (central Kenya) or Kisauni Islamic Centre in Mombasa. Many of their graduates went on to Saudi or Pakistani Islamic universities to be trained as imams and preachers. For many young and ambitious Muslims in North Eastern Province and the Coast Province, this was the only route to gainful jobs and respectability.

Many of these madrasas are now cash-strapped, largely because of the crackdown on Muslim charities since the

late 1990s. Enrolments have declined and scholarships have dried up. However, the overwhelming majority of the youths attending state-run or private primary and secondary schools also attend madrasas, especially in North Eastern Province. This dual system is a considerable burden for students and a factor in the disproportionate high school dropout rate. Furthermore, many madrasas in North Eastern Province and Eastleigh teach a variety of Salafi theologies that, in general, foster social conservatism, cultural relativism and separatism, at odds with values taught in mainstream schools.[73] Subjecting young impressionable students to these contradictory values contributes to youth maladjustment and alienation often exploited by jihadi radicalisers.

B. MADRASA REFORM

Many reform-minded Kenyan Somalis believe the madrasa system needs to be modified,[74] but there is insufficient will to draft a strategy. The issue is deeply divisive. Realistically, madrasa reform can only be part of wider reform. Conservative groups and hardliners dismiss the idea as primarily driven by the West. It would be unwise for the state and donors to intervene. Modest and discreet attempts by the U.S. in recent years to encourage debate (especially in Coast Province) have galvanised hardliners.[75] Competent, respected Muslim educators should be encouraged to prepare an action plan, drawing on experiences throughout the Muslim world. Even a Muslim-led plan may not be readily acceptable because of sectarian and ideological divisions, but failure to reform would strengthen the case of those who want to scrap the whole system.[76]

There is no evidence of an appetite for comprehensive madrasa reform in Kenya. Many remain ambivalent or disinclined to the idea of reform, while a tiny but vocal constituency is implacably hostile. This aversion is mostly due to the religious and socio-cultural dominance of Wahhabism and other Salafi theologies and ill-advised

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[72] Tom Odula, "War fears: Somalis in Kenya afraid of xenophobia", Associated Press, 11 November 2011.

[73] A Salafi madrasa for girls in Pangani (near Eastleigh), for example, reportedly teaches young girls not to fraternise with Christians or to eat food cooked by Christians. Crisis Group interview, former student, 2010.
[74] Crisis Group interviews, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, September 2011.
[75] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September 2011.
[76] There has not been an energetic campaign to close madrasas, but there is Muslim community anxiety that growing threats of jihadi terrorism and increasing numbers of radicalised youth may lead to one. Modest Islamic religious education is given in mainstream schools. Some fear this may be used as justification to end madrasa education or, less drastic, give the state the excuse to meddle in it. Crisis Group interviews, Muslim leaders, Nairobi, Garissa, Mandera and Wajir, September 2011.

state counter-terrorism policies that focus largely on security and heavy-handed policing and alienate and radicalise the Muslim community.[77] Salafi groups oppose reform because they fear it could highlight troubling aspects of their theology. Modernisers and moderates prefer inaction because they consider the issue either not a great priority or to be inexpedient, since they could lose ground to the hardliners.[78]

There is no model of a successful madrasa reform program to serve as a template, though lessons could be drawn from the modestly encouraging steps toward reform in a few countries, especially in South East Asia. These might include bringing private madrasas under the education ministry; requiring registration and enrolment information; setting academic standards that can be checked; and instituting a module of non-religious courses and government help that would also justify supervisory visits. But any reform plan must balance Muslim integration and the community's right to live its faith. Reform will also entail a substantial overhaul of madrasa curriculum and a qualitative improvement in teaching, ideally by creating local teacher training colleges and universities. This requires technical interventions to progressively transform the system.[79] More important, it is about modernising and integrating traditional madrasa pedagogy with mainstream secular schooling. Many other faith communities in Kenya have already done this.[80]

C. LEADERSHIP

Many problems faced by the Muslim community, especially sectarian and regional divisions; inability to confront major challenges like radicalisation; and mounting tensions with other major faith groups, are blamed on the lack of Kenyan-Muslim leadership. There is great disaffection with the "official" Muslim leaders, many of whom are widely viewed as elitist and self-serving; their integrity sullied through ties with the regime or foreign interests; and disconnected from harsh community realities.[81] This trust and credibility deficit compounds the leadership crisis and undermines community cohesion. Radical organisations have emerged in the last decade to challenge the "official" leadership and institutions.[82] Their political activism and radical anti-establishment politics are attractive to many youths, disillusioned with what they see as timid, pragmatist and moderate political views and style of the established institutions.

The institution whose ageing leadership is at the centre of this backlash is the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), whose status as the pre-eminent Kenyan-Muslim body is increasingly contested. Its traditional strategy of cultivating close links with regimes and the major political parties, as well as its preference for dialogue and engagement, may have been understandable and useful in the past but is now part of the crisis of confidence. Its officials personally profited from those relationships. During the Moi era, many were stalwarts of the ruling party and campaigned for it.[83] In return, they received Moi's patronage. That culture has not changed. Many now support Prime Minister Raila Odinga's ODM party. Yet while it has close ties to power, SUPKEM has not been effective in modifying the heavy-handed security tactics and petty discrimination faced by Muslims.

There are also allegations of corruption and nepotism. Critics complain of poor financial records and an inability to account for large grants from Gulf benefactors.[84] Some also suggest the long-standing scholarship program, funded through a grant scheme of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), has not been well-managed or has often been awarded in a nepotistic fashion.[85] SUPKEM remains useful to the

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[77] Muslim attitudes to state policies are mostly negative and unchanged, but negativity is increasingly tempered by a growing awareness Muslims can leverage their demographic and electoral strength to win concessions. Some Muslims feel they can fend off state pressure for madrasa reform because politicians have no stomach for anything that could cost votes. The downside is that the new clout can feed complacency. Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Nairobi, September 2011.
[78] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, Garissa, September-October 2011.
[79] Salafi traditionalists are particularly hostile, because this has the potential to undermine the universalism of their educational and sectarian proselytisation agenda. Crisis Group interview, former madrasa teacher, Eastleigh, Nairobi, September 2010.
[80] If done well, integration of the systems might create a generation of Muslim students with sound religious values but also a good modern education, able to compete in the jobs market and less vulnerable to radicalisation.

[81] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi and Garissa, September-October 2011.
[82] The most prominent are the National Muslim Leadership Forum (NAMLEF), Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK).
[83] A prominent Muslim leader from the Rift Valley belonging to Moi's Kalenjin community and influential in the SUPKEM executive for decades, was known for using his influence and SUPKEM machinery to canvass support for the ruling party.
[84] Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Nairobi, September 2011.
[85] Ibid. The allegations of unethical behaviour are hard to verify independently and do not detract from the fact that the scholarship program has benefited the community. Unlike the Saudi scholarships, the IDB program aims at providing quality education to bright students from poor families, with the focus on scientific and technical subjects. Hundreds from North Eastern Province and Coast Province have been sent to Turkey and Malaysia to obtain undergraduate degrees in medicine and engineering.

state, primarily for channelling grievances in a non-confrontational, pragmatic and moderate manner. It appears, however, that the authorities suspect the body's diminished influence and role are beyond repair. Rumours are rife that the main parties in the governing coalition are looking beyond SUPKEM to find influential Muslim partners ahead of the 2012 elections.[86]

D. THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF KADHI

The Office of the Chief Kadhi has existed since colonial times, when, as an arm of the official judiciary, it was part of the hybrid judicial system designed to accommodate customary and religious legal systems. Its primary role was to oversee kadhi courts across the country and enforce a limited Sharia regime, mainly in family and civil law. This modest concession to Sharia became the subject of a major controversy. A vigorous campaign in 2010 by churches to prevent the "entrenchment" of the kadhi courts in the new constitution raised Muslim-Christian tensions to unprecedented levels. But the main political parties – keen to gain Muslim votes – resisted the pressure. However, while the issue is legally settled, there is no political closure. Many Christian groups feel aggrieved. Intercommunal relations are frayed, and the fissures opened by the ill-tempered contest have widened. With intercommunal tensions likely to worsen due to the growing fear of jihadi terrorism, the potential for violence is real.

The Muslim community feels it scored a major political victory over the status of the kadhi courts. Many appreciate the role of key leaders in the coalition, especially President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga. There is renewed self-confidence and less hostile views of the central government. The regime has thus defused some of the old anger and indirectly undermined the radicalisation agenda. Yet, expectations also have been raised. The community would like to extract more concessions, but calls for these would certainly renew tensions.[87]

Unless steps are taken to address the serious radicalisation problem, it will worsen. The biggest obstacle is the inability to muster the necessary resolve. The tendency within the Muslim community has often been to downplay the scale of the crisis or deny it exists. Unless it is acknowledged and a coherent, coordinated strategy drawn up, little will change. Progress ultimately depends on the will to act decisively, which may appear remote given the leadership problems. However, there are steps that could be taken to reform Islamic institutions and improve quality of leadership. These could include forming a Muslim Ad-

visory Council of respected laders, chosen by the community, to create a forum responsive to Muslim concerns and aspirations and able to articulate the community's message to those in power and formulate the measures needed to improve its overall well-being.

Many view it as an anomaly that should have been rectified long ago that Kenya, unlike many African countries, has no supreme Muslim spiritual leader – a Grand Mufti, whose primary function is to provide spiritual guidance and, when necessary, issue binding pronouncements (*fatwas*) on vexed issues. It is difficult to find such a unifying figure, given sectarian and regional tensions, but thought could be given to developing a process, with community input, for selection of one.

VII. CONCLUSION

Islamist radicalism in Somalia is reaching into Kenya. The cross-border network Al-Shabaab has built is attempting to radicalise youth to fight in Somalia and conduct terrorist attacks in their own country. This problem has become more severe with the Kenyan government's decision to intervene directly in Somalia. It is important that Nairobi not conflate radicalisation and terrorism. Counter-terrorism tactics should not be the only official response to radicalisation. The government must develop effective, long-term strategies for both counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation, because extremism will continue to be a problem long after the physical threat of terrorism subsides. Radicalisation presents a threat to Kenya's security and stability. Formulating sound policies and then tackling it head on before it is too late needs to be a priority.

Nairobi/Brussels, 25 January 2012

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[86] Crisis Group interview, Muslim leader, Nairobi, September 2011.
[87] Crisis Group interviews, Nairobi, September-October 2011.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF KENYA

APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

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