

**African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific – AFSAAP
37th Annual Conference – Dunedin – New Zealand – 25-26 November 2014
Conference Proceedings (published January 2015)**

Africa: Diversity and Development

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**Aliens to the Area: How Historical Ethnic, Religious, and Political Tensions
Explain Kenya's Failed Counterterrorism Strategy and Show How to Fix it**

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This chapter examines Kenya's failed counterterrorism strategy, characterized by arguably blatant discrimination against Muslims and ethnic Somalis in eastern provinces, in the wake of attacks by the militant Islamic terrorist group al-Shabaab. Such practices have a historical precedent in the colonial and post-colonial political domination of the largely Muslim coastal areas of Kenya by 'upcountry' Christians. Many Kenyan Muslims see these prejudiced procedures as a natural extension of the political imbalances that preceded them, and one that is increasingly being combated through violent means by al-Shabaab. Their twisted example of religious political activism stems from the fragile situation in Somalia, and al-Shabaab's spread into Kenya will be discussed as one of the biggest threats to the stability of Kenya in its post-independence period.

General religious political activism throughout Kenyan history will also be discussed, largely dealing with post-independence Kenya. While this chapter will touch upon the period of British rule, it is mainly to provide historical background and contrast to the period of outspoken activism for Kenyan churches, which began in earnest during the presidency of Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002) and has continued through the contemporary multiparty democracy era. In this context, religious activism deals more with direct appeals to politicians and citizens regarding changes in policy, as opposed to capacity-building measures such as educational enterprises or health and wellness initiatives done under religious auspices. Such initiatives are an important part of church vocations and provide a moral grounding for religious responses to challenges in other areas of Kenyan society, including ethnic violence and other sources of communal strife.

Religious and community activism in pursuit of conflict management will be specifically explored through the case of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, which helped to transform an anarchic frontier region of Kenya into a significantly more peaceful state by leveraging actors across the local level of government, civil society, and tribal leadership. Wajir, as an example of a "mediated state," will be studied as a potential model for pacification and

greater political unity in some of the more restless areas of Kenya, including Mombasa, which has been plagued by separatist factions and the sentiment that “the Coast is not Kenya.” Citizens of Mombasa, long the seat of the Islamic population of Kenya, as well as Kenya’s second largest city and largest port, have been seen as second-class for years. Calls for separation between the Coast Province and the rest of the Kenya have sounded since the beginning of British colonial rule, and organizations like the Mombasa Republican Council remain active in calling for greater autonomy in the area.

Such sentiment has only exacerbated preexisting tensions between ethnic Somalis living in Kenya and the Kenyan government, whose heavy-handed crackdown following al-Shabaab’s 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi has reinforced religious and ethnic tensions, which have been strained at best since independence. This recent rise in religious and political affiliated violence make the broad, cross-cutting societal interventions like those in Wajir all the more necessary in other regions of the country, like the rest of the Northeast Province or the Coast. While expecting interreligious harmony in such fraught times might seem overly optimistic, this chapter will argue that there is a distinct possibility and precedent for such action, seen in Kenya’s heritage of political stands taken by religious leaders and civilians in a religious context. This legacy must once again become the norm in order for Kenya to successfully combat the strains of violent extremism creeping in from Somalia and reclaim its status as a beacon of peace and security in East Africa.

Kenya’s most recent episodes of violence are a result of several complex humanitarian emergencies that began with Somalia’s famine, officially declared by the United Nations in 2010. The famine came at a transitory time for Somalia, as the United States had suspended food aid to Somalia the year before in an effort to withhold material support for al-Shabaab, which at the time controlled most of the southern half of the country. That withdrawal of support combined with al-Shabaab banning almost all international aid agencies that same year, led to a massive refugee crisis across the Somali border in neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya. Ken

Menkhaus, professor of Political Science at Davidson College, wrote in August 2011, “With 440,000 Somali refugees, Dadaab camp in northern Kenya now constitutes the third-largest Somali city in the Horn of Africa. Few of these refugees will ever return home, placing enormous stress on the countries receiving them.” (para. 12). That number has only grown in the last three years, further straining the resources of the Kenyan government.

The Kenyan invasion of Somalia began in October of that year, after a series of cross-border raids by al-Shabaab culminated in the kidnapping of French and British tourists. In recent years, Kenya’s military has been built up thanks to aid and training from the United States. This partnership, formed to combat terrorism in the Horn of Africa, has grown so much that “senior officers regularly travel to the United States for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency training; such instruction has become a core part of the curriculum at the Kenya Military Academy.” (Branch, 2011, para. 5). Such importance being given to the military is without historical precedent in Kenya, which has lasted since independence without going to war with another country, and according to Daniel Branch “with the exceptions of a brief mutiny in 1964 and a failed coup in 1982,” has never needed the military to keep order domestically, unlike many of its neighbors (2011, para. 4).

The newfound confidence from American military assistance, frustration over the refugee crisis, and “overt Islamophobia” introduced into the public debate in recent years thanks to “the rising influence of Christian evangelism,” combined to create almost unanimous public support for the invasion of Somalia (Branch, 2011, para. 9). Such support bolstered the confidence of politicians like internal security minister George Saitoti and Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who at the time both hoped to fill the vacuum left by departing President Mwai Kibaki. Such an opening combined with the patriotic fervor seen throughout Kenya led to Saitoti, an ambitious second-tier politician aiming to make his mark on the country ahead of the 2012 elections, ordering Kenyan security forces “into the country’s Muslim and Somali ethnic communities, arresting supposed al-Shabaab sympathizers.” (Branch, 2011, para. 8). The accuracy of the raids were

questionable at best, as Branch explains, “exact numbers of arrests are unknown, but efforts to crack down on groups like the Mombasa Republican Council, a vehicle for grievances held by coastal Muslims with little apparent connection to al-Shabaab, suggest that the police are applying little discretion in using force.” (2011, para. 8).

However, the raids ignore the reality of the situation on the ground, where plenty of the estimated 500 Kenyan Muslims in al-Shabaab are not ideologically committed to the jihad. Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, a Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) at Kings College in London, tells of meeting six Kenyan al-Shabaab deserters in mid-2012 and realizing that reasons for joining varied – “Two of the men claimed that they had joined for purely ideological purposes,...three claimed that they joined for mainly financial reasons; one said he was kidnapped.” (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2013a, *The Highest Honor*, para. 1). While six people are admittedly a very small sample size, the intertwining of economics and ideology in the recruitment of Kenyans cannot be overlooked. According to Meleagrou-Hitchens, backed by statistics from USAID, “unemployment among out-of-school youth is about 75 percent, and the number is thought to be even higher among Muslims, who generally live in the northeast, one of the country's most deprived regions. In Garissa, a Muslim-majority town that borders Somalia, youth unemployment is at a staggering 90 percent.” (2013a, *Take It To The Streets*, para. 7). Al-Shabaab’s willingness to offer around four times the average national wage per month (*ibid.*) to prospective recruits is a powerful incentive to join the organization, and one that the Kenyan government must combat, perhaps by taking some of the money allotted for counterterrorism and putting it towards youth employment initiatives. All that is clear three years into the conflict is that if the current approach continues, the problem will continue unabated. Unfortunately, the government’s strategy has only been reinforced in the aftermath of al-Shabaab’s lengthy siege of Nairobi’s Westgate Mall in September 2013.

The Westgate attack, striking the commercial and political heart of Kenya, was both retaliation for the Kenyan presence in Somalia and a piece of the larger jihad, in which,

according to Meleagrou-Hitchens, “the fight in Somalia is only one of multiple fronts in this struggle -- and countries such as Kenya are legitimate targets for retaliatory attacks. The Westgate shopping mall, which is frequented by Kenyan officials and Western tourists and is owned by Israelis, was thus a way to hit three birds with one stone.” (2013b, para. 5). The eighty-hour tragedy was marked as much by infighting amongst Kenyan security forces to determine appropriate jurisdiction as it was by anti-Western violence at the hands of al-Shabaab. The attack provides a window into not only the psyche of al-Shabaab, but also the dysfunctional methods of the Kenyan police and military units tasked with defending the country. Just as problematic as the three and a half hour wait from the beginning of the shooting until the arrival of both the army and Kenya’s police reconnaissance “recce” group, the equivalent of a SWAT team, was the power struggle between the police chief David Kimaiyo and the army head, Julius Karangi, over whose forces would take the lead that kept all soldiers sidelined. The forces pulled out ninety minutes later when, according to Daniel Howden, reporting for *The Guardian* from Nairobi, “with no radio communications between army and police units, KDF soldiers opened fire on what they thought was an armed suspect – but who was in fact one of the commanders of the recce group. The man died, and three police officers and one soldier were wounded in the exchange.” (2013, *The Siege Begins*: 5.30pm, para. 1). In the immediate aftermath, the operation came to a standstill as partisan bickering preoccupied Kenyan military and political leaders for a full two hours. The poor communication and political infighting during this national tragedy is unfortunately a microcosm of a similar problem plaguing Kenya today.

Political infighting has created an entry point in Kenya for al-Shabaab as the country’s leaders fail to protect their constituents. Kenyan leaders must bring their country back from the brink of the chaos it currently faces, but to do that, they must first trust each other. In the days following a June 15, 2014 al-Shabaab attack in Mpetikoni, despite repeated claims of responsibility by the terrorist group, President Uhuru Kenyatta blamed former Prime Minister Raila Odinga and other opposition factions “in a high-stakes game of political brinkmanship that

could plunge Kenya into another toxic ethnic conflict – exactly the kind of environment in which a group like al-Shabaab can thrive.” (Hidalgo, 2014b, para. 1). High profile militant attacks in the period between Westgate and Mpetikoni have contributed to a massive rise in tensions between Odinga and Kenyatta, to the point where Odinga has called for the sacking of the current ministers of interior and defense, the chief of the national intelligence service, and the inspector general of police. (Hidalgo, 2014b, para. 5). Kenyatta’s strategy of ignoring al-Shabaab’s claims of responsibility in favor of groundlessly blaming his rivals came again just three weeks later when, according to Paul Hidalgo, an analyst of politics and extremism in the Horn of Africa, “just one day before a massive anti-Kenyatta rally in Nairobi, al-Shabaab struck again, claiming responsibility for killing nearly 30 non-Muslim men in two separate towns near Mpeketoni. Consistent with its apparent new strategy, the government brushed aside that claim, and instead blamed the attack on a separatist political group based in Mombasa.” (2014b, para. 6). Further facilitating al-Shabaab’s entry into Kenya are the poor security strategies undertaken by Kenyan officials.

The actions of security forces during the Westgate siege and its aftermath are prime examples of what must be changed in order to save Kenya. At Westgate, despite being surrounded by media from all over the world, according to Michaela Wrong, the author of non-fiction books on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Kenya, the KDF “devoted much of the four-day siege that followed to shooting open shop owners’ safes, emptying fridges of beer and looting designer outlets -- removing men’s suits, jewelry, mobile phones, and frilly underwear as survivors cowered in toilets, waiting to be freed.” (2014, para. 6). Such a callous disregard for the people they are supposed to protect appears typical of Kenyan forces, especially given “a simultaneously draconian and sloppily executed roundup of thousands of Somalis suspected of living illicitly in Nairobi’s Eastleigh district” which was widely suspected of doing more to radicalize Kenya’s Muslim community than al-Shabaab ever could on its own (Wrong, 2014, para. 7). Throughout Kenya, the concerns of Muslims, especially those of

Somali heritage, have yet to be even cursorily addressed by authorities. The only substantive interactions between Kenyan Muslims and police in recent months have been ones of aggravated assault by police officers. In one example, violence erupted following the assassinations of two outspoken, hard-line Muslim clerics in Mombasa, both largely ignored by the police, with no suspects in two and eight months respectively. According to Jacob Kushner, a reporter on human rights, aid, and foreign investment in Africa and the Caribbean, “when a gang of Mombasa youth rioted and burned a church following the killing of the first cleric, Kenyan police responded by storming a nearby mosque during prayer time, dragging out worshipers, and beating them with batons.” (2014, para. 11). The shortsighted crackdown against Muslims in general and Somalis in particular is only pushing more Kenyans to support al-Shabaab and, “absent a fair and conciliatory political environment, the disadvantaged will remain susceptible to extremist ideologies, and radicals will remain a permanent fixture in the region.” (Hidalgo, 2014a, para. 11). Simply put, Kenya as a country is in trouble in a manner unlike any in its history.

Kenyan Muslims have dealt with political infighting for centuries. Their status as a people separate from the national establishment predates British colonialism. Largely occupying the coast, Muslims in present-day Kenya were given special protections during the rule of leaders from Oman and Zanzibar that were largely continued during British rule. This resulted in Kenya’s coastal strip being run “as a protectorate in which the sultan had at least some formal authority, and the red flag of Zanzibar flew next to the British flag. Residents of the coastal strip were considered ‘British protected persons.’ The inland territory of Kenya was regarded as a colony, and its inhabitants were ‘British subjects.’” (Oded, 2000, pg. 63). This separation caused problems at the time of independence, when among Muslims “the Arabs and some of the Swahilis supported *mwambao*, that is, the separation of the entire Coast Province from Kenya and its unification with Zanzibar, so that the inhabitants’ special rights would be preserved.” (Oded, 2000, pg. 63). The movement, however, was unsuccessful, and Kenyan

Muslims slipped into a state marked by political ignorance at best and discrimination at worst.

Complaints of being treated as second-class citizens have come from all sectors of society, especially economic, as the revenues of Mombasa's Kilindini Harbor, the biggest in East Africa, are channeled upcountry and not invested in the coast. Less prevalent but still relevant are educational inequalities, with the worst teachers sent to the coast, and societal discrimination, where drug trafficking and abuse in coastal towns are seemingly being condoned by the authorities. (Kresse, 2009, pg. 79). However, most of the discrimination is political in nature, especially after "*mwambao*, of course, came to nothing, and the reality of the post-independence political situation has been that of up-country domination, as government in Mombasa and elsewhere in the Coast Province has been monopolized by non-Muslim appointments to the principal administrative positions." (O'Brien, in Hansen and Twaddle eds., 1995, pg. 204). The continuation of historical tensions between coast and upcountry throughout the immediate post-independence era is still present today. But for all the struggles of the Muslim people in Kenya, they have been largely unable to turn their anger into collective action. "Little else is able to unify Kenyan Muslims – or at least able to create an impression of unity among them – more than the opposition to apparent discrimination by the upcountry Christian government." (Kresse, 2009, pg. 88).

Similarly, Somalis in the northeast of the country petitioned for separation from Kenya in order to join Somalia, which had gained its independence three years prior. According to Arye Oded, former Israeli Ambassador to Kenya, having been denied by the British, "the Somalis boycotted the 1963 general elections that set the stage for independence. There was unrest in the region, including violent clashes between Somali guerrillas, known as Shifta, and the Kenyan security forces." (2000, pg. 79). Poor treatment of Somalis has been a staple in Kenyan national politics since then, as "the Somali Muslims of the Northeastern Province repeatedly accuse the government of neglecting their security and development and of discriminating against them in provision of schools and social services." (Oded, 2000, pg. 174). Communal

anger at the government was heightened in the 1990s, after the proposed Islamic Party of Kenya, deemed a violation of the separation of church and state, was denied official status on the eve of the first multiparty elections in 1992, and government security forces massacred ethnic Somalis at Wagalla in 1994. However, large-scale widespread retaliatory violence did not erupt in the aftermath of either instance, and it is the reasoning behind those examples that can be used to show the way forward into a more peaceful Kenya given the government's current heavy-handed security strategy.

The former Northeast Province of Kenya, now divided into the Counties of Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera under the 2010 Constitution as units of devolved government, is arguably the safest area in Kenya, though for unexpected reasons. The Kenyan government has long struggled to establish a heavy presence, military or otherwise, in the northeast, according to Menkhaus. "Instead, the improvement in governance and security has emanated from coalitions of non-state actors in the local community who have formed hybrid systems of governance in partnership with the Kenyan state," known as a mediated state (2008, 24). What was once a lawless and anarchic frontier region is now stable, has been so for years, and remains that way today, even with a large Muslim population and checkered history of violent conflict and unrest in other parts of the country.

Clashes came about with the advent of multi-party elections in 1992 between the three main Somali clans in the northeast; the Degodia, Ajuraan, and Ogaden, over new parliamentary constituencies and longstanding anxiety over land access. "These elections were viewed as high-stakes, zero-sum contests by clans fearful that victory by rival clans would institutionalize the rival's hold on resources and eventually disenfranchise the losers." (Menkhaus, 2008, 25). In an effort to defuse tensions, the Kenyan government split the Wajir district into four electorates, which caused worry among some Ajuraan who felt that the decision "not only failed to address the underlying cause of the conflict – grazing land and access to resources – but actually institutionalized the loss of Ajuraan of land to the Degodia, who, as one Ajuraan figure

put it to the Kenyan media, 'are aliens to the area.'" (Umar, 1997, 18; qtd. in Menkhaus, 2008, 28).

In response to such spats of violence and general unrest between clans, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) was established in 1995, and was made up of representatives from NGOs, religious leaders, members of the business community, tribal leaders, and the district's four MPs. Bringing together important members from all sectors of society provided a key sense of legitimacy to the endeavor. Had either local government administration or civic and tribal leaders, often rival sources of authority, not been fully present, the overall partnership likely would have been ineffective at best. Dekha Ibrahim, founder of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, expanded on this in a 2010 telephone interview with Katherine Marshall of Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, "I began working with women at first, but quickly realized that what we [were] dealing with was not just about women. It was also the whole society. We began working with all the leaders in the community, business, religious, political, educators." (Ibrahim, 2010, "Question One", para. 6). Working with all aspects of society is key, as Menkhas explains - "for a mediated state strategy to succeed as a peace-building and governance strategy, the sources of local authority must be relatively legitimate and committed to peace and good governance, not predatory or corrupted local elites. Otherwise, the strategy produces a patch-quilt of state-sponsored warlord fiefdoms." (2008, 32, emphasis in original).

As it is, "the WPDC's chief success has been in reducing incidents of violent crime and banditry, and facilitating rapid, effective conflict management response where conflicts have emerged." (Menkhaus, 2008, 27). Using local actors to take over where the Kenyan government itself is unable to provide security or good governance shows that the experiment in the northeast is a uniquely useful strategy, going beyond standard religious peace-building efforts or civic partnerships. The porous border with Somalia and the uneasy peace around the Dadaab refugee camp may further necessitate such an approach in new areas of Kenya.

A mid-grade United States military official with knowledge of the situation, but who wished to remain anonymous as his views may not necessarily be the same as those of the US government, expanded on the situation, “the Kenyatta [government] sees Dadaab refugee camp as their most immediate and number one internal security threat. [al-]Shabaab uses it with impunity as a staging point [and] recruitment area...The flow of guns/explosives from Somalia through Dadaab and into the predominantly Somali neighborhood of Eastleigh in Nairobi was instrumental to the success of the Westgate attack last year.” (personal correspondence, August 15, 2014). Despite not necessarily being an issue in the past, Menkhaus explains that “when that ‘frontier governance’ calculus changes – when state authorities develop an interest in asserting or reasserting security and rule of law in their hinterland, but lack the capacity – conditions improve for an alternative, ‘mediated state’ approach.” (2008, 31). Such conditions are present currently, and tensions are at a level not seen since before the original formation of the WPDC.

While the aforementioned government-civic partnership in Wajir “has unquestionably produced impressive gains in public security and conflict management,” and the ethnic role remains present in contemporary Kenyan violence, the conflict must be recast to focus more on the religious aspect of the current situation facing Somalis and Muslims in Kenya (Menkhaus, 2008, 33). Speaking on the role of religious conflict in the early 1990s, WPDC founder Ibrahim remarked “at first, there was not a religious dimension but this did arise, because there was a Christian minority that was being attacked. The tensions did not arise because of historic religious problems within the community, but were sparked by a problem in a different part of the country...And we created...interfaith groups that took root and have lasted.” (Ibrahim, 2010, “Question Five”, para. 1). Ibrahim also elaborated about the role of religion in the peace-building process in general, “with the religious leaders, we found cooperation from the beginning...They were ready to support us as long as we showed them respect...We would open meetings with a Muslim prayer, and close with a Christian blessing.” (Ibrahim, 2010,

“Question Eight”, para. 2). Thankfully for the future of Kenya, a long history of religious political activism in pursuit of a better, stronger Kenya, of which Wajir is only one example, bodes well for future efforts at interfaith dialogue and unity against al-Shabaab.

Both Christians and Muslims in Kenya have overall been slow to collectively organize for political action. In a trend reaching back to the beginning of British rule, Kenya’s Christians “have...regarded the state as providential liberator of God’s people, only later to wake up to each successive state’s defects in that role.” (Lonsdale, 2004, 5). Particularly, the first two presidents of post-independence Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi, took great care in appealing to religious authority as a way to enhance their own political legitimacy, which was especially effective in maintaining ideological dominance in the single party state. Immediately following independence, “in a letter to Archbishop [Leonard] Beecher, dated 6 December 1963, Kenyatta paid homage to the Archbishop’s central role in the struggle for Kenya’s independence and invited the Church to play a major part in nation-building.” (Sabar, 2002, 65-6). Kenyatta further ensured that “church leaders were punctiliously invited to the major state events: the annual opening of Parliament, the annual Kenyatta Day ceremonies, Independence Day ceremonies, and others.” (Sabar, 2002, 66). Such a cozy relationship between church and state led to reluctance on the part of church leaders to condemn the Kenyatta regime for its increasingly corrupt practices, especially the blatant rigging of elections in the de facto one-party state following independence.

Similarly, after the regime change, the Moi government was “long given the benefit of the doubt, since it had initially set out to reverse some of the growing social inequalities of the Kenyatta era.” (Lonsdale, 2004, 5). Given its own propensity for corruption, the Moi administration doubled down on the rhetoric and, “going beyond Kenyatta’s call for the churches to act as the conscience of society, Moi explicitly invited them to play an active role in managing the country.” (Sabar, 2002, 179). In this way, the various church structures in place in Kenya were nominally integrated into the national power structure. However, the close connection

between church and state began to fall apart as an increasingly paranoid Moi, following an aborted coup attempt in 1982, began to brutally crack down on anyone he deemed a potential threat to his regime. Most notable was his attack in the late 1980s on the autonomy of religious leaders, whose response carried far-reaching consequences for the entire country.

While the main church awakening with regards to political independence took place during the queuing controversy in the late 1980s, the initial revitalization began earlier that decade. Following the attempted coup, in early September 1982, Anglican Archbishop Manasses Kuria “called for the full participation of the churches in restoring peace and order.” Unlike admittedly scant past religious overtures for peace and order, “he also spoke out against the widespread detentions and arrests, and continued to speak out in the following months.” (Sabar, 2002, 183). At the same time, “the Roman Catholic bishops published a pastoral letter calling for a more accountable leadership, a more just division of wealth, the renewal of Kenya’s commitment to socialism and democracy, and for the churches to assume the responsibility that Kenyatta had assigned them” (ibid.). Following the rigging of purportedly free and fair elections in 1983, even the Anglican Church, the closest religious hierarchy to the ruling state administration back to colonial times, began to speak out. Galia Sabar, Chair of African Studies at Tel Aviv University, writes “the coup and the government’s subsequent level of corrosiveness seem to have finally shaken the Anglican Church out of its wait-and-see stance... The coup brought home the dual threats of chaos and military rule, while the restrictive measures that followed it dashed all hopes and expectations that Moi had aroused when he first took office.” (2002, 189). Such newfound ideological dissonance came even more to the forefront in the late 1980s, when President Moi changed the rules of elections in a final desperate attempt to maintain control over a country slowly slipping from his grasp.

While the crackdown following the attempted coup caused church leaders to speak out, real action was not taken until their own position was threatened. According to John Lonsdale, “A combination of clientelist expectation from below and institutional self-regard on high can

have quite radical effects in promoting a vigilant culture of critical democracy.” (2004, 6). This combination of forces was seen in the queue voting controversy of 1988, in which participants were expected to quite literally stand behind their candidate of choice and be counted. Queue voting posed a problem for ordinary Kenyans who would otherwise vote against the Moi regime; now they would be publicly shamed and perhaps be exposed to violent retribution. This fear, brought “by endangered congregations who expected the support of their institutional patrons” (Lonsdale, 2004, 6) as well as the fear that the same would befall leaders in the church hierarchy, proved instrumental in organizing widespread public and parochial protests against the changed law, and led to a countrywide change in attitude followed the massively flawed 1988 election.

Blistering sermons by church leadership, especially the then-Bishop of Mount Kenya East David Gitari, inspired ordinary Kenyans and struck fear into the heart of President Moi, who retaliated by stepping up pressure against the opponents of his regime. In April 1989, Moi-sponsored thugs masquerading as political activists attacked Gitari’s home, and he only narrowly escaped. “That Moi, who billed himself as a Christian, would sanction physical violence against a man of the cloth is indicative of just how effective Gitari and other churchmen were in leading their people in the struggle for fair elections, government accountability and constitutional rule” (Sabar, 2002, 210). Moi soon bowed to mounting pressure from church and civil society groups, and the Kenyan Constitution was reviewed in 1990 and amended in 1992, leading to the first multi-party elections since independence.

With the advent of multiparty elections came the most concerted effort in Kenyan history to integrate Muslims into the political process. The Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) was proposed in an attempt to address economic hardship and youth unemployment in the Muslim community, which was especially prevalent in Mombasa. The IPK received widespread support throughout the Muslim community who, tired of feeling like second-class citizens in a country dominated by Christians, felt that only a Muslim political party could adequately address their concerns.

However, the Kenyan government claimed that the IPK was a violation of the fundamental principle of separation of church and state. Kenyan Muslims, on the other hand, felt “that the government itself did not adhere to that principle; on the contrary, it emphasized, implicitly and explicitly, the centrality of Christianity to Kenyan society. In practice, Muslims claimed, there was no separation between religion and state but instead an effort by the state to control religion and use it to further its own interests.” (Oded, 2000, 174).

However tense relations were between Muslims and the government, Muslims and ordinary Christians were able to work together quite well, and the trend of religious political activism has continued into the present day, playing a major role in rallying public support for changing detrimental policies and resisting conflict escalation. In December 2000, during Moi’s last desperate bid to maintain power, a group of Christians and Muslims came together in an attempt to restructure and ameliorate a broken constitution left over from Kenya’s time as a single party state, and the Moi administration ham-handedly tried to stop the effort with violence. “The burning of churches and mosques in Nairobi...was widely seen as the ruling party’s attempt to stall the faiths-led initiative. But the religious leaders are fully aware of this ploy and have appealed for calm among their followers.” (Karanja, in Ranger ed., 2008, 86). This example of interfaith unity, along with that of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, are just two of many that must be repeated and enhanced in order for Kenya to have any chance at regaining any semblance of security during such a pivotal period for the country.

Despite the current state of Kenya, there is hope. Ambition for continued military engagement in Somalia is waning among the Kenyan public. Indeed, “the possibility of a Kenyan withdrawal, considered highly improbable not long ago, has crept into mainstream Kenyan politics and consciousness. Al-Shabaab has effectively equated a withdrawal with a halt in its attacks within Kenya, and an increasing number of Kenyans seem to be buying the alleged bargain.” (Hidalgo, 2014b, “Divide and Conquer” para. 2). Pulling troops out of Somalia would ostensibly lead to al-Shabaab pulling out of Kenya, and would perhaps lead to a reversal of

Kenya's biased, discriminatory, and unsuccessful counterterrorism policies. More importantly, the Kenyan military appears able to recognize the religious dimension of peace-building and seems ready to commit to it. An individual with knowledge of the activities of the chaplaincy of the Kenya Defense Forces who wished to remain anonymous stated, while describing training simultaneously received by Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim KDF chaplains, "they had not met as a collective group like that for about five years prior to that gathering, [but] they were willing to set aside [their] differences during the training for the sake of receiving the benefits of that training for the various groups in their care" (telephone interview, August 18, 2014).

Kenya's counterterrorism strategy is dangerous, both for the ethnic Somalis it discriminates against and for the country as a whole because it opens the country to retaliatory attacks by al-Shabaab. Equally dangerous is the political infighting amongst Kenya's political elite, formerly unanimously supportive of the military operation in Somalia, but which has, like the general public, slowly grown disillusioned with the violence. Kenya's largely nonviolent history, with conflict resolution largely a product of religious and civic activism, must again come to the forefront to ease the tensions currently present throughout Kenya. The country itself is primed for a necessary religious revival in the vein of the one seen in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A religious revival of this nature, a return to the wide-ranging societal integration seen with the WPDC on a national level, and a military withdrawal from Somalia are the three most necessary steps to save Kenya from itself before the current violence overwhelms the calls for peace, and Kenya transforms into another example of squandered hope like so many other African democracies.

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