

LEARNING INSTITUTIONS' VULNERABILITY TO TERRORISM. AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUE COVERAGE IN NOWADAYS' MEDIA AND SPECIALISED LITERATURE & A CASE STUDY OF GARISSA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KENYA

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Terrorist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, (ISIL), Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda have the knowledge and the capability to strike anywhere in Kenya and with Kenya Defense Forces' (KDF) incursion into Somalia in mid-October 2011, the citizens in Mandera, Moyale, Garrisa, Nairobi and Mombasa have been attacked and lives lost. This confirms that Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda have been motivated by Kenya Defense Forces' (KDF), now under the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) incursion into Somalia and they will continue to attack Kenya as a way of retaliation. The importance of Learning Institutions makes it a soft target for ISIL, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda terrorists. The fact that ISIL, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda terrorists will strike at Learning Institutions is real and this can be confirmed by the Garissa University College, Kenya terror attack where 148 people were killed on 2 April, 2015. The risk of terrorists attack against this critical infrastructure can result in communal disruptions, disarray, and even overreaction on the part of governments and the public as a result of any attack, may be high. We argue that Learning Institutions are vulnerable to ISIL, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks. In summary, the article looks at the concepts of terrorism, the dangers of attack on Learning Institutions, Kenya's Learning Institutions preparedness and concludes with a set of recommendations.

Key words: *vulnerability, terrorism, learning institutions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a subfield of peace and Conflict Studies that analyses the interactions between states and other actors in their engagement with each other over legitimacy [1]. It is one of the most disputed terms and has no comprehensive definition [2]. Terrorism refers to the deliberate killing of civilians, or to the doing of extensive damage to their property, with the intention of spreading fear through a population and

communicating a political message to a third party, usually a government[3].

A terrorist is someone who opposes the established order either at national level or internationally. Even if engaged in a restrained military campaign against an un-democratic, racist or repressive regime, these individuals are still 'terrorists', and the government forces that oppose them 'counter-terrorists' [4].

The French Republic coined the term 'terror' as a measure to counter-revolutionaries against the weak

government in 1795 and as a policy to protect itself [5]. The Bolsheviks used it to legitimize their actions against enemies of the state [6]. Jenkins' statement according to which [7] 'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' is often used to highlight the problem of implying a moral judgment when classifying the term 'terrorism'. If one identifies with the victim of the attack, that is considered terrorism, but if one can identify with the perpetrator he or she is seen as a liberator. This elusiveness reflects the fact that the meaning of the term terrorism remains contested. It can be used in relation to violence by states against their subjects, sometimes referred to as 'enforcement terrorism' or 'terrorism from above'. [8] It can be used more broadly to describe violent actions in a civil war or other conflict. It can also describe isolated acts of violence separate from a situation of war, intended to cause terror rather than contribute to a broader conflict. By extension, this type of terrorism can refer to acts of violence carried out internationally, in a third country apart from the location of its political cause [9].

"Terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." The definitions propose the motive of "furtherance of political or social objectives". Such motives include religious, cultural, economic or psychological factors. Increasingly important, however, is the question of targets [10].

In traditional discussions about terrorism, targets are usually governments, political figures, objects of economic or social significance, or random civilians. But the motives and targets can include environmental and ecological resources such as water and built water systems. The social and cultural value and importance of oil pipeline systems also make them attractive targets. By calling attention to the inability of governments to protect vital symbols of civilization, terrorists can raise doubts

about controlling authorities [11]. *"The relatively high efficiency of terrorism derives from its symbolic nature. If the terrorist comprehends that he is seeking a demonstration effect, he will attack targets with maximum symbolic value."* There are few soft targets with more symbolic power than learning institutions [12].

The United Nations General Assembly's Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, set out in its resolution 49/60 that terrorism includes "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes" and that such acts "are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them".[13]

2. METHODOLOGY

The Qualitative Research method was used in this study. Primary and secondary data were analyzed. The lead researcher being a soldier in Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) was able to collect primary data by interviewing and analyzing the narratives and the stories told by fellow soldiers, officers who had been involved in rescue operations and students who were rescued from Garissa University College. A total of 113 people were interviewed out of which 50 were military officers and 63 students. Secondary data on the subject drawn from books, journals, news papers, Conference proceedings, Government/corporate reports, theses and dissertations, Internet and magazines was critically analyzed. The findings and analyses are discussed below.

3. TERRORIST ATTACKS ON LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

3.1. Precedence

On Tuesday, December 16 the militant group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) carried out a suicide bombing and armed assault at the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan. More than 140

people were killed in the attack, most of them children, and more than 100 others were injured. To provide context for the attack, this report describes historical patterns of terrorist attacks targeting educational institutions, based on data from the Global Terrorism Database. Between 1970 and 2013 more than 3,400 terrorist attacks targeting educational institutions took place in 110 countries. These attacks comprised 2.7 percent of all terrorist attacks worldwide during this time period [14].

3.2. Lethality

Although attacks on educational targets have the capacity to be highly lethal, this is certainly atypical. In fact, the average lethality of attacks on educational targets was 0.8 deaths per attack, compared to 2.3 deaths per attack on average for all other types of targets combined. Many attacks against schools and universities, including many of those in Pakistan, took place when the buildings were unoccupied and targeted the facility rather than individuals [15].

This produced a considerably lower likelihood that the attack caused any casualties. More than 70 percent of all terrorist attacks on educational targets between 1970 and 2013 (2,365 attacks) caused no deaths, compared to approximately 50 percent of attacks on other types of targets. Between 2004 and 2013, the percentage of non-lethal attacks against education targets actually increased to 76 percent, while attacks against other types of targets were more likely to be lethal than they had been previously [16].

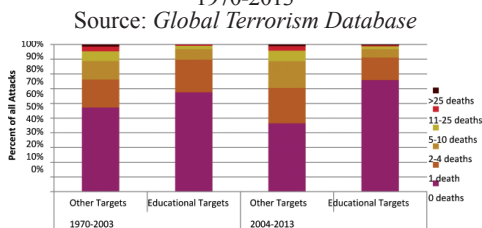
In contrast, a relatively small number of terrorist attacks on education targets worldwide were highly lethal. The

percentage of attacks on educational targets that caused more than 25 deaths increased more than six-fold, from 0.07 percent (1 attack) between 1970 and 2003 to 0.54 percent (10 attacks) between 2004 and 2013. The most lethal terrorist attack on an educational target took place in 2004 in Russia when several dozen Chechen and Ingush militants affiliated with the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs attacked School Number One in Beslan. The assailants, armed with firearms and wearing explosives, held approximately 1,200 staff and students hostage for three days. Ultimately, 344 people were killed, including more than 100 children, and more than 700 others were wounded making this one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in modern history. In addition to the Beslan attack, highly lethal attacks on educational targets have taken place in Croatia (1 attack), Iraq (3 attacks), Kenya (1 attack), Nigeria (3 attacks), and Syria (2 attacks). However, none of these involved more than 75 fatalities [17].

3.3. Location and tactics

The country that experienced the most terrorist attacks on educational targets between 1970 and 2013 was Pakistan, where 753 attacks targeted educational institutions, 724 (96%) of which took place between 2004 and 2013. Between 2004 and 2013, far more attacks on educational targets took place in Pakistan than in the next three countries combined: Thailand (213), Afghanistan (205), and Iraq (184). [18] Although many attacks on educational targets took place in Pakistan, unlike the recent attack in Peshawar, most were not lethal. In fact, Russia, Iraq, and Nigeria experienced more deaths in attacks on educational targets compared to Pakistan. As a result of the Beslan attack described above, fatalities in attacks on educational institutions comprised nearly one-quarter of all deaths due to terrorist attacks in Russia between 2004 and 2013. In contrast, although several hundred people were killed in terrorist attacks on educational institutions in

Table 1. Lethality of Terrorist Attacks against Educational Institutions and Other Targets, 1970-2013



Iraq during this same ten year period, Iraq suffered far more attacks on other types of targets and therefore attacks on

educational targets comprised only 2% of all terrorist attacks and 1% of all deaths from terrorist attacks [19].

Table 2. Ten Countries with Most Terrorism against Educational Institutions, Attacks and Fatalities, 2004-2013

Country	Terrorist Attacks on Educational Institutions	Percent of all Terrorist Attacks	Country	Fatalities in Attacks on Educational Institutions	Percent of all Fatalities
Pakistan	274	10%	Russia	351	24%
Thailand	273	9%	Iraq	339	1%
Afghanistan	205	4%	Nigeria	289	6%
Iraq	184	7%	Pakistan	149	1%
India	143	3%	Syria	138	6%
Nigeria	97	6%	Afghanistan	126	1%
Philippines	56	3%	Thailand	113	7%
Nepal	35	5%	Kenya	50	10%
Uruguay	33	7%	India	47	1%
Bangladesh	31	10%	Sri Lanka	21	1%

The global prevalence of terrorist attacks against educational institutions was highest in 1970 and 1971 (10% and 9% of all attacks, respectively), when the overall volume of terrorism was relatively low. Between 1972 and 2003, 2 percent of all attacks each year, on average, targeted educational institutions. Globally, 69 percent of attacks on educational institutions between 1970 and 2013 targeted schools, universities, and educational buildings; 19 percent targeted teachers, professors, and instructors, and 11 percent targeted other educational personnel. However, the timing and tactics of attacks on educational targets differ depending on the location or context. To better understand the nature of these attacks, we compare patterns in several key countries that have recently experienced a growing trend in attacks on educational targets Pakistan, Thailand, Nigeria, and Afghanistan and one country that experienced a significant number of attacks on educations historically, the United States [20].

3.3.1. Pakistan

In Pakistan terrorist attacks on educational institutions took place between 1990 and 2013, and targeted schools, universities, and educational buildings at a much higher rate (88%) than worldwide (69%). The vast majority of the attacks on educational infrastructure in Pakistan (94%) were non-lethal, and they typically involved the use of explosives (90%) or arson or incendiary devices (7%) against primary, middle, or high schools that were unoccupied at the time of the attack. The

primary goal of these attacks appears to be disruption of the educational process, particularly at girls' schools, rather than loss of life [21].

Although the perpetrators were unidentified in more than three-quarters of the attacks on educational institutions in Pakistan, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was responsible for 136 such attacks, 77 percent of those with known perpetrators. Nearly all of the attacks attributed to TTP (131) were not lethal, however four attacks killed one or two individuals. One TTP attack, at Hussaini Madrassa in Peshawar in 2013, was carried out by a suicide bomber and two gunmen and killed 14 people and wounded 32 others [22].

3.3.2. Thailand

In Thailand, terrorist attacks against educational targets occurred between 1980 and 2013, but were much more common in the 2000s and involved different tactics than those in other locations. Attacks on education in Thailand were more than twice as likely to target teachers, professors, and instructors (43%, compared to 19% globally). Nearly all of these attacks were either armed assaults (66%) or bombings (30%) aimed at teachers and the police or military security forces that routinely escorted them on their commute [23]. Although Thailand also experienced numerous non-lethal attacks on vacant school buildings like those in Pakistan, these comprise approximately half of all attacks on educational targets. Overall, terrorist attacks against educational targets in Thailand were much more likely to be deadly more than 40 percent of attacks resulted in at least one fatality [24].

3.3.3. Nigeria

With the exception of one attack that took place in 1988, all terrorist attacks on educational targets in Nigeria occurred between 2008 and 2013, the most recent year for which data are available. The group commonly known as “Boko Haram” (a Hausa phrase that loosely translates as “Western education is a sin”) was responsible for carrying out all such attacks for which a perpetrator was identified (69%). Preliminary data from the first half of 2014 indicate that this group’s practice of targeting schools continued as they gained greater notoriety for kidnapping 276 students from a government-run secondary school for girls in Chibok, and also carried out approximately 10 other attacks targeting educational institutions [25].

Terrorists’ tactics against educational targets in Nigeria were somewhat varied and primarily included armed assaults (22%), bombings (27%), facility/infrastructure attacks (35%), and kidnappings (12%). They were considerably more likely to target schools, universities, and educational buildings (76%) than teachers or other personnel (24%). Educational targets of terrorist attacks in Nigeria included primary and secondary schools as well as colleges, universities and religious institutions. Although 63 percent of attacks on educational targets in Nigeria were non-lethal, several devastating attacks against schools have taken place. In addition to the kidnapping in Chibok in 2014, Boko Haram carried out two assaults in 2013 that each killed more than 40 people at a secondary school and an agricultural college, respectively, in Yobe state [26].

A distinct pattern among attacks against educational targets in Nigeria involves the prevalence of multi-part, coordinated attacks. Among all terrorist attacks on educational institutions worldwide, approximately 15 percent were part of a coordinated attack. Among all terrorist attacks in Nigeria against any type of target, 28 percent were part of a coordinated attack. However, 46 percent of all attacks on educational institutions

in Nigeria were part of a coordinated event in which multiple attacks either on other educational targets or other types of targets were linked together based on timing, location, and perpetrator. For example, in October 2012 Boko Haram burned eight different schools in one night, though no casualties were reported [27].

3.3.4. Afghanistan

Like attack patterns in Nigeria, the first attack on an educational target in Afghanistan was recorded in 1988, but no others occurred until the 2000s when their prevalence increased considerably. Also, like Nigeria, only one group in Afghanistan was responsible for all of the attacks on educational targets in which the Taliban was identified as a perpetrator (46%). As we see with most attacks on educational targets, many of those in Afghanistan were non-lethal (71%). However, a unique pattern emerges with respect to the injuries caused by these attacks [28]. While it appears that some of the attacks were intentionally non-lethal (e.g., they targeted vacant buildings), they were much more likely to cause non-fatal injuries. Notably, between 2009 and 2013, 20 attacks involving chemical weapons such as toxic gas or poisoned water supply were reported in Afghanistan. Although these attacks were non-lethal, symptoms were reported by scores of students and staff, including five incidents in which more than 100 people became ill. Authorities typically suspected that the Taliban was responsible for these attacks, though the group did not claim responsibility for these attacks and often denied involvement [29].

3.3.5. United States of America

The unusual high prevalence of attacks on educational institutions worldwide in 1970 and 1971 was almost entirely driven by patterns of terrorist activity in the United States. Of the 103 attacks on educational targets worldwide in 1970 and 1971, 91 (88%) took place in the United States. These attacks, which occurred in 23 different states,

occurred in the context of the anti-war movement and in the wake of the civil rights movement. Responsibility for the attacks was occasionally attributed to formal organizations like the Weather Underground (5%) or the Chicano Liberation Front (10%), but more often the only information available about the perpetrators of these attacks is that they were "student radicals", (50%; nearly all attacks were at colleges and universities) "white extremists" (13%; often located at recently desegregated schools), or "black nationalists" (8%). None of these attacks on schools caused any deaths; four resulted in injuries. As the United States' engagement in the Vietnam War declined, the relative frequency of attacks on educational targets decreased dramatically: there were only five in 1972 [30].

A second wave of terrorist attacks on educational institutions in the United States began in the late 1980s. Between 1987 and 2013, 80 percent (32 attacks) of all terrorist attacks on educational institutions in the United States were carried out by radical environmentalist groups, including the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth Liberation Front (ELF), and groups calling themselves "The Justice Department" and "Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade." These attacks typically targeted university research laboratories or researchers personally, and caused extensive property damage but no deaths and only one injury. Although the specific value of the damage was often not reported, the eleven attacks for which values are known caused more than \$5.6 million in damages [31].

4. GARISSA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TERRORIST ATTACK

With its horrific attack on a Kenyan university, the Somali militant group Al-Shabaab has given up all pretense of governing and has joined the depths of global jihadi depravity. On April 2, 2015, our gunmen affiliated with Somalia's Al-Shabaab jihadist-terror group, entered Garissa University College in Garissa, Kenya, killing 148 and wounding dozens. "The assault on

Garissa a pastoral area that is home to many Somali refugees stands in stark contrast to the group's deadly 2013 attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping center, which was frequented by expats and rich Kenyans..." This is part of a perceptible shift in modern terror tactics; increasingly, the world's terror organizations seem to be turning away from attacks on subway cars and airport terminals, to focus lethal attention on institutions of learning [32].

The violence in Garissa marks the bloodiest terrorist attack on Kenyan soil since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and is Al-Shabaab's most high-profile violence in the country since the 2013 attack on the Westgate mall. It also represents a final point in al Shabab's long evolution from a populist resistance movement into a full-blown, international terrorist organization. The execution of students has special significance for Al-Shabaab: The high-profile bombing of a graduation ceremony for newly minted doctors in Mogadishu in 2009 was one of the group's most embarrassing political blunders, and it has largely refrained from direct attacks on students since then. Its willingness to claim this latest incident marks a visible shift in strategy [33].

Assuming that the evocation of Boko Haram is deliberate, the Garissa assault could signal an intention to realign al-Shabab, long linked to al Qaeda, with the Islamic State. (Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in March.) If so, Al-Shabaab should be expected to use ever more flamboyantly violent tactics in the future, as it seeks to compete with other Islamic State affiliates for notoriety and for relevance in the global jihad. [34]

One reason that "terrorist organizations might choose to target learning institutions is that learning institutions, children and students act as powerful symbolic targets". Learning institutions represent 'soft targets'. "A soft target is a relatively unguarded site where people congregate, normally in large numbers, thus offering the potential for mass casualties." But practicalities aside, there are also specific, political



Fig. no. 1. A map showing Garissa University College in northeastern Kenya. Gunmen attacked the institution on April 2, 2015. PHOTO GOOGLE MAPS

and cultural reasons a terrorist cell might target learning institutions. And this is where such acts diverge from the usual modes of modern terror [35].

Though bombing public transport takes months, if not years of intensive planning, it is intended to make the act appear random any one could become a victim by passing through at the wrong time. The terrifying power of this particular terror tactic is, after all, its unpredictability. An ideological message is usually announced in the aftermath [36].

Attacking learning institutions, however, is predictable because the act is the message. Terrorists who attack learning institutions intend to deplete the number of institutions disseminating philosophies ostensibly contradictory to their worldview. For example, “Boko Haram,” roughly translated from the Hausa language means “Western education is forbidden”. “They’re attacking what they see as the institutions of culture, and in particular the institutions of Western culture”. “They see that the process of Westernization begins at learning institutions” [37].

It is not difficult to see why Garissa was targeted. Kenyan learning institutions consistently rank toward the best in the region, and the overall Kenyan population demonstrates one of the highest literacy rates on the continent. It is also a highly diverse place, with regards to religion and ethnicity, unlike many African countries occupying the borderlands between Muslim-dominated North Africa and the Christian-dominated

south. Consequently, Kenyan learning institutions are well-positioned for the maximal exchange of cultures, politics, and ideas a concept that stands in direct opposition to the rigid ideologies of groups like Al-Shabaab [38].

Al-Shabaab has a history of interfering in local education. In areas of Somalia under the group’s control, once public learning institutions have been gender segregated, with the majority of girls being intimidated against enrolling, if not forcibly removed from learning institutions all together. Whole classes of boys have been pulled out of learning institutions and conscripted into its ranks [39].

In an audio message released following the attack at Garissa, Ali Mohamoud Raghe, a spokesperson for Al-Shabaab, said: “the university had been targeted because it was educating many Christian students in ‘a Muslim land under colony’, according to The New York Times, ‘a reference to the large ethnic Somali population in a part of Kenya that Somalia once tried to claim. He called the university part of Kenya’s ‘plan to spread their Christianity and infidelity’. That makes Al-Shabaab’s objective crystal-clear, and all too familiar: to wipe out a generation of ideological non-adherents [40].

5. CONCLUSION

Most Kenyan residents admit that radicals, Al-Shabaab, are living among them. But the government through police campaign is backfiring some Muslims in places like Mombasa, because of police

moves like bursting into mosques during prayer without removing their boots is a major affront to the religion.

The government needs to rethink its strategies so that they can benefit from intelligence from the locals where Al-Shabaab recruiting the youths is most likely. Muslims in Mombasa are also angry at religious leaders and elders from umbrella organizations like the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims. Locals accuse these groups of staying silent not only on police abuses, but extremism. None condemned the radical youth's takeover of the mosques, for example, nor the mass arrests and raids by the police. Therefore, the government should abandon the realist approach where it is only the state as the actor. Since track one has had little impact, they should use track one and a half.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The local security personnel should identify and make a list of prominent/ high profile learning institutions in their jurisdiction for the purpose of standard operating procedure (SOP). Each learning institution should have concrete boundary wall, with 3 to 4 gates and each gate should be manned by enough guards, on a 24- hour basis.

B. There should be proper illumination along the perimeter so that nobody can jump over the wall into the learning institutions in the night for any nefarious activity. Concertina wire may be fixed on the iron grills above the boundary wall to deter any one from jumping over the wall.

C. Installation of CCTV systems all along the boundary as well as some additional locations inside the premises, to monitor the movement of any suspicious person, with recording facilities for the last three days, at least. The system should also have requisite video analytics to detect any intrusion and raise an audio as well as visual alarm. CCTV system alarm may also be connected to the identified gates to close them automatically.

D. A visual anti-sabotage check of the entire learning institutions should

be carried out by the security staff of the learning institutions before the students start arriving in the institution. They should also check the footpath in front of the learning institutions, all along the boundary wall including the parking area to detect any suspicious objects lying unattended there.

E. Learning Institutions staff, teachers and students should be regularly briefed not to touch any unattended object lying anywhere inside/ outside the school. In case any such object is found, the person who finds it should immediately bring it to the notice of the chief security officer of the learning institutions. In case it is seen by a student, he should immediately bring it to the notice of his first available teacher, who in turn will inform the nodal security officer/ principal of the school. All should also be briefed to keep away from such an object.

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