

Countering Terrorism through Diplomatic Missions in IGAD Countries: Harvests from Capacity Building and Promotion of Partnerships

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Abstract: The global community has intensified its efforts in counter-terrorism, making use of various strategies, including international multi-lateral organizations and diplomacy. One of the most prominent hotspots for terrorist activities in Somalia, following the collapse of the national government three decades ago, and the intensification of Al Qaeda sponsored Al-Shabaab activities. Foreign missions and inter-governmental agencies have great potential in contributing to international efforts in combating terrorism. The study examined the influence of Somalia-based IGAD countries' diplomatic missions in capacity building and partnerships in countering terrorism. The study was guided by the political theory of anarchism which relates to the realism concept. A descriptive research design involving a mixed research approach of both qualitative and quantitative data was employed. An interview schedule was administered for the head of mission, while questionnaires were used for the rest of the officers. The findings of this study were potentially important sources of policy framework on the role of diplomacy in counterterrorism. The study found that there is a great influence of Somalia-based IGAD countries' diplomatic missions in capacity building for countering terrorism. The study also revealed that the Somalia-based IGAD countries' diplomatic missions influence the promotion of partnerships for countering terrorism. The significance of the study is to show the relationship between diplomacy and counterterrorism and how diplomacy can be used effectively to counter terrorism in a transnational relationship.

Key Words: *Terrorism, Diplomatic Missions, IGAD Countries, Capacity Building, Partnerships*

1. Introduction

Law (2009) claims that terrorism is as ancient as human culture and as recent as today's headlines. Some claim that people and groups have been using terrorism for years, while others argue that true terrorism has only existed for decades. Both camps are right up to a limit. Terrorists' weapons, strategies, and objectives change all the time, but some characteristics have remained consistent since the beginning. The United States has tried to define it in its legal code; however, every other American government entity has its definition. Under such circumstances then terrorism is identified by actors under the narrative of "I know it when I see it"

According to Hoffman (2006), "terrorism became popular during the French Revolution. In comparison to its predominant use, at that time terrorism had an absolutely solid appeal. The structure or régime de la terreur of 793–94 from which the English word came was adopted as a means to maintain order during the transient anarchical era of instability and upheaval that followed the uprisings of 789, and indeed many other revolutions. Hence, unlike terrorism as it is generally known today, to mean a revolutionary or anti-government operation conducted by non-state or subnational actors, the régime de la terreur was an instrument of governance wielded by the newly formed revolutionary state. It was intended to concentrate the new government's power by suppressing counter-revolutionaries, saboteurs, and all other dissidents that the new system viewed as 'enemies of the people.'"

The Committee of General Security and the Revolutionary Tribunal ("People's Court" in the modern vernacular) was thus bestowed broad powers of arrest and judgment, publicly sentencing to death by guillotine those convicted of treasonous (i.e., reactionary)

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crimes. In this manner, a powerful lesson was transmitted to all who might oppose the revolution or grow nostalgic for the ancient régime.

Scholars have made more emphasis on how terrorism works and how to combat it rather than what it is. However general characteristics that define terrorism include the following elements of traditional definitions; such as violence against innocent people, different methods of organization, the reliance on conspiratorial life, the use of fear, contact with the media, and so on.

The military option has over time been considered the most effective approach for fighting terrorism. However, transnational relations have brought several dynamics globally on counter-terrorism. Multi-lateral and bilateral relations of democracies in world politics with regards to terror groups have made it a matter of “your friends are our enemies.” This particularly was seen during the 1998 bombings by Al-Qaeda in Kenya and Tanzania for their friendly relations with the United States. Historically, Kenya has been recognized as ‘an island of peace’ however it has been a target of terror activities since its involvement in the Somali Civil War and its military action in Somalia (unilaterally) and eventually under Africa Union Mission in Somali (AMISOM). This led to a lot of criticism with calls for troop withdrawal to offer security in Kenya since clearly, the attacks were more at home than where the troops were. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons that show that the military option is not working in the case of Kenya’s action for counterterrorism. This then calls for diplomacy in counterterrorism measures.

Somalia and other East African Countries have been under deadly attacks by extremist groups for three decades now. Apart from clan rivalry in Somalia, terrorist organizations such as Harakat Shabab al-Mujahideen have been a major cause of instability in the country. The terrorist groups have been capitalizing on the weakness of the central government of Somalia. Al-Shabaab had captured and controlled significant parts of Mogadishu and Kismayo port. This was a major victory for them as they not only benefitted economically but their strength politically and socially grew. In 2011, with the help of AMISOM and Kenyan troops that later joined AMISOM, Somalia regained control over Mogadishu and Kismayo port. However, Al-Shabaab conducted even more attacks with over 500 attacks and about 150 of them in Kenya.

In April 2015 the militants would conduct a 15-hour siege at Garissa University College holding over 700 students hostages leading to the death of 148 people. In December 2019, a suicide truck bombing in Mogadishu killed 82 people and injured about 150 others. In a more daring attack, the US military base in Lamu-Kenya is attacked in January 2020 killing at least 3 US personnel. Al-Shabaab attacks Kenya with a demand for Kenya’s withdrawal from Somalia.

In response, governments have opted for military options with the use of drone strikes, special operations force with over half a billion-dollar spent on the training and equipping of AMISOM. Despite all these the attacks from terror groups still, go on. For a long-term approach to solving the problem of instability caused by these groups, the military option is not working. Most governments including the Somali government have downplayed the role of diplomacy in countering terrorism over time. With recent developments in how the terror groups operate transnational, it calls for cooperation with countries and diplomacy in approaching the groups. Kenya holds a no negotiating policy with the terrorist. When the two Cuban doctors were abducted in April 2020 by the Al-Shabaab who demanded a ransom of 1.5 million USD, Kenya realized the limitations of military action. It took the help of community elders from both Mandera in Kenya and Bulahawo in Somalia to negotiate for their release. This underpinned the importance of diplomacy.

Furthermore, despite Kenya’s troops in Somalia, the attacks in Kenya by terror groups have significantly increased. This shows the limitations of the military and calls for diplomacy to help in countering terrorism. Since diplomacy has traditionally been left to promote the state’s interest there is very limited literature explaining the role of diplomacy in counterterrorism.

The research analyzed the influence of diplomacy in countering terrorism focusing on IGAD countries’ diplomatic missions in Somalia.

2. Literature Review

The immediate goal of capacity building for counter-terrorism is to improve the national capacity to combat, investigate and prosecute terrorism, counter-terrorism funding and money laundering in Kenya more efficiently and comprehensively. With a long-term aim of reducing the incidence of terrorists, terrorism funding, and money laundering in Kenya. Any initiative aimed at enhancing Kenya's national capacity is achieved by strengthening the capacity of the NCTC.

Due to the nature of terrorism in the East African Region and Kenya, which on most occasion has targeted foreign interest, major efforts to counter-terrorism has been led and operated by donor funds and affected foreign interests. Therefore, most of the capacity-building programs are majorly funded by IGOs or international NGOs with regional initiatives still receiving support from the UN.

Technical organizations, foreign NGOs and local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are vital sources of professional knowledge and can serve as independent suppliers and implement a great deal of capacity building related to counterterrorism on the ground. CSOs are increasingly seen as autonomous and trustworthy partners by many donor states and other assistance providers and act as implementing agencies for a great deal of technical and other counterterrorism-related assistance.

CSOs' capacity-building activities and the capacity-building funding channeled into them provide many advantages over government-to-government assistance. The political sensitivities between an autonomous CSO and a recipient government, for instance, could be less than between two national governments. CSOs are also best suited to overcome the cultural and language differences that can hinder state-to-state preparation, which can draw experts from diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic skills.

CSOs are therefore more agile, autonomous, and faster on their feet than governments and are therefore better able to respond to the recipients' sometimes-changing needs.

Capacity-building assistance is strengthened by bottom-up approaches rather than top-down policies on many counterterrorism-related problems, and local CSOs may help create support for other actors' capacity-building activities and ensure that they obtain the required follow-up attention to ensure that they are sustainable. Successful capacity-building initiatives enable both the assistance provider and the recipient to have local ownership and a long-term commitment.

CSOs, mostly permanently based in the region, have a competitive advantage over, for example, international donors or UN suppliers of technical assistance, who appear to have a small presence in the field.

The IGAD Capacity Building Program Against Terrorism (ICPAT), launched in June 2006, is an example of a groundbreaking collaboration on counter-terrorism capacity building between civil society (the Pretoria Institute for Security Studies [ISS]) and the government (the IGAD Member States and interested donor States). ICPAT, sponsored by European and other donors and administered by the ISS, is supervised by a steering committee consisting of IGAD member states.

A collaboration of both regional and international stakeholders, the initiative aims at capacity-building in the following five areas: (i) enhancing judicial measures; (ii) working to facilitate greater inter-agency counter-terrorism cooperation within individual IGAD member states; (iii) enhancing border control; (iv) providing training and exchanging knowledge and best practices; and (v) promoting pro-agency counter-terrorism coordination within IGAD member states; (iii) enhancing border control; member States of ICPAT admire and are deeply involved in the program for their technically based apolitical work.

3. Materials and Methods

The study was guided by the political theory of anarchism which relates to realism concept. A descriptive research design involving a mixed research approach of both qualitative and quantitative data was employed. The target population for this study was personnel of the diplomatic missions of IGAD countries in Somalia, namely, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, and Djibouti. From each mission, 6 officers were selected for data collection, namely, the head of mission, military attaché, political attaché, trade

attaché, and the administrative officer. An interview schedule was administered for the head of mission, while questionnaires were used for the rest of the officers. In addition to this personnel, IGAD’s secretary and the counter-terrorism officer in Somali’s foreign affairs ministry were selected for the administration of interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and triangulated with qualitative data that was analyzed following the themes isolated in the interview schedules.

4. Results

The study entailed the inquiry on the influence of the Somalia-based IGAD countries diplomatic missions in capacity building for countering terrorism. The study consisted of a questionnaire item containing selected statements that measured the influence and rated on a 5-point Likert scale starting with 1- for strongly disagree and a maximum of 5 for strongly agree. The questionnaire participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statements. The collected data on the item was analyzed using descriptive statistics entailing frequencies and percentages and presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Diplomatic missions in capacity building for countering terrorism

		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	Total
IGAD mission capacity building has created greater diplomacy	F	10	8	7	8	9	42
	%	23.8	19	16.7	19	21.4	100
IGAD mission capacity building has been inclusive	F	7	10	9	9	7	42
	%	16.7	23.8	21.4	21.4	16.7	100
IGAD mission has been on top level of involvement of the involved countries	F	9	7	10	9	7	42
	%	21.4	16.7	23.8	21.4	16.7	100
Capacity building needs in IGAD mission highly informed formation of CEPCVE	F	6	8	8	13	7	42
	%	14.3	19	19	31	16.7	100
CEPCVE inception has positively changed the capacity building of IGAD mission	F	6	9	8	10	9	42
	%	14.3	21.4	19	23.8	21.4	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants (n=10, 23.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement “IGAD mission capacity building has created greater diplomacy”. However, the second-largest portion of the respondents (n=9, 21.4%) strongly agreed with the statement. This implied that there were variations in agreement with the statement. This was also affirmed through a portion of the respondents (n=7, 16.7%) indicating neutral with the statement. The findings were supported by the interview findings from one of the key informants. He noted;

Through IGAD mission, we have created a platform for capacity building among the staff. For instance, the training is conducted in groups irrespective of the country of origin. This helps in sharing ideas and knowledge from various countries hence an amplified training [KI 02].

The above statement shows that indeed there is the contribution of IGAD mission in capacity building with comes with the enhancing of diplomacy among participating countries.

Table 1 also shows that the majority of the respondents (n=10, 23.8%) disagreed with the statement “IGAD mission capacity building has been inclusive” while the other two equal portions of n=9 (21.4%) indicated neutral and agreed with the statement.

The table also shows that majority of the respondents 10(23.8%) were neutral with the statement “IGAD mission has been on top level of involvement of the involved countries”. Other portions of the respondents 9(21.4%) agreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This was consistent with the interview results with the KIs where one noted;

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The involvement of IGAD mission depends on several factors. While some countries are fully involved, others are partial. For instance, countries close to Somalia re of great concern to the security of Somalia and thus need for them to be more active in the involvement [KI 01].

Table 1 also shows that majority of the respondents (n=8, 19%) in equal measures disagreed and remained neutral about a statement that Capacity building needs in IGAD mission highly informed the formation of CEPCVE.

However, the majority of the respondents 10(23.8) agreed that CEPCVE inception has positively changed the capacity building of the IGAD mission. This implies that the impact of the IGAD peace budling through the missions in Somalia is evident.

The study entailed an investigation of Somalia-based IGAD countries’ diplomatic missions in the promotion of partnerships for countering terrorism. The study involved a closed-ended questionnaire item with a task to rank the level of awareness of the statements among the respondents. The item was measured on a Likert-scale ranging between 1- not at all aware and 5- extremely aware. The findings are presented using Table 2.

Table 2 Somalia-based IGAD countries’ diplomatic missions in the promotion of partnerships

		not at all aware	slightly aware	somewhat aware	moderately aware	extremely aware	Total
Partnerships have been initiated and/or conducted by IGAD countries	F	8	10	9	7	8	42
	%	19	23.8	21.4	16.7	19	100
Funding partnerships promoted by the IGAD countries	F	9	12	10	6	5	42
	%	21.4	28.6	23.8	14.3	11.9	100
Partnerships promoted effectiveness by IGAD countries	F	12	8	10	6	6	42
	%	28.6	19	23.8	14.3	14.3	100
Partnerships have been affected by diplomatic disputes	F	10	8	10	6	8	42
	%	23.8	19	23.8	14.3	19	100
Personnel partnerships promoted by IGAD countries	F	12	8	10	6	6	42
	%	28.6	19	23.8	14.3	14.3	100

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents 10(23.8%) were slightly aware about Partnerships have been initiated and/or conducted by IGAD countries. Equal portions of 9(18%) were not at all aware as well as extremely aware about the statement. This implies that there as divided views about the statement on the partnerships initiated. This could be informed by the differences in different job categories as well as missions.

Similarly, majority of the respondents 12(28.6%) indicated slightly aware about Funding partnerships promoted by the IGAD countries. Another portion of the respondents 10(21.4%) were somewhat aware of the statement. The table also shows that majority 12(28.6%) indicated that they were not at all aware about Partnerships promoted effectiveness by IGAD countries.

The quantitative findings depict the qualitative findings through the interviews with the mission heads where one KI noted;

The mission hardly focusses on bringing together countries. Instead, the focus is on accomplishing the objective set in Somalia, there are hardly association of the partnership between the countries to inform the effectiveness of the IGAD mission [KI 03].

In a different interview, the respondent indicated that it is only through partnerships that the essence and success of Amisom in Somalia has been met. He noted;

Was it not for the partnership among these countries to form Amisom, the Al-shabaab challenges facing Somalia would not have been curbed? The partnerships have helped the stakeholders to put together resources both financial and human to strengthen the fight against Al-shabaab [KI 01].

The majority of the respondents 10(23.8%) were neutral with the statement “Partnerships have been affected by diplomatic disputes” which implies that the disputes may not be a significant factor in the delivery of peacebuilding in Somalia. Moreover, an equal portion of the respondents 23.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. The table also revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement “Personnel partnerships promoted by IGAD countries”. This implies that the partnerships haven’t created a unique network for IGAD countries.

5. Discussions

From the study findings, there exist consistencies and contradictions with existing literature. The study found that the majority of the participants (n=10, 23.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement “IGAD mission capacity building has created greater diplomacy”. This is the reflection of Pesto (2010) who claims “Adequately and skillfully applying diplomacy is the key element that can integrate all anti-terrorism initiatives in a cohesive and connected whole.

The study also found that through the IGAD mission, we have created a platform for capacity building among the staff. The study also reported that the majority of the respondents (n=10, 23.8%) disagreed with the statement “IGAD mission capacity building has been inclusive” while the other two equal portions of n=9 (21.4%) indicated neutral and agreed with the statement. According to Connon and Simpson (2016), “the first principle of realism is that in foreign affairs, the state is the principal actor. Actors, for instance, people and organizations, exist, but their power is regulated.

The study also shows that the involvement of IGAD mission depends on several factors. While some countries are fully involved, others are partial. The study reported that the majority of the respondents (n=8, 19%) in equal measures disagreed and remained neutral about a statement that Capacity building needs in IGAD mission highly informed the formation of CEPCVE. According to Antunes and Camisão (2017), terrorist attacks engender a sense of injustice, creating an incentive for the purposeful recruitment of militants who are prepared to die to validate the goals of the terrorist organization, which is equally true for fighters within the area, as well as those exposed to the Al-Shabaab threat.

The study also found that the majority of the respondents 10(23.8%) were slightly aware of Partnerships that have been initiated and/or conducted by IGAD countries. Rosand, Miller and Ipe (2008) posit that in many respects, much more attention has been given to the comparatively few Western victims of terrorism in the sub-region of East Africa. The study reported that the majority of the respondents 12(28.6%) indicated being slightly aware of Funding partnerships promoted by the IGAD countries. The study also associated the efforts into bringing nations together as a hardly focused area. However, there were challenges in accomplishing the objective set in Somalia, there is hardly any association of the partnership between the countries to inform the effectiveness of the IGAD mission.

The study also reported that the majority of the respondents 10(23.8%) were neutral with the statement “Partnerships have been affected by diplomatic disputes”. This relates to existing studies including Ingram and Reed (2016) who opine that in the broadest sense, three variables, whether a single message or the larger campaign itself, is critical to optimizing the potential effect of strategic communication activities.

6. Conclusion

From the study findings through data collected using questionnaires as well as interviews, the study make the following conclusions;

That there is a great influence of Somalia-based IGAD countries’ diplomatic missions in capacity building for countering terrorism. This has been through the elements tagged on IGAD mission capacity building including being inclusive and highly informing the formation of CEPCVE.

The study concludes that the Somalia-based IGAD countries’ diplomatic missions influence the promotion of partnerships for countering terrorism. The key elements on interest in the influence of the diplomatic missions are partnerships that have been

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initiated and/or conducted by IGAD countries, the funding partnerships promoted by the IGAD countries as well as partnerships that are directly influenced by diplomatic disputes. The study showed that the association of the partnership between the countries to inform the effectiveness of the IGAD mission is key.

7. Recommendations

As established on the findings of this study, the researcher developed recommendations that if implemented would further accelerate the influence of diplomacy in countering terrorism focusing on IGAD countries' diplomatic missions in Somalia.

1. The Amisom team and administration focus on creating greater Somalia-based IGAD countries' diplomatic missions through inclusive capacity building. By this, Amisom will be able to effectively counter-terrorism.
2. From the findings, the Amisom team can greatly influence the Somalia-based IGAD countries' diplomatic missions in countering terrorism through increased capacity building for its stakeholders.

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