Emergence of Religious Radicalism and Violent Extremism: Historical Roots and Contemporary Trends in Kenya with a Focus on Al Shabaab

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Abstract

This work examines the historical roots of religious radicalism and violent extremism and analyses new trends in Kenya. Radicalism and extremism are aspects that are found in all religions. For example, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have exhibited notorious extreme tendencies through application of Torah, Crusades and Islamic jihadists groups such as al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Boko haram respectively. The 1980-2000 secular bent ideologies of Liberation Tigers of Tamil (Eelam) and Hindus in Sri Lanka, to name but a few, used both religion and politics to forge their grievances. Kenya above all East African Countries seem to have been singled out as the battle field of terrorism activities attributed to Al-Shabaab based in Somalia. This study uses qualitative methodology to describe issues and events through historical analysis. Hypothetically, when adherents of any religion become radicalized and take their beliefs and practices to the very extreme, stretching them beyond the norm or agreeable standards according to scripture and orthodox means, they become dangerous to humanity. This study has suggested measures that can be engaged to tame violent extremism.

Key words: Radicalism, Extremism, Dialogue, Co-existence, Terrorism, Ideologies

Introduction

The goals of this work are to critically analyze the historical roots of radicalism and extremism both in Islam and Christianity with a view to understanding contemporary events in Kenya and other global challenges today. The central argument in this work is that radicalism and extremism have historical roots both in Islam, Christianity and other world religions. Even though terrorists have associated themselves with Islam in the recent past, all religions provide an avenue for extremist tendencies to thrive perhaps because of various interpretations of scripture to suit ones agenda. Politics and persons with other agenda have found the use of religion to achieve their goals.

This work is divided into the following sections: section one gives the background to radicalism and extremism. It also defines terms as used in this study. Secondly, the work explores general historical roots before discussing the roots in Islam and Christianity. This leads to section three that examines contemporary trends in Kenya as a reference to other contexts. This work winds up by providing relevant pragmatic recommendations for inter-religious dialogue.

Radicalism and extremism activities are forms that have been exhibited both in Politics and religion. Recently, politicians have found it easy to use religion to fight established regimes and government for example in the Arab world. There have been disagreements, turmoil and bloodshed in Somalia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Nigeria and most countries in the Mid East. Brotherhoods like *Ikhwan Muslimun* and other groups that sharply disagree with traditional ways of religion and politics have emerged with strong ideologies in most cases not accepted by established norms of those countries.

This is because religion can be used to unite and divide people based on different interpretations and divisions that emerge out of leadership wrangles and ideologies. This work gives a general school of thought about the origin of radicalism and extremism, and discusses religious roots in Islam and Christianity as away of comparative study. There is need to show that radical and extreme tendencies are found in both Islam and Christianity because in most cases due to terrorism activities, these terms are associated with Islam.

In order to understand the Kenyan scenario, a brief history of terrorism attacks has been examined with a view of analyzing emerging trends in Kenya. Terrorism has come out as a tool for radicals to express their agenda worldwide. These are contextual trends peculiar to East African confederation. Above all, the question of world peace is paramount in the context of terror and radical activities therefore, some recommendations are offered that can trigger peaceful co-existence of all religion in the Horn of Africa and worldwide. To avoid confusion of these terms, a working definition has been given.

Radicalism and extremisms are familiar terms both in politics and religion. The usage might differ according to how they are defined by different schools of thought, individuals and groups. The following explanations have been adopted for this work.

Extremism

Druckman [1](2001) and Stein[2] (2001), define 'Extremism,' as a complex phenomenon, although this complexity is often hard to see. Most simply, it can be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary. In conflict settings it manifests as a severe form of conflict engagement.

However, the labeling of activities, people, and groups as "extremist", and the defining of what is "ordinary" in any setting is at times a subjective and political matter depending on the views or perspective of the definer.

Extreme acts are more likely to be employed by marginalized people and groups who view more normative forms of conflict engagement as blocked for them or biased, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. At times where reason and dialogue has failed, people have resorted to physical confrontation so as to be heard.

Radicalism

The term 'radical'[3]is derived from the Latin word *radix,* meaning a root. It refers to groups, both Political and religious that resort to revolutionary means to bring change in the society. However, the term is more used in politics than in religious cycles. Historically, Radicalism began in the United Kingdom with political support for a "radical reform" of the electoral system. Some radicals became republicans like in France i.e. the far left in the nineteenth Century as opposed to the right-wing in 1871-1940. With time the term came to denote a progressive liberal Ideology[4].

General Historical roots

Radical and extreme practices have sometimes emerged in situations of suffering, denial of human rights, torture and persecution, revelations and inspirations of divine nature or discoveries of some truth from scripture. These activities have always been gradual over time as seen in mainline monotheistic religions like Islam and Christianity. There are about six schools of thought that explain the origins of extremism according to Maurice Block[5]:

1. Socio economic roots: Extremism is grown. That adverse conditions (poverty, inadequate access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and employment), a denial of basic human needs (for security, dignity, group identity, and political participation), unending experiences of humiliation, and an ever widening gap between what people believe they deserve and what they can attain leads to extreme acts. This is particularly so because normative channels for getting needs met are experienced as blocked. For instance, Muslims in Kenya believe that as the minority, they are disadvantaged hence lack some of these necessities because they are Muslims.

2. Extremism is constructed. This takes two forms. One, where political leaders, capitalizing on adverse conditions, incentivize extremism (such as offering monetary awards to families or emphasizing benefits to "martyrs" in the afterlife) and legitimize militantism in order to draw attention to their cause and gain power. Two, dominant groups, in an attempt to maintain power and resist demands for change, characterize the actions of marginalized groups as "extremist" and create a self-fulfilling prophesy which elicits increasingly extreme actions from these groups. Both of them legitimize their actions using religion.

3. Defense and revenge Mechanisms: Extremism is an emotional outlet for severe feelings. Persistent experiences of oppression, insecurity, humiliation, resentment, loss, and rage lead individuals and groups to adopt conflict engagement strategies which "fit" or feel consistent with these experiences. Thus, extremists will use violent, destructive strategies, not because they are instrumental to attaining other goals, but because they feel righteous, vengeful, and good. In fact, when extremism is morally sanctioned by those in a group as an appropriate response to such feelings, members become more invested in extremist acts because they are empowering and feel "right".

4. Political Roots: Extremism is a rational strategy in a game over power. That extremist actions are an effective strategy for gaining and maintaining power in a hierarchical environment where resources are scarce and competition for power is paramount for meetings one's needs. In other words, extremism works. It can call attention to one's cause, damage one's opponent, and unite one's in-group against a common enemy. This is a very common and popular perspective on the prevalence of extremism.

5. Religious ideological roots: Extremism emerges from apocalyptic, eschatological ideologies. Extremist activities are often committed and valued because they are consistent with broader myths or systems of meaning. Some of these ideologies are focused on the cataclysmic demise of evil ruling powers (the out-group) and the elevation and glorification of the righteous (in-group), and thus emphasize the destruction of the other. Such belief systems include: good vs. evil framing; an 'other' worldly orientation; a need for self-purification; divine sanctioning of horrendous violence; and the depiction of martyrdom as an act of self-purification and justice. Youth are often socialized to buy into these ideologies by families, peers, communities, educational systems (such as madrasa), media and politicians.

6. That extremism is a pathological illness. This perspective views extremism as a disease and a way of life where people look to violence to provide a feeling of aliveness. It is noted that the lack of identity associated with extremists is the result of self-destructive, self-hatred that leads to feelings of revenge toward life itself, and a compulsion to kill one's own humanness. Thus, extremism is seen as not a tactic, nor an ideology, but as a pathological illness which feeds on the destruction of life.

Besides, religious extremism seems to be supported by scripture and emerging interpretative ideologies thereof.   All these forces and causes seem to find religion a tool to ride on their objectives because religion is amoral and can be interpreted either way.

Religious roots of Radicalism and Extremism in Islam and Christianity

Christianity and Islam have exhibited notorious extreme tendencies that are hard to associate with religion for those who might wonder why to the use of religion to destroy God's good creation? Mirza (1993, p.17) argues that 'religion is on the retreat; crime is rampant, truth is disappearing fast, justice on the verge of extinction…these are positive signs of morally decadent radical society.' The following extremism and radical tendencies are cross cutting both in Islam and Christianity as deduced from the above schools of thought: Belief that their ideology is right, others are wrong, those against us are against our God therefore enemies of us and our god, they must join us if not they have to die. We are special, others are not important: Examples are found among the: Zealots, Puritans, Pharisees in Christianity, and Wahhabis and Salafis in Islam.

Those groups draw their Ideological sectarian differences from scripture and traditions include: Religious fundamentalist and sectarian groups: those that take the scripture literally and outside its context, exhibiting little knowledge of scripture which is dangerous because they teach half truths. Some of the sectarian divisions in religions include but are not limited to: Conservatists or traditionalists who support the status quo or would want religion as it was practiced by the founder, i.e. various revival groups; Moderates – who may use reason but sparingly i.e. Mutazilites;

Modernists - who may use scripture to understand present context; and Liberalists - who may use scripture and reason, radical ones very rationally critical. Some have been influenced by secular bent ideologies i.e. Liberation Tigers of Tamil (Eelam).

Radical and extremist Roots in Christianity

Christianity as religion has roots in the Old Testament times of Judaism. Christianity radically sprang out of it through the revolutionary teachings and practices of Jesus Christ. In this milestone, the scripture has been the foundation of most radical changes. The same scripture is understood most times differently in Christianity leading to these categories outlined by Anderson (2004):

Abuse of scripture: Most extremists have a poor interpretation of scripture (purely literal). In most cases they take a text out of its context in their application. Such texts have been used without regard to what the original message meant: in Deut 13:7-11, one is compelled to murder anyone who serves other gods, "You must stone to him to death". Lack of proper education and training has seen persons in the ministry who fail to interpret and understand the scripture before application. According to this text and many more in the Bible, violence, including war, was justified against other communities since it was a divine course for idolaters. Unfortunately, this trend has continued to be perpetrated until recent times regardless of difference in space and time. Notably, some radical strands have come out as a result of proper understanding, revelation and interpretation of scripture. Radical departure of most denominations during the reformation and thereafter are cases in point.

The nature and person of Jesus Christ[6]: the appearance of Jesus on the world map has drawn different understandings, responses and counter responses. The person and nature of Jesus Christ has at times been the cause of extremism and radicalism: who was/is he? Was he a religious radical and revolutionary? Even though the person of Jesus is found in both the Qur'an and the Bible, historical narratives differ distinctively.

His conception, birth, death and resurrection have been the bone of contention. Early church Christological misconceptions saw many branded as heretics and radicals. Thus, the Early church Christological radicals: heretics[7] of the first to third centuries like the Marcionism, Gnostics, Arianism, Docetism, Adoptionists, were seen as a threat and persecuted because some denied the humanity or divinity of Jesus. In the same way, Islam was seen in the sixth century or has been understood by some Christians as a distortion of Christianity.

Apostolic and medieval period: Disciples and followers of Jesus were seen as radicals by Judaism and Romans. The fear that Christians were radicals planning to overthrow the Roman government saw disciples and apostles of Jesus branded as radicals and tortured, some like Peter put to death. To the Romans, Christianity was a dangerous sect, a superstition, claims Smith[8]. The early church persecution was a response to purported religious radicals and extremism against Judaism and Roman political establishment. Some of the notorious Roman Emperors who persecuted the early church and early church Fathers were: Domitian (AD.81-96), Trajan (AD. 98-117), Decius, Nero among others. Fathers and Bishops who were seen as atheists and radicals hence martyred included: Bishop Polycarp, burnt to death in Smyrna present day Turkey (AD. 70-155), Cyprian of Cathage and Bishop Stephen and Sixtus II of Rome (AD.253-268) among others.

At the crusades[9] of the eleventh-twelfth centuries in Europe, during the Spanish inquisition and crusades, religious Zealots were commanded by the "will of God" to torture, mutilate and brutally kill the others. Pope Urban II in 1095 called for a people's crusade to recapture Jerusalem from Turks, promising saintly martyrdom and shortening of time in purgatory (indulgencies) for warlike volunteers.

Other events seen in extremist terms were as follows:-

The Roman Catholic Reformation:[10] Martin Luther took a bold step to challenge the church structures and establishment on common and popular practices of indulgencies, clericalism, and sacraments, among others.

The entire church leadership was shaken by his 95 thesis where he outlined his radical views on the church. He perhaps deserved to die but nobody can stop a cause whose time has come. A radical revolution had come to the church.

Schooling and enlightenment era[11] in Europe in 13th - 18th century: Secularism, science vs Religion became the main story in Europe. This was a period of renaissance, rebirth after the so-called dark ages when the church was weakening. According to Anderson above cited, this period saw a radical departure from the church as the custodian of knowledge, literature, and science to secular institutions of schoolmen who concentrated on the study of man hence humanism. Church leaders like Petrarch (1304-1374) vehemently opposed scholasticism while Pope Martin (V) channeled it extremely towards Biblical Humanism to their advantage.

According to Buthelezi (1974) and Davidson (2006), apartheid in South Africa was justified by scriptural interpretations by the Boers.

The Blacks had to come up with radical liberation theologies - Black theology, to capture their religious and political freedom led by Nelson Mandela.

Before the Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church was the only church; others were radicalized and seen as false institutions. Evidently, Christianity has witnessed extreme and radical acts throughout history of varying magnitude.

Religion has been a cause of suffering, and death for whoever was seen as an enemy by the other party. In most of these cases, the scripture was used to support extreme tendencies against others.

Radical roots in Islam

The emergence of Islam as a third force monotheistic religion in itself was radicalized[12]. The Jews and christens during the time of Prophet Muhammad viewed it as a threat. After the *Hijra* in AD 622/IAH, Islam took a turning point as a religious and political entity. Katerega (1980, p.45) narrates the statesmanship and the battle of Muhammad against aggressors of Islam, Jews and Meccans included. Well, according to (Mvumbi, 2006), this does not make Islam a violent religion, though violence is mentioned. Actually, he claims that all religions are violent and of radical nature, but Islamism or Fundamentalism has at times been amplified a bit too far by some ideologists. Surat-ul-Yusufu (12:40), among other things says that………one has to worship none but God, calling for complete adherence to the law.

i) Sharia and Islamism: this is an ideology or ideologies that demands complete adherence to the sacred law of Islam-Sharia. It is imbued with deep antagonism towards non-Muslims like in the Sudan and Libya and to extremes against other Muslims like the Al-Shaabab in Somalia.

Islamism targets secular governments and institutions because Islam is the solution, God the goal, and Muhammad the leader[13]. However, in a plural society such attitudes of intolerance are against humanity itself.

Islam and the Qur'an: The Qur'an seems to legitimize the use of force, war, against non-Muslims as radical means to spread Islam, defend Islam and Allah in Jihad, against Surat-ul-Baqarah (2:256) … "Let there be no compulsion in religion…."

Other Quranic texts that may lead to extreme interpretations are as followers: 2:190. "Fight them in the course of Allah those who fight you", 9: 5-41, fight them until they subdue-but who? Idolaters. Christians are not idolaters hence should not be targeted, those opposed to Muslim leadership, all those who fight Muslims. A Muslim therefore should not be an aggressor under whatever provocation. Other texts that perpetuate terror include 22;78, 23; 39-40, 8; 39-42, 2; 186 in reference to jihad: however, jihad has been misinterpreted and misconceived. It should be noted that:

The greater Jihad is Jihad *Nafs*… striving against one (self) on the path of Allah, and not physical Jihad. Secondly, Jihad against evil deeds in the society like immoralities indecency, oppression etc. Jihad against physical enemy is lesser Jihad. However, conditions and rewards of paradise (61.4, 2; 154) could compel some to engage in war like Jihad. Market economies, and power struggles envisaged in the (Abuja declaration) such as preaching and propagation of faith to secure the whole Africa for Islam has been seen as jeering for militancy.

ii). Islamic renaissance: postulation of a regeneration of Islam and an acceptance of positive features of the west has been noted that between 18th -19th Centuries, Islamdom has been swept by a wave of militant religious reformers. A case in point is the Egyptian theologian Muhammad Abdul and Rashid Rida. Other Proponents of their ideologies include: a) Rifa'ah R. al-Tahtawi b) Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. The recent revolutionary and militant turmoil in the Arab world (Egypt, Libya, Syria etc) has been caused by these great minds under Muslim Brotherhood called Al-Ikhwan al Muslimun. This is against Muslim traditionalists who long for the old prophetic glory.

iii) Different variants of Islam and emergence of Islamic liberation theology and resurgence[14]. In Islam, practice varies greatly throughout the Islam world or *Umma* (Community). Azumah (2008, p.53) analyses different groups and movements in Islam that disagree in practice i.e. Sunnis, Shiites, Sufis, Wahhabiyya, Ahmadiyya.

Islam in Nigeria seems different from one in Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Kenya, Morocco etc. for example in Africa, Islam is divided among brotherhoods owing allegiance to their founders' teachings, and trends besides the Qur'an and *Sunnat Nabi*. Likewise there are two main groups in Islam between Sunnite and Shiites, i.e. disagreement about the legitimate successors of Muhammad. The Sunnis consider the first four rightly guided Caliphs while Shia considers Ali. Both of them accuse one another for extremism though they use the same Quran. This internal conflict has led to militant forms of Islam in Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, among others. On the other hand, the west has been forced to intervene due to abuses of human rights on citizenry of affected nations.

According to Bennett (2008) some see Islam as a threat whereas Muslims feel that real freedom is thwarted by injustices, exploitation, oppression and violence of the oppressors.

History of terrorism-radical attacks in Kenya

This is a summary of violent radical attacks on Kenyans as compiled by Africa Briefing, N0. 85 Nairobi/Brussels, 25 January 2012, and 2014. These attacks which are associated with Islam and Muslims are analyzed to understand the new tactics by the attackers in Kenya: 1963-1968. Secession attempts in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) by Muslim Somalis. This led to *Shifta* war and *Waggalla* massacre in 1984. 1970s - Recruitment of Muslim youths to *Salafi* Islam. 7/8/1998- al-Qaeda attack US embassy in Nairobi-213 killed.

1990s - Al Qaeda radical group fought to establish an Islamic government in Somalia and created a network to raise funds in Kenya culminating into domestic jihadist in Kenya-terrorist attacks. The center stage was Riyadha Mosque Pumwani Eastleigh- Nairobi, 2008. Muslim youth Center (MYC) formed at Riyadha Mosque to express Muslim Youth Grievances. MYC radicalized and recruited youths in militancy. MYC organized fundraising, training and other logistical support for Al-Shaabab to fight in Somalia. Youths were taught jihadist literature and speeches. Recruitment targeted Somalis, Muslims and any other for pay. 1/10/2011- Marie Dedie – a French woman kidnapped and taken to Somalia. 14/10/2011- KDF- enter Somalia. 30/9/12- several attacks on churches, innocent peoples, hotels in Nairobi, Mombasa, Garrisa and other places. Al-Qaeda related group, Al Shaabab claimed responsibilities. There are several extremist groups in Africa. Al Shabaab has been associated with this violence in Kenya and East Africa. Somalia and Kenya share boundaries and Muslims are in both countries. The next section outlines their grievances.

Al Shabaab in Somalia and East Africa

Abdulkadir (2012) analyses the genesis of Al Shabaab militia group from the 1990s. He has argued that the Somalia Central government collapsed in 1991. This opened the country to clan conflict which shuttered the country's unity and democracy. Al Shabaab is one of those non-state actors that invaded state leadership vacuum. It took control of parts of Puntland and Southern Somalia. It evolved into a formidable army recruiting within East Africa and in America and even Europe.

Al Shabaab is an established Islamist group espousing Wahhabism ideology with an aim to establish an Islamic state in Somalia based on strict Sharia law. Somalia is 90% Islam. Religion has been used to rally support for solidarity purposes during post-colonial era by Sayyid Muhammad Abdallah Hassan (Adam, 1995). Most clans came together for a common purpose; to gain independence. However, this dream of a united Somalia was short-lived when Siad Barre took over.

1969-1991 was Siad Barre's regime. He alienated and marginalized certain clans and groups, inequality was widespread, and there was poor infrastructure leading to his overthrow (Yusuf 2003). These wanting socio-economic conditions led to emergence of Islamic group's wide agonizing anarchy, insecurity, poverty, rampant violence and cold blood deaths. Islamic factions emerged to try and offer alternative government to restore law and order through enforcing Islamic law, (Ibrahim, 2010).

Indeed by 2006, Islamic groups under the union of Islamic Courts (ICU) brought some peace, security and unity in Somalia but it was short lived. Ethiopia, supported by United States invaded ICU areas of jurisdiction paving way for Al Shabaab which overpowered ICU. Henceforth, Al Shabaab dismantled ICU and engaged Ethiopia militarily. Ethiopia eventually withdrew from Somalia in 2008. Al Shabaab embarked on implementing strict Wahhab ideologies[15] that led to mass killings and stoning of adulterers to death, and other penalties of strict form of Sharia. Those Somalis who had supported it began to criticize due to strict interpretation and application of Sharia. This is because most Somalis are Sunnis with Sufi preference. They found strict use of Sharia difficult to follow.

The Wahhab laws forbid women to half veil, to engage in commercial activities, go out in public without a male relative escorting her, they force unmarried women to marry, Music and dancing, sports and mixing of genders strictly forbidden. They use amputation and kill those who break the law, flog offenders publicly. What was clan centered conflicts in Somalia now revolves around religious group affiliation. The other agony is the shuttering of traditional mechanism of settling disputes and creating peace. This was done through customary law *Xeer,* negotiations *shir,* and payment of blood money *diya*. Al Shabaab also undermined and alienated clan loyalty and respect for elders, a strong ethical value among Somalis, (Menkhaus, 2007).

In the Horn of Africa they have also eroded peace in the region. They support Ethiopia's Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), an ethnic Somali group. They too support Eritrea in their military expeditions in the region; have carried out bombings in Kenya, Uganda as part of their Islamic duty to attack their perceived enemies (Rice, 2010). Al shabaab and other radical groups have changing tact to evade defeat. The following are news trends to ensure their survival.

Contemporary trends of Radicalism and extremism in Kenya

Unlike in other countries, radical and extreme activities in Kenya have been intense and with new approaches and methods. Terrorism has been evolving daily to counter any government efforts to curb them. The utilization of Christians, charity organizations, Mosques and Muslim preach.

Radicalization of Christian youth and non-Somalis in Kenya

Some of the radicalized Kenyan Christian youth have been for instance linked to the 1998 US embassy attack in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi and the 2002 attacks on Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa. Elgiva Bwire Oliacha, also known as Mohamed Seif, a recent Kenyan Muslim convert, was arrested in connection with the two October 2011 blasts and was sentenced to life in prison after having pleaded guilty to all charges.[16] Others include Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, a Kenyan national, for instance is said to have been the recognized leader of Al-Qaeda's East African cell and has been together with other foreigners linked to the Kenyan 1998 US embassy attack. Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam, another Kenyan national has also been linked to the twin attacks of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.[17]

According to one Sheikh, a student from Mandera in Kenya:

> There is continued exercise of recruiting and radicalizing some of the Kenyan youth into the terrorist organizations especially, specialists like scientists, lawyers, ICT and doctors for specific jobs and roles.

This is a new tact. For instance, it has also become clear that Kenya has a domestic radicalization problem of its own. Kenyan nationals have conducted a number of recent terrorist attacks in Kenya, with many of them receiving military training from Al-Shabab in neighboring Somalia.

The recruits are both Christians and Muslims lured because of money and as sympathizers, by Muslim clerics in Mosques.

The two suspects arrested in Eastleigh with bombs, grenades and a cache of weapons that included six suicide bombs, 12 grenades, four AK 47 rifles and 480 bullets recovered from them as police thwarted a major terror plot in Nairobi[18]Police arrested a suspect, Thabit Jamaldin Yahya, in connection with an attack at Mombasa Bella Vista bar in May 2012.

On 29 September 2012, police arrested over 60 people with possession of bomb making materials.[19]An increasing number of terrorist attacks in Kenya have been carried out by local Kenyans, many of whom are recent converts to Islam. Estimates in 2012 placed the figure of Kenyan fighters at around 10% of Al-Shabaab's total forces.[20]

Referred to as the Kenyan *Mujahideen* by Al-Shabaab's core members, the converts are typically young and overzealous, poverty making them easier targets for the outfit's recruitment activities. According to diplomats, Muslim areas in coastal Kenya and Tanzania, such as Mombasa and Zanzibar, are also especially vulnerable for recruitment.[21]

Use of charity organizations and Mosques for selfish gains by individuals

Some of the terrorist groups and organizations involved in humanitarian and charity work in the world are: Al-Qaeda (Global network), Abu Sayyaf (Philippines), Al-Islam, Boko haram (Nigeria), Taliban(Afghanistan), Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Al *Shabaab* meaning the youngsters is a Somalia based cell of the militant Islamist group that is responsible for many bombings and mass killings in Kenya. Hamas, Hizbollah, Shia groups in Palestine.

According to Amnesty International's report (2010) "From Life Without Peace To Peace Without Life: The treatment of Somali refugees and Asylum-Seekers In Kenya", the Al-Qaida linked Al-Shabab Islamist group could be part of the refugees hosted in the Dadaab camps exacerbating the security condition of the refugees and the larger host communities. (Amnesty International, 2010). The recruitment of youth into militia groups is not a new phenomenon. There are some distinctive new trends emerging in the recruitment exercise of youth by militia groups in Kenya. For instance, politicians take advantage of vulnerable youth for Political mileage and patronage.

There are several gangs in Kenya at the disposal of politicians to advance their agenda using violence against their opponents. Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is a case in point. Poverty, unemployment, political marginalization has been used as a vehicle to radicalize the youth.

Radical preachers

Radical preachers act as agents of larger extremist groups. This is a new trend that extremists are using in East Africa. Besides other topics they preach wars being fought against Muslims abroad in (Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq) as part of a global campaign against Islam.

Public debates or what is commonly known as *Mihadhara* has brought enormous suffering among Christians and Muslims and by extension to other faith groups in most parts of Kenya. The most affected areas are Nairobi, North Eastern and Mombasa. The main problem is not just public debates in themselves but the manner in which they are carried out: intentions, methods and strategies.

The methods which are never well organized by both parties, are polemical in nature hence induce violence, hatred, suspicion and poor relations between Muslims and Christians.

According to Sammartha[22] Islam and Christianity are missionary faiths and the preacher's business is to convert people. Abdin Noor Chande[23] contends that the most notorious radical preachers in Islam Ngariba and Kawemba, came from Kigoma to Tanga in March of 1985. Through their influence, recruitment and radicalization now takes place in Mosques. With time, the effects in Tanzania came into Kenya. Since then, Kenyan mosques have invited these radical preachers resulting into incitement and violence at the Coast.

Isma'il R. Faruqi[24] agrees with the above explanation that radicalization and extreme tendencies that target Christians and for the first time non-Somalis happen in Mosques across the country by Al-Shabaab sympathizers. He also observes that the refugees' menace in Kenya makes worse terror war.

Due to overflowing camps some moved to major urban centers like Eastleigh causing insecurity. The question that still begs our attention is how to deal with extremism and radicalization. The following ways are some of pragmatic recommendations.

Recommendations

Dealing with the root causes of religious radicalism and extremism can offer both long and short-term solutions for peace. Military combat against radicals by governments has born little fruits. In secular governments, legal approach has been problematic whereas in Islamic states strict and indiscriminate use of Sharia has only fueled trouble.

The following ways have been tested in the Sudan, Nigeria, and Israel among other nations. They are not blue prints but can work in most situations where there is a will politically and religious.

Inter-religious Dialogue

If dialogue[25] at all levels is harnessed, there could be peace. In Kenyan society, both urban and rural (especially at the grassroots level) families live together in the same households with intra-faith and interfaith dialogue; as they celebrate the diverse religious festivals together for example during Christmas or *Ramadhan*, share in the joys at birth and sadness during death and as they share resources together. Throughout all these they interact and discuss various issues and problems in their community. They dialogue with one another at informal stages.

They collaborate and cooperate to attend to human needs. Historically, there are areas that Muslims and Christians have walked together: for peace and peaceful coexistence, Religious rights and peace, and politics. These engagements can be utilized to identify trouble makers by those who love peace.

Dialogue at National and intellectual levels seems to be for the elites whose discussions and agenda does not disseminate down to the majority of the people affected according to (Denffer 1980).[26]However, it can give room for positive engagement in tackling extremisms.

Participation of Political and religious leaders in Peace Making

 Violent extremist and radical activities have always taken a religious angle in Kenya. Little can be achieved without involving both political and religious leadership in the Country. Perpetrators of these heinous acts are part of the society, some are our sons, or people we interact and dine with. They are known by the communities and even visitors in their midst are also known.

Kenyan Muslims leadership ought to be doing better to help the government deal with radicalization, lack of it is or lukewormness is an indicator of support of terror. The locals who disappear and appear after having been trained in Somalia, those trained in the Mosques or in forests are no longer secrets. They should be revealed for the better of the whole community.

Fragile leadership structures in Islam

Mosques and other Muslim groups, Sunnis, Shiites, Sufi and sects and organizations for the youths seem to operate without a central authority that can monitor, advice, and discipline errant persons and groups. Muslims need a voice that can articulate issues and whose primary function is to provide spiritual guidance, and when necessary, make binding pronouncement (fatwa).

Perhaps the chief Qadi ought to be at the top of things though this is not coming out forcefully for whatever unknown reasons. Other recommendations are: to reinforce programs to de-radicalize affected youths, provide jobs, ban foreign NGOs with hidden agenda, separate religion and state politics, government to solve land emotive issues in Kenya and the Government of Kenya to ensure equal distribution of resources among all communities.

Tame radical preachers and foreign organizations

The Muslim radical preachers who have been executed by unknown forces among them, Abdi Rogo were accused of fanning hatred and recruitment of youths into terror gangs. Besides other topics, they preach that "wars being fought against Muslims abroad in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq are part of a global campaign against Islam. Public debates or what is commonly known as *Mihadhara* has brought enormous suffering among Christians and Muslims and by extension to other faith groups in most parts of Kenya.

The most affected areas are Nairobi, North Eastern and Mombasa. The main problem is not just public debates in themselves but the manner in which they are carried out: intentions, methods and strategies that are polemical in nature hence induce violence, hatred, suspicion and poor relations between Muslims and Christians. Local and foreign preachers must be censored by religious leadership and the government on who should preach, teach or even which Mosques or church should be registered or not. These regulations are healthy for monitoring and ensuring religious leaders give account of some of their activities.

De-radicalize youths

The Kenya government has strategized to recruit more youths in the National Youth Service (NYS), provide employment opportunities and implement education policy of free education to all. This has been working to keep idle youth busy in some meaningful financial activities.

Those affected by drugs are being recruited into rehabilitation centers at the Coast and other Counties across the Country. Some form of amnesty and financial support should be considered for youth who want to return back to the country.

Conclusion

The roots of radicalism and extremism are almost in all religions. The nature of religions themselves is radical because they call people to abandon their traditional ways of life to a new and better faith. This radical departure to the unknown is an extreme act. It has been established that Islam and Christianity are affected by radical acts throughout their history. Some of the roots are internal and inherently entrenched while others are external circumstances that are contextual in nature due to human struggles for power and survival using religious space and platform.

The main cause seems to be the use of religions through literal interpretations or lack of it to achieve desired goals that might not necessarily be religious. The deployment of KDF troops to Somalia has attracted Al-Shabaab or sympathizers to launch deadly attacks against Kenya government and civilians. Counter attack has triggered a security crackdown that has driven some Somalis and other Muslim groups into Al-Shabab. As such a blanket or draconian crackdown on Kenyan Somalis, or Kenyan Muslims in general, has increased radicalization and domestic terrorism. The counterterrorism operations ought to be keenly implemented and monitored, develop effective, long-term counter-radicalization and de-radicalization strategies. The roots of radicalism and extremism can indeed help in finding solutions to world peace as indicated in the recommendations.

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