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**Religio-Political perspective of radical Islamic
movements in Africa**

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Abbreviation List:

AAIA	Aden Adde International Airport
AAS	Ansar al-Sharia
AFRICOM	The United States Africa Command
AIAI	Al-Ittihad al-Islami
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANPP	All Nigerian People's Party
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

FTO Foreign Terrorist Organisation

GSU General Service Unit

HAMAS Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya

HTS Hayat Tahrir al Sham

ICU Islamic Courts Union

IDP Internally Displaced Person

IED Improvised Explosive Device

IJA Interim Juba Administration

IJASF Interim Juba Administration Security Forces

IS Islamic State

ISI Islamic State of Iraq

ISIL Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISWA	Islamic State in West Africa
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa
JNIM	Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin
KDF	Kenya Defence Force
LGA	Local Government Area
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
SNA	System of National Accounts
SPF	Somali Police Force
SSS	State Security Service
SVBIED	Suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices
SWS	South-West State

TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USS	United States Ship
VBIED	Vehicle-Born Improvised Explosive Device

CHAPTER 1:

1.1 Introduction

Across the African continent, radical Islamic movements have emerged as influential actors in shaping socio-political landscapes, challenging existing power structures, and promoting alternative visions of governance. These movements articulate religio-political ideologies that guide their objectives, strategies, and interactions with the state and society. Understanding the methods of how these movements articulate their ideologies and objectives is crucial for understanding their motivations, trajectories, and potential impacts on the regional stability and governance of a specific area.

This dissertation explores how Islamic movements in Africa create and articulate their religio-political ideologies and objectives while examining the variations across the regions and groups affected by these radical Islamic movements. The study looks into the different ideological foundations, political aspirations, regional dynamics and strategic adaptations of these various movements across the African continent while focusing on the relationship these factors have in religion, politics and society.

The study begins with a focus on the three largest Islamic radical movements in Africa, which are Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab. The study also looks into other Islamic radical movements, such as Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis in Egypt, ISIS-M in Mozambique and the Central African Republic (CAR) in South Sudan, to gain a greater understanding.

By looking into these three main groups, the study sought to find the root of their radicalisation, and where the motive lies as to why they have reached a level of radicalism. These groups can indicate how other smaller groups in the uprising might grow and develop into something much larger.

Throughout the early twenty-first century, the African continent had seen major

changes in terms of the security threats faced. From the 1960s and well into the post-colonial era, Africa has been characterised by political irredentism and territorial conflicts stemming from the arbitrary borders established during colonial rule and perpetuated by authoritarian governments. By the 1990s things had changed as non-state actors had become more active across Africa. This development expanded to encompass aspects of statehood, political violence, and the ability of a group to project power. These transformations stem from legitimacy crises, the breakdown of existing social structures, and the emergence of groundbreaking military advancements, particularly evident in Africa (Haleem, 2011:34).

Over the last quarter century, a new generation of armed groups has emerged. The above groups are all examples of the armed groups that have become prominent in African security discussions from the early 21st century. These groups use a mixture of religious language, irredentist beliefs, and terrorist tactics to portray their beliefs and radicalism.

They represent a growing trend of non-state actors asserting and gaining power across Africa and beyond. By the 2010s, these groups had caused significant insecurity on a large scale, leading to regional and international crises, thus paving the way for the emergence of other groups worldwide.

This research uses a religio-political approach to analyse the ideologies and objectives created by the radical Islamic movements across the regions in the African continent. By examining news articles, textbooks, academic research, books and policy documents, this study aimed to identify patterns, trends, and factors that shape the ideological discourse and the strategic orientations of these movements. The results of this research have the potential to enhance our understanding of the intricate interactions among religion, politics, and conflict in Africa, and provide valuable insights for guiding policy formulation and interventions aimed at tackling radicalisation and creating peace across the regions.

1.2 The background of the study:

When discussing radical religious movements in Africa, they are often grouped under terms such as terrorists, insurgents, radicals, and extremists when violence emerges. However, it is important to recognise that these groups vary significantly in their geographical location, organisational structure, goals and underlying motivations. When examining radical religious movements, it is essential to analyse them in distinct components or segments. This involves dissecting their ideology, organisational structure, recruitment methods, tactics, and objectives separately to gain a comprehensive understanding of their dynamics and impacts. The definition of radicalisation is the process by which an individual or group adopts extreme beliefs, ideologies, or behaviours, often diverging significantly from mainstream societal norms. When referring to “extreme” beliefs the definition given by Tahir Rahman from the National Library of Medicine states, “An extreme overvalued belief is one that is shared by others in a person’s cultural, religious, or subcultural group. The belief is often relished, amplified, and defended by the possessor of the belief and should be differentiated from an obsession or a delusion. The belief grows more dominant over time, more refined and more resistant to challenge. The individual has an intense emotional commitment to the belief and may carry out violent behaviour in its service” (Rahman, 2018). This process can involve exposure to radical ideas, charismatic leaders, or social networks that reinforce and amplify extremist viewpoints. Radicalisation may lead individuals or groups to reject peaceful means of achieving their goals and instead embrace violence or other extreme actions to advance their agenda (Loyd, 2016:1).

But what is Radical Islam?

Islam originates from the Arabic term that means the submission or surrender to the sole deity, Allah. This was established by Muhammad, born in Mecca around 570 AD (Yalman, 2001:1).

Islam emerged among the nomadic pastoralists and the caravan traders of the Arabian Peninsula, which was centred on the five fundamental pillars: the

declaration of faith in one God and Muhammad as his messenger, regular prayers five times daily, fasting during Ramadan, giving alms, and undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime (Mozaffari, 2007:17). The religion began its ascent and dissemination beyond the Arabian Peninsula from the year 634 AD onwards (Mozaffari, 2007:17). The first continent to experience the spread of Islam via Southwest Asia was Africa during the early seventh century (Levtzion and Pouwels, 2000:221). Islamism in Africa is dynamic, and this dynamism is evident in the continuous reshaping through prevailing socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political dynamics (Ottuh and Erhabor, 2022:244). This description is given to provide context for the understanding of radical Islam defined by Mozaffari as “a complete phenomenon with multiple dimensions and various ramifications, like political doctrines, Islamism in its contemporary shape, is an ideology, a movement-organisation and a form of government” (Mozaffari, 2007:17).

This means that Islamism, or radical Islam, represents a religious ideology offering a comprehensive understanding of Islam, aiming ultimately for the conquest of the world by any means (Fafore, 2019:105).

Radical religious movement refers to at face value it refers to a group or organisation within a religious framework that advocates for and actively promotes extreme or unconventional interpretations of religious doctrines or beliefs.

Since 2009 Boko Haram began to infiltrate Nigeria by targeting the Nigerian government, military, Christian schools and churches, and Muslim individuals throughout the country and surrounding areas (McKenna, Danjibo, 2014:1).

This study looks at the political theology behind the conflict, focusing on what the government has done in terms of preventive measures and whether this has made an impact, towards the Christian population and the Muslim society that has been affected by the actions carried out by the terrorist group. The

terrorist group Boko Haram will be a main focus throughout and how this specific terrorist group has created a conflict in the country and what they have done to make Nigeria an Islamic state. It has been considered one of the largest and fastest-growing terrorist groups in Africa as they have evolved so much over the last decade (Pham, 2016:1).

Just nine years ago in 2015, Boko Haram went through another evolution where they had a pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) where they rebranded as the Islamic State West Africa (ISWAP) (Pham, 2016:1). Along with the Middle Eastern jihadists, Boko Haram occupied regions of the African continent using violence, rape and human trafficking to gain compliance from groups of people (Akinbi, 2015 and Attah, 2016:365).

When individuals denied the demands of Boko Haram, they would remove or deplete resources vital for the survival of these individuals to make a point. Studies have also shown that some areas occupied by Boko Haram have seen severe poverty, starvation, and denied access to fresh water and medical care if they had not accepted Boko Haram and their means to “purify” the land to create an Islamic state in Nigeria and other surrounding areas (Akinbi, 2015:32).

Al-Qaeda's presence in Africa has seen a notable rise, with activity observed in 19 African nations and regions between 2009 and 2011 (Krech, 2011:125). The organisation operates through four regional branches, each with multiple sub-groups: the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (including branches in Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, and Sudan), and Al-Shabab in Somalia. Following Osama bin Laden's death in 2011, African leaders within Al-Qaeda have gained prominence, with all three presumed members of the strategic command level hailing from Africa. The Arab Spring did not weaken Al-Qaeda. This underscores the potential to expand Al-Qaeda's influence in Africa and emphasises the urgent need for effective countermeasures (Krech, 2011:125).

Looking into Al-Shabaab, Al-Shabaab has the intention and seeks to overthrow the central government, get rid of the foreign forces from Somalia, and establish an Islamic state in line with the laws of Sharia. The organisation establishes its credibility among Somalis by offering services within its protection scheme, including dispute resolution, which the government has historically found challenging to provide (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:4).

Islamism:

Islamism can be described as a broad set of political ideologies that use and draw inspiration from Islamic symbols and traditions in pursuit of a socio-political objective. These aims and objectives can differ, along with their interpretations of the Islamic tradition and practice (Zeidan, 2024:1).

Zeidan states that “The adjective *Islamist*, denoting someone or something in pursuit of a socio-political objective using the symbols and traditions of Islam, is distinguished from the term *Islamic*, which refers directly to aspects of Islam as a religion” (Zeidan, 2024:1).

Among the groups considered to be Islamist are reformist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the transnational jihadist movements such as Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State in Iraq, and the Levant in Iraq and Syria (ISIL and ISIS) (Zeidan, 2024:1).

The difference between Islamism and Islam:

Looking at the term Islamism there is no set definition of what describes this concept. Islamists follow the order of Islamism, however, it is not just mere Islamism, politics but can be described as a religion-ized politics. "Religionized politics" in Islamism refers to the advocacy for a political system perceived to be derived from the will of Allah, rather than being grounded in principles of popular sovereignty. While Islam as a religion encompasses ethical principles and may influence political values, it does not inherently prescribe a specific governmental

structure (Tibi, 2012:6). Islamism comes from a specific interpretation of Islam, but it differs from the Islam faith as it represents a political ideology separate from the teachings of Islam. Contrary to common characterisation, Islamism is not a revival of Islam but a distinct construction of Islamic beliefs that diverge from its historical heritage. Islamism advocates for a resurgence of Islamic historical prominence and greatness, yet the envisioned state it aims to "return" to is, as described by Eric Hobsbawm, a fabricated tradition (Tibi, 2012:6).

The term 'Islamism,' has faced scrutiny for its appropriateness. We maintain that it can, and should, be used analytically rather than pejoratively. The term 'Islamism' originates from the Arabic word Islāmiyyūn (Islamists), used by various Islamic political movements to describe their outlook. While some prefer to describe themselves simply as members of 'the Islamic movement'. However, scholars argue that this terminology can be confusing and potentially misleading.

It cannot be emphasised enough that when discussing Islamism (a socio-political ideology with a distinct history and trajectory) it is not Islam, the religion. As scholars have clarified, the latter is one of the world's great monotheistic religions and comes in many forms, the majority are compatible with liberal democratic norms and freedoms (Policy Exchange, 2023).

Islamism is the ideologised, politically purposeful and activist form of the faith (Tibi, 2012:6). It is a modern phenomenon, emerging from debates about the relationship between Islam and modernity, Islam and 'the West', which circulated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Out of this period of intellectual ferment, several key ideologues helped shape the first recognisably 'Islamist' political movements, most notably, an Egyptian school-teacher, Hassan al-Banna, who created the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, and the Indian journalist-turned-politician, Abul A'la Mawdudi, the founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami (Kandil, 2015:535).

All forms of Islamism are committed to achieving social and political change. Most favour non-violent activism, social or political, what Gramsci called a war of manoeuvre and position. A small minority insist on the necessity of violence - what Gramsci called a frontal assault. But all seek fundamental societal transformation.

Committed Islamists represent a small minority of the global Muslim population, avowedly violent Islamists constitute a minority of that minority. To be clear: most Islamists are not terrorists, and most Muslims are not Islamists. A chasm separates Islam the faith, from Islamism the ideology (Policy Exchange, 2023).

It is worth trying to identify what it is that allows an individual or group to be labelled 'Islamist'. Though by no means exhaustive, the following serves as a useful map of the Islamist worldview (Policy Exchange, 2023).

The main premise of Islamism is the belief in Islam as a comprehensive and supreme system governing all aspects of life, rejecting secularism and the separation of religion and politics. For Islamists, Islam must govern religion and state, aiming for an 'Islamic order' (nizam Islami) primarily defined by the implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) (Policy Exchange, 2023).

In countries where Muslims are a minority, Islamists often accept that an immediate 'Islamic state' is impractical, but they still advocate for Muslims to view themselves as part of a global, de-territorialised Ummah (Roy, 2004:378). They emphasise that orthodoxy and orthopraxy should define individual identity, which has led to the 'new communalism' - a view where Islamists represent a unified Muslim identity and seek to be seen as the authoritative voice for Muslim communities (Policy Exchange, 2023).

Islamists hold a teleological, millenarian view of history, idealising the time of Prophet Muhammad and his successors as a model of an ideal society. They see contemporary Muslim decline because of Western and Zionist conspiracies, leading to a narrative of grievance and victimhood. This historical perspective informs their activism, which aims to restore what they see as true Islam.

Islamists engage in various forms of activism, or jihad, broadly understood as socio-political struggle. Islamists consider physical force jihad an integral part of their faith, promoting martial strength and irregular warfare. This includes defensive jihad and more extreme forms of violence, as seen with groups like the Islamic State.

Islamists are often viewed as divisive and sectarian by many other Muslims, who see their interpretations of concepts like Sharia and jihad as heterodox. Despite their claims to be the truest believers, non-Islamist Muslims are frequently the victims and critics of Islamist agendas.

It is worth noting that there are Islamists within the Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam. These have remained distinct - to some extent held within sectarian boundaries. But there have been moments of cross-fertilisation. Sunni Islamists of all stripes took heart, at least, from the Islamic Revolution in Tehran in 1979. Conversely, Ayatollah Khomeini and other Shi'a Islamists have been influenced ideologically by their Sunni counterparts like Sayyid Qutb or Abul A'la Mawdudi.

Any effort to examine Islamism within Western countries is hampered by the fact that many groups and individuals which hold recognisably Islamist views tend to eschew the label. This is an inevitable function of worldview. For the most part, they are pious Muslims, as described, they believe themselves to be practising the truest form of the faith. They often question why they should be known as anything other than 'Muslims'. And their preference is to refer to themselves

simply as 'the Islamic movement'.

Within that is a crucial distinction that divides them from their non-Islamist counterparts, which is the central importance they attach to organised activism, to the creation of the 'movement'. It is in providing us with a vocabulary to analyse that movement and the activism associated with the term Islamism gains its value. It signifies the discussion of a discrete phenomenon, distinct from Islam or the broader Muslim population.

Bassam Tibi (2012) identifies six themes to the relationship between Islamism and Islamic tradition for a greater understanding of the basic contrast between the two:

1. Interpreting Islam as nizam Islami (state order).
2. The perception of the Jews as their main enemy conspiring against Islam, because they are believed to be pursuing a "Jewish world order" that conflicts with the Islamist goal.
3. Institutional Islamism in a democratic state.
4. The evolution from classical Jihad to terrorist jihadism.
5. The reinvention of Sharia and the question of purity and authenticity, which determines the Islamist view of secularisation and desecularisation. (Tibi, 2012:6).

This reflects the basic differences between the two as identified by Bassam Tibi (2012).

1.3 Problem Statement

The emergence and proliferation of radical Islamic movements pose a significant challenge to the stability, security, and social cohesion across Africa. Characterised by extremist ideologies, violent tactics, and transnational networks, these movements threaten the sovereignty of states, exacerbate inter-communal

tensions, and impede efforts towards peacebuilding and development. Despite varying contexts and drivers, the larger problem revolves around the persistent threat to the stability, security and social cohesion posed by these radical Islamic movements towards the political, economic, and social impact of African societies, and how these existing movements can impact upcoming radical Islamic movements. The challenge of the study is to identify how these radical Islamic movements in Africa articulate their religio-political ideologies and objectives, and how these differ across regions and groups being affected.

This problem statement sought to address the complexities and implications of radical Islamic movements in Africa, where we investigated how historical narratives shape ideological articulation, analysed how different interpretations of Islam justify political agendas, societal norms, and governance structures, examined the specific political objectives and goals of the radical Islamic movements in Africa, specifically the three main ones being Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, compared how radical Islamic movements articulate their ideologies and objectives across different regions of Africa, and assessed how the radical Islamic movements impact the society.

Through exploring these topics above one could identify the impact and expansion potential of these established radical Islamic groups on the newer emerging ones within the African continent.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to investigate radical Islamic movements in the African continent through the understanding of how radical Islamic movements in Africa articulate their religio-political ideologies and objectives are essential for grasping their motivations, strategies, and potential impact.

With the focus, and not exclusive of the other radical Islamic movements, on the three main groups Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab the study objectives:

1. Investigate how historical narratives shape ideological articulation and analyse how different interpretations of Islam justify political agendas, societal norms, and governance structures.
2. Examine the specific political objectives and goals of the radical Islamic movements in Africa, specifically the three main ones Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab.
3. Compare how radical Islamic movements articulate their ideologies and objectives across different regions of Africa.
4. Assess how the radical Islamic movements impact the society.

1.5 Research Methodology

This dissertation is literature-based and uses the methodology of qualitative research aimed at identifying a religio-political ideology that addresses how radical Islamic movements in Africa articulate their religio-political ideologies and objectives, and how these differ across regions and groups. The focus will shift to a comparative analysis of the three main groups: Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab.

The dissertation analysed news articles, textbooks, academic research, articles, books and policy documents to identify patterns, trends, official documentation of these movements, religious texts and factors that shape the ideological discourse and the strategic orientations of these movements. Interviews were not a method of research, as this method could be biased in terms of the individual's actual experiences, whereas having a more literature-based method allowed the research to have its own course of interpretation.

This research will use a religio-political approach, which refers to how factors of religion have an impact on the political world, such as how radical religious movements and in this case, radical Islamic movements, are connected to the politics and political change within a country. This research will use a qualitative method of gathering information to analyse the ideologies and objectives,

techniques, aims, motives and reasons behind what has been created by the radical Islamic movements across the regions in the African continent.

The reason for using this specific qualitative methodology is because this method allows one to gather deeper, and more in-depth understanding from research studies that have been explored while still allowing space for this research to have its own course of interpretation.

Qualitative research utilises multiple methods to delve into its subject matter, adopting an interpretive and naturalistic stance. This entails studying phenomena within their authentic contexts, aiming to understand them through the perspectives and interpretations of the people involved. It entails gathering diverse materials, such as personal experiences, introspection, life stories, observations, historical data, interactions, and visual representations. These materials shed light on ordinary and challenging aspects of individuals' lives, allowing researchers to explore their meanings and significance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:2).

Qualitative research involves an exploration of social meanings and dynamics in their natural context, employing methods, such as interviews, observations, and textual or visual analysis. Unlike quantitative researchers who rely on statistical techniques for wide-ranging conclusions about populations (like analysing voting patterns across demographic groups), qualitative researchers conduct detailed examinations of social phenomena to understand the intricacies of group behaviours and thoughts. For instance, they might delve into case studies to uncover the underlying experiences shaping political perspectives (Stanford Libraries, 2024:1).

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009, p. 13).

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible through a religio-socio-political lens. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:3).

In this study, we will not looking into interviews, case studies, or numerical data. I focused on analysing and investigating news articles, textbooks, academic research, articles, books and policy documents to identify patterns, trends, official documentation of these movements, religious texts and factors that shape the ideological discourse, and the strategic orientations of these movements as stated previously in the paragraph above.

1.6 Structure:

The proposed study is organised into four chapters.

The first chapter is the introduction, background, problem statement, aims and objectives, research methodology and the overall structure of the study. This serves as a general introduction to the entire study, focusing on the research problem, its background, and the question(s) to be investigated.

The second chapter, “Exploring the Influence that Religious Texts and Interpretations have on the Ideologies of Radical Islamic Movements in Africa.” Here the focus is on the role in which religious texts, doctrines, and historical narratives play regarding how they articulate their ideologies and analyse how various interpretations of Islam have been used to justify their political agendas, social norms and forms of governance.

The third chapter, “The Political Objectives and Goals of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab.” Here the study examines the specific political objectives and goals of the radical Islamic movements in Africa, specifically the three main ones Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab.

The fourth chapter, “A Comparative Analysis,” compares how radical Islamic movements articulate their ideologies and objectives across different regions of Africa.

The fifth chapter focuses on “The Societal impact caused by Islamic Radical movements in Africa,” assessing how these various Islamic radical movements affect society.

1.7 Literature Review:

Islamism and Islam

In his insightful book, Bassam Tibi (2012), a prominent scholar of Islamic politics, addresses the widespread confusion between Islam and Islamism, a politically motivated fundamentalist movement. Drawing from extensive research spanning twenty Islamic nations over thirty years, Tibi clarifies that Islamism is a political ideology grounded in a reinterpretation of Islamic law. He examines various aspects of Islamism, including its vision for state governance, its antisemitic tendencies, its opposition to democracy, the transformation of jihad into terrorism, the fabrication of Sharia law as a constitutional framework, and its distortion of authenticity and cultural purity. Drawing from Hannah Arendt's theories, Tibi continues to conclude that Islamism can be understood as a totalitarian ideology (Tibi, 2012:6).

According to Tibi (2012:6), Islamism represents a process of cultural purification

that stands in contrast to Islam, which historically embraced reason and external influences. Islam is a diverse and ancient religion with interpretations and practices that vary among its followers. Non-Muslims cannot definitively judge what constitutes "true Islam." The religion, like others, has evolved and continues to do so.

Max Singer (2018:9) stated in his research report that Islamism, or radical militant Islam, is an ideology that asserts Allah's command for the entire world to embrace Islam and be governed by Islamic law. It advocates for Muslims to reject non-Muslim governments and perpetually engage in conflict against them. According to Islamists, there is no distinction between Islamism and Islam itself, as they believe religion and politics are inseparable. However, many Muslims and scholars reject this view, seeing Islamism as a separate ideology that incorporates elements of fascism and communism alongside traditional Muslim beliefs.

There is disagreement among Islamist groups regarding the extent of violence necessary to achieve their goals. While some advocate for postponing violent actions for practical reasons, all agree that Islam prohibits permanent peace with non-Muslim entities, sanctions violence to expand Islamic influence, and views the West as an adversary (Singer, 2018:10).

What is Islamic Radicalisation:

Across Africa, radical Islamic movements have emerged as influential actors in shaping socio-political landscapes, challenging existing power structures, and promoting alternative visions of governance. Jibrin (2021:2) discusses the term radicalism and states that the term "radicalism" in political studies diverges from its Latin origin, "radicalis," which signifies a political change from the root. In contemporary usage, it refers to the conviction that societal transformation is essential and can be achieved only through revolutionary methods.

Hassan (2013:1) discusses in his paper "*Islamic radicalism: towards a theoretical*

framing” that Radical Islam, or Islamic Radicalism, can be understood as a multifaceted movement with historical, socio-economic, political, and cultural dimensions. It views Islam not only as a comprehensive religious belief but also as a revolutionary political ideology and a potential state system. This ideology advocates for radical change and perceives violent actions, particularly through Jihad, as necessary to dismantle existing societal structures perceived as unjust or lacking in faith. The ultimate goal is to replace these structures with an Islamic system governed by Sharia law, drawing upon the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad as guiding principles. Here is a good indication of what Islamic Radicalism is, and how it can be understood in terms of how this study is focused. The term radicalisation is crucial for understanding this study, as it informs the discussion throughout this dissertation.

The rise of radicalism can be due to several factors. Militant groups and radical movements have exploited religion to further their political objectives, economic disparities, and ethnic divisions within society to recruit their supporters in African regions and countries.

Influence of Religious Texts:

Conceptually, Radical Islamism, or radical Islam, refers to a historical and religious movement that regards Islam as a comprehensive faith intertwined with a perceived reformist political ideology aimed at instigating change (Hassan, 2013:1).

Radical Islam was first referenced in January 1979, when the *New York Jewish Weekly* published an article titled, *Carter pushes Sadat to demand West Bank link, Jackson says*. This is where the author interviewed then-U.S. Senator Henry Martin “Scoop” Jackson (D-WA) about Ayatollah Khomeini’s rise in Iran. The article quotes Jackson referring to the Ayotallah’s “anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, anti-Bahai” *rhetoric* as “radical Islam” (Abdelkader, 2017:184). However, it was not until August 1979 that the term “radical Islam” became linked with violence or

death and gained prominence, particularly within the realm of news media (Abdelkader, 2017:184).

Radical Islamism signifies a behavioural pattern aimed at reshaping prevailing religious or political structures through violent means, employing principles of faith, justice, and equality. Radical Islamism entails a radical overhaul of existing systems through violent acts termed 'Jihad', replacing them with an Islamic-based system governed by Sharia law (Ottuh, 2012:216) and the Quran and Sunnah (Prophet's traditions) (Ottuh and Erhabor, 2022:249).

Van Aarde (2018:1) stated that the relationship between religion and the state in Islam differs significantly from Western perspectives, primarily due to the influence of Sharia law in Islamic thought. A contentious topic in Islamic studies revolves around the intertwined nature of religion and the state, particularly the role of Sharia law in governance. Western discourse historically centres on the separation of church and state as essential to democracy, along with debates regarding the integration of Christian morality into public law. Islamic fundamentalism merges political and religious domains indiscriminately, challenging the distinction between the two (Van Aarde, 2018:4).

Robert W. Hefner goes into greater detail on what Sharia law entails, where he states that many Muslim societies are currently undergoing significant political transitions, sparking intense debates about the role of Sharia law in modern politics and ethical practices. His book brings together leading scholars on Islamic politics, ethics, and law to examine the diverse interpretations and applications of Islamic law, aiming to evaluate the potential for democratic, pluralistic, and gender-inclusive Islamic ethics. Contrary to assertions by certain radicals, his essays demonstrate that Muslim perspectives on Islamic law and ethics have always been diverse and are shaped not by static texts but by active engagement with Islamic traditions and everyday experiences (Hefner, 2016:47). The ongoing ethical dialogues in contemporary Muslim societies offer valuable insights into the prospects for democratic governance and the evolution of a pluralistic Islamic

ethical framework. Despite the tragic violence inflicted by groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq, there remains hope for a period of ethical revitalisation throughout the Muslim world (Hefner, 2016:47).

Geographical and Social Influences:

Isolation, remoteness and lack of exposure to others are significant factors in shaping early conditions that may render individuals susceptible to violent extremism later in life.

The United States Institute of Peace stated in their paper, "The Jihadi Threat: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Beyond" that "Jihadists exploit geography," and continued to state that extremists like to operate in specific areas that provide cover or are less accessible whether it is in busy regions or more remote regions (The United States Institute of Peace, 2017).

A haven is seen by terrorists as a secure area, used for indoctrination, recruitment, consolidation, training, regrouping, and preparing or supporting operations. Physical safe havens typically exist in areas with weak governance or where international borders are easily crossed (U.S. Department of State, 2005). The interconnectedness of global communication and financial systems, particularly facilitated by electronic platforms like the Internet, worldwide media, and unregulated economic channels, enable terrorists to carry out many functions without relying on physical sanctuaries (U.S. Department of State, 2005).

These "virtual" havens are characterised by high mobility, making them challenging to track and control. While physical safe havens offer security for senior terrorist leaders to plan and inspire acts of terrorism globally, these havens do not always indicate state sponsorship of terrorism. Often, areas or communities serve as terrorist safe havens despite government efforts to prevent them (U.S Department of State, 2005).

Salafism:

Salafism seeks to "purify" Islam by removing what it perceives as Western

influences and centuries of "deviant" practices that deviate from what its adherents consider true Islam. This perspective includes rejecting Shiism, Sufism, and other non-Salafist Sunni traditions. Salafism is strictly Sunni, and a typical Salafist text might focus more on obscure theological concepts than practical strategies or goals (Olidort, 2015:1).

According to Salafist beliefs, Islam consists solely of practices explicitly endorsed by Muhammad and upheld by the first three generations of Sunni followers, up to the ninth century. This idea is rooted in a Hadith in what Muhammad is said to have declared, "The best of my community is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them." Anything introduced after this period, or anything not explicitly endorsed by Muhammad, is deemed un-Islamic. This broad definition encompasses secular political ideologies, nation-states, political parties, and similar constructs, this contrasts with the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamism, which integrates modern political frameworks, whereas Salafism rejects such modern political structures as un-Islamic. (Olidort, 2015:1)

This dissertation addresses the gaps in research by using a focused, religio-political analysis of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab. It takes a deeper look into the specific ways these groups articulate their ideologies and operational strategies within their respective African contexts. Furthermore, this dissertation explores the inadequately researched influence of digital platforms in the radicalization processes of these groups, shedding light on how global networks interact with local grievances to perpetuate violence and instability. Through this lens, this study doesn't only complement the existing literature but it also expands on the academic understanding of the unique characteristics and impacts of radical Islamic movements in Africa as well as aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners that are engaged in both counter-radicalization and peace-building efforts across the continent.

1.8 Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have outlined the scope and significance of the dissertation,

which looks into the different ways that these three radical Islamic movements in Africa have articulated and portrayed their religio-political ideologies and objectives in their active regions. By focusing on Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, this research aims to unravel the complexities behind their radicalisation processes and political aspirations.

Throughout the chapter we have established the historical context of security threats in Africa, tracing the start of these groups from the post-colonial territorial conflicts to the rise of these non-state actors. This sets the stage for a greater understanding of how these groups use religious rhetoric and terrorist tactics to assert their influence and challenge existing power structures.

The research methodology used encompasses a religio-political analysis, utilising sources, including news articles, academic research, and policy documents. This approach allowed me to identify patterns and trends in the ideological and strategic orientations of these movements, offering insights into their impact on regional stability and governance through a religio-political lens.

This study aimed to contribute to a deeper level of understanding of the interactions between religion, politics, and conflict in Africa. The findings helped to guide policy formulation and interventions aimed at countering radicalisation and fostering peace across the continent.

CHAPTER 2:

2.1 Introduction:

In this chapter, we will explore the influence that religious texts and interpretations have on the ideologies of radical Islamic movements in Africa. It begins with an overview of Islam and its historical background.

Islam is one of the three largest monotheistic religions in the world and has a large following all over the globe. The word Islam means “submission” and “surrender” to the will of Allah (History.com editors, 2018).

The start of Islam can be traced back to as early as the 7th century in Mecca, also known as Saudi Arabia in modern times, and was founded by Muhammad, a highly spiritual and religious individual who had dedicated months to praying and contemplation in secluded areas of Mecca where it is said that he had received divine messages.

The story states that one morning Muhammad heard the voice of the angel Gabriel and, through him, Allah spoke words of wisdom. The words were first recited by Muhammad, later his disciples, and then recorded as text, known as the Holy Quran. Thus, followers of Islam consider the Quran not the work of Muhammad but as direct revelations from Allah. Islam, which means “submission,” was founded on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as an expression of surrender to the will of Allah. The Quran, the sacred text of Islam, contains the teachings of the Prophet revealed to him from Allah. Traditional Muslims believe that Allah is the one true God with no partner or equal and that the inspiration of this belief system comes straight from God and the vehicle chosen by him to deliver these teachings to the general population, the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad is said to have returned from the cave a changed man. The first person he preached to on his return, was his wife Khadija, who became the first disciple of this new religion. Muhammad, encouraged by this, began to preach the revelations to the public at large through his sermons. Many people were impressed by verses of the Quran and converted to Islam out of their free

will. However, since the growing popularity of Islam jeopardised Muhammad's and his disciples' lives, the entire community moved from Mecca to Medina circa 622 CE. This move became a crucial event in the history of Islam and came to be known as Hijra. The Muslim calendar begins with the day of this migration. The people of Medina accepted Islam, and the spread of this new religion gained momentum. Later with well-organised finances and a vast army, Muhammad conquered and converted Mecca. He did not stop here but sent numerous emissaries to different parts of Arabia. Today Islam remains one of the most flourishing religions in the world, it is the second largest with around 23% of the earth's population identifying as Muslim. The main teaching in the Qur'an is the belief in Allah, the one and true God. The followers of Islam are traditionally divided into two main branches, the Sunni and Shia. Each group (although they follow the same religion), interpret certain events and teachings of Islam differently (Charles Darwin University).

Radical Islamic movements tend to make use of religious texts and interpretations to justify the ideologies and actions they carry out. Religious texts serve as a foundational framework upon which radical Islamic movements build their ideologies, justifications, and identities. The interpretations of these texts, often extreme and exclusionary, support their radicalisation and mobilisation of followers towards their goals.

Iranian sociologist Ali Sharyati provides a perspective based on the instrumentality of religion in societal contexts and states that religion can function as a spiritual or moral guide and a powerful method for social mobilisation and transformation. He emphasises that religion can be an instrument to challenge existing power structures, advocate for social justice in affected areas, and inspire group action among oppressed groups (Haleem, 2011:97).

Here it is highlighted how religion, when strategically employed, can galvanise individuals and communities for them to pursue social change and challenge dominant ideologies and practices that are more radical and extreme (Haleem, 2011:66). So, the question would be, what do these racial movements find wrong with the present conception of the good and what understanding of good do they

want to bring about for society? Then, how do they want to bring about changes to attain their vision of the good?

Haleem quotes Ali Sharyati who states that “Religion is an amazing phenomenon that plays contradictory roles in people's lives. It can destroy or revitalize, put to sleep or awaken, enslave or emancipate, teach docility or teach revolt” (Haleem, 2011:97).

Religion can sometimes force division and conflict among people, especially those from opposing belief groups. History shows us instances where religious differences have led to wars, persecution, and violence. But religion can often revitalise and enrich people's lives, giving them a sense of belonging and acceptance. For many, it provides a deep sense of purpose, community, and moral direction. It can offer a sense of solace in times of difficulty and can inspire people to do acts of kindness. However, religion could also encourage passivity, where individuals might accept hardships as a part of their divine plan, thus having the potential to discourage efforts to challenge or change their circumstances. Religion can also be a powerful catalyst for the awakening and change in people, as many religious figures and movements have used their beliefs to drive social reform and advocate for justice within their community. When looking into the different radical Islamic movements in Africa, it can be seen that they are largely affected by their faith and their dedication to their beliefs. Islamic radicals tend to justify their violent actions by portraying themselves as individuals who are legitimate authorities able to authorise those types of violence (Haleem, 2011:111). From this, it can be seen that it is easier for individuals who are potential victims of the recruitment of these groups, to believe in something or someone said to have a sense of authority. Individuals want to have a sense of security and reassurance that these acts, whether acts of kindness or violence, are justified or given by someone who gives off the impression that they are in control and that people must listen to them.

For instance, the Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) of Palestine stated that Allah is their goal, the messenger (Prophet Muhammad) is their leader, the Quran is their constitution, Jihad is their methodology, and death

for Allah is their most coveted desire. By presenting the Prophet Muhammed as their leader, and the Quran as their constitution, HAMAS can present their authority and the authority of any of their contemporary and changing leaders as a legitimate authority. Through this contextualisation, all their actions are seen as actions authorised by a legitimate authority (Haleem, 2011:110).

2.2 The Quran and Jihad:

In the Quran, it is shown that the earliest of the Quranic verses that dealt with the right to engage in a “defensive” jihad or struggle was revealed soon after the Hijra (the emigration) of Muhammad and his followers to Medina where they fled their persecution in Mecca (Esposito, 2002:3).

During a critical moment when they were compelled to defend themselves, Muhammad was instructed that “Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged, surely God can help them, who were expelled from their homes wrongfully for saying, ‘Our Lord is God’” (Surah 22:39–40).

The defensive aspect of jihad is distinctly emphasised in Surah 2:190, “And fight in the way of God with those who fight you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors.” During pivotal moments over the years, Muhammad received divine revelations that offered guidance for conducting jihad. As the Muslim community expanded, questions promptly arose regarding conduct during times of conflict. The Quran had stipulated specific guidelines and rules about warfare, stating who should participate in battle and who qualifies for exemption (Surahs 48:17: 9:91), when hostilities must cease (Surah 2:192), and how prisoners should be treated (Surah 47:4). Verses, such as Surah 2:294 emphasised that warfare and the response to violence and aggression must be proportional (Surah 2:294): “Whoever transgresses against you, respond in kind” (see Esposito, 2002a:3).

In the Quran it is stated, “If your enemy inclines toward peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God” (Surah 8:61) and “Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you, and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them” (Surah

4:90) (see Esposito, 2002:3).

The Quran has several passages regarding fighting, some advocate for peace while others suggest more of a warlike image. Below are a few instances of this:

“Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors” (Surah 2:190).

“To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid” (Surah 22:39).

“But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is One that heareth and knoweth (all things)” (Surah 8:61).

Since its beginning, Islam has prohibited the killing of non-combatants, including women, children, monks, and rabbis, who were granted immunity unless they engaged in combat or participated in the fighting. Evidence of this in the Quran can be found in verse 4:90, “Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you, and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them.”

However, there are verses in the Quran occasionally referred to as “sword verses”, such as, “When the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush” (Surah 9:5), or “Those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day - even though they were given the scriptures, and who do not hold as unlawful that which Allah and His messenger have declared to be unlawful, and who do not follow the true religion - fight against them until they pay tribute out of their hand and are utterly subdued” (Surah 9:29). These are two of the verses in the Qur’an that demonstrate a more violent side of Islam and its scripture, as these verses are seen to call for the “killing of unbelievers.” These verses have been seen and abused by religious extremists and caused a “theology of hate” and intolerance, along with legitimising unconditional warfare against unbelievers of Islam (Esposito, 2002:3).

Radical Islamic movements attempt to impose their ideological brand of Islam and take Islamic doctrines such as jihad, which claim to be defending true Islam, to legitimise their illegitimate use of violence and acts of terrorism.

Today, individuals and groups, religious and secular, take it upon themselves to declare and justify acts of terrorism in the name of Islam, rejecting the regulations of Islamic law about the aims and legitimate methods of valid jihad. These regulations state that violence must be proportionate, only the necessary amount of force should be used to repel enemies, innocent civilians should not be targeted, and jihad must be declared by a ruler or head of state, whether it be a religious authority or a bureaucratic authority (legitimate authority).

The Quran provides a subtle framework for understanding jihad, emphasising the principle that its primary justification is defensive and that one is expected to adhere to those strict ethical guidelines. The earlier verses on jihad were mostly focused on the right to self-defend, and the principles of proportionality and restraint, which provide a clear mandate for believers to avoid aggression and violence and to seek peace when possible. These principles are the foundation of Islam, and they aim to prevent unnecessary violence to protect civilians, and members who are not affiliated with these radical groups.

Quranic verses, referred to as "sword verses," are cited by extremists to justify aggressive actions and widespread violence. These interpretations, which promote unconditional warfare against nonbelievers, deviate significantly from the Quran's broader message of justice and proportionality. Such misinterpretations contribute to a "theology of hate" and are used to legitimise acts of terrorism, thus undermining the true ethical teachings of Islam.

Radical Islamist groups exploit these verses to impose their extremist ideologies, rejecting the Quranic regulations that stipulate jihad should be declared by a legitimate authority, and violence must be proportionate and discriminate. This distortion of religious teachings to justify terrorism shows a profound departure from the core principles of Islam, which advocate for restraint, justice, and peace.

Addressing the misuse of Islamic doctrines for violent actions requires a clear and good understanding of the Quran's genuine teachings, with an emphasis on promoting interpretations that coincide with its principles of compassion and justice.

2.3 Leadership and Authority:

For us to understand the violence oriented with radical Islamists, one needs to understand this is not an issue caused by the absence of a legitimate authority but a problem that a different understanding of a legitimate authority is being followed.

Let us look at an **example** provided by Uwe Steinhoff (2007:12):

If the people that endorse the Israeli army are seen as a legitimate authority and therefore have the ability to make the Israeli soldiers agents and executives of public force, then why might the community supporting members of Hamas view them as legitimate authorities, thereby making Hamas fighters agents of publicly recognised force (Steinhoff, 2007:12)?

Another **example** is provided by Steinhoff (2007:8):

If Hamas or an unorganized single fighter in the Gaza Strip had to blow up an Israeli tank (an action considered legitimate under international law and the laws of war against soldiers of an occupying power) it is seen as terrorism, however when a democratically elected leader such as Sharon orders helicopters to fire onto groups of Palestinian civilians (unequivocally a war crime under international law and the laws of war) it is seen in a different light due to its recognition as the legitimate authority by international law.

When looking at it from a historical perspective, it is seen that a legitimate authority for an Islamic community was that which was relegated to the title of the caliphate (Khalifah) in the Sunni tradition and that which was relegated to the title of the imam in the Shia tradition. Thus, broadly speaking, the Sunnis have sought a caliphate while the Shias have sought an 'imamate' (which is interchangeably

referred to as the Mahdi) (Haleem, 2011:107).

In this study, the term "legitimate authority" refers to an individual who holds religious authority or presents themselves as possessing such authority. This is because some will look at a legal-relational argument and others will disregard these as illegitimate and will refer to traditional, religious or even charismatic basis for authority.

To better understand the radical Islamist justification of violence in the context of legitimate authority, one must understand the implicit meaning and significance of the notions of the caliphate and the Mahdi (Haleem, 2011:107).

In Islamic eschatology, the Mahdi is a messianic figure expected to bring justice and equity to the earth, restore true religion, and usher in a brief golden age lasting seven, eight, or nine years before the end of the world. The Quran does not mention Mahdi. However, several canonical Hadith collections, which include sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, discuss the Mahdi. These traditions are absent from the two most esteemed Hadith compilations, those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Many orthodox Sunni theologians are sceptical of Mahdist beliefs. Such beliefs are a central element of Shīʿite doctrine (Britannica, 2024:1).

According to the internationally recognised "Just War" doctrine, a conflict is classified as 'just' once a legitimate authority declares it, this is typically understood today as an elected head of state in office. Within radical Islamist discourse, violence and warfare are justified if they serve the goals of establishing what is perceived as a legitimate authority. While these perspectives differ in terms of the justification for war and the objectives sought, both rely on the concept of legitimacy in wielding authority, and this is so for Islamic nations and non-Islamic nations. (Haleem, 2011:107).

Both perspectives involve the concept of legitimacy. However, they are different in their sources and within their applications. While the "Just War" doctrine is deeply rooted within international law and democratic governance, radical Islamist

discourse prioritises religious and ideological authority, thus challenging the conventional state-based legitimacy. This divergence underscores the complexities and conflicts between traditional international norms and radical ideologies in the realm of warfare and authority.

Apart from the concepts of the caliphate and the Mahdi, radical Islamists also justify acts of violence by positioning themselves as the legitimate authority that can endorse it. This justification often relies on frequent references in the radical Islamist discourse to the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet as providing directives for violent actions. However, Haleem argues this interpretation is not so much about an accurate interpretation representing Islam or Islamist extremism but is based on asserting oneself as a legitimate authority to mobilise support (Haleem, 2011:110).

For example, Article 8 of the Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) of Palestine states “Allah is its Goal. The messenger (Prophet Muhammad) is its leader. The Qur’an is its constitution, Jihad is its methodology, and death for the sake of Allah is its most coveted desire.”

The term ‘For the sake of Allah’ is powerful, and its meaning runs deep. Living life for the sake of Allah means living a life of true submission to the will of Allah. It means choosing what is pleasing to Him over your wishes and desires. It means being happy and pleased to have the opportunity to do anything for His sake. It means sacrificing your desires out of love for Him. When that level is reached, living for Allah’s sake, individuals are happy to forgive others for Allah’s sake, to love others for Allah’s sake, to give in charity for Allah’s sake, and to steer clear of sins and misdeeds. Living or acting for the sake of Allah means aiming to seek his pleasure in everything and not think of other people or our desires (Saalim Al-Azhari, 2024).

Another method used by radical Islamic leaders and their recruiters to portray their authority as legitimate and their cause as valid is through using carefully selected references in the names of the groups they are in charge of.

Understanding the meaning and symbolism behind the different names of the Islamic extremist groups is vital to the understanding of their dynamics and nature of the motivations behind those that voluntarily join Islamic extremist groups and the understanding of the equation of violence with morality.

Below are some examples of the symbolism behind some of the most popular Islamic extremist groups around Africa to create a basis for understanding the above statement.

Al-Shabaab is based in Somalia and is affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab means “The youth” in Arabic, which relates to their principal objective. Their primary goal is to establish a Somali caliphate based on the Wahhabi Islamic principles, where Wahhabism advocates a purification of Islam, rejects Islamic theology and philosophy developed after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and calls for strict adherence to the letter of the Koran and Hadith, within the regions of the Horn of Africa inhabited by Somalis. They aim to achieve this goal through military intervention, capitalising on the instability of Somalia's failed statehood. They also exploit Ethiopian and United States strategic involvements in Somalia and use them as rallying points to motivate the Somali youth, driving recruitment and fostering national discontent (Ali, 2008:3).

Boko Haram, which calls itself “Jama’atu Ahi as-Sunnah li-Da’awati wal-Jihad” (JASDJ, Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad) and the “Nigerian Taliban” is a Nigeria-based group that seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a regime based on Islamic law. It is more popularly known in Nigerian and Western media as “Boko Haram,” which means “Western education is forbidden” (the word “boko” is a holdover from the colonial English word for book). Ansar al-Sharia (AAS), works with regional extremist groups to train, conduct attacks, amass weapons, and actively fight the Libyan security services with efforts to assert control throughout the country. The term AAS translates to “Partisans of Islamic Law” (The U.S. National Counterterrorism Centre: Ansar al-Sharia).

By evaluating these three examples one can see how the names these groups

have given themselves represent what their main motive and focus is centralised on within their extreme ideologies, this is imperative in the understanding of the basis of these groups. The radical Islamist justification for violence is deeply intertwined with their understanding of legitimate authority and the historical and religious contexts that shape their perspectives. Unlike the internationally recognised “Just War” doctrine, which sees legitimacy through the lens of established political institutions, radical Islamist groups often redefine legitimacy according to their ideological and religious frameworks.

For these radical Islamic groups, the concept of legitimacy is not purely based on conventional state structures, it is also rooted within their interpretations of these religious texts and historical precedents. The caliphate and the Mahdi both represent symbols of authority that radical Islamist movements use to legitimise their actions and assert their claims. They position themselves as the true bearers of this authority, thus justifying their use of violence to establish or defend their perceived legitimate order.

The symbolism presented in the names given to these Islamic radical groups, such as Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and Ansar al-Sharia, reflects what their core objectives and ideological motivations are, thus providing us with a far greater understanding of these groups from a more intimate perspective. Understanding these names and the context behind them offers a greater insight into these groups' strategies, along with the reason they appeal to certain individuals. By examining these dynamics, one can gain a far clearer understanding of how radical Islamist groups define and justify their actions and ideologies. For us to address this issue it would require a more subtle approach with the ability to recognise the complex interplay between religious beliefs, ideological convictions, and social and political goals.

2.4 Recruitment:

Islamic radical groups from all over the world have an absolute need to constantly add to their membership through means of recruitment, radicalisation and training. Throughout the years it has become essential to attract new members committed

to the jihad and replace those who leave, die or are caught and arrested by security forces (Springer, 2009:132). The need for this becomes apparent as without the recruits and supporters these social movements are incapable of sustaining and growing their operations for them to reach their goals.

In this section, how religious texts and interpretations have played a role in the recruitment process for Islamic radical groups, and how using these texts has given them the ability to convince individuals they are doing the correct thing in the name of their beliefs and values, are looked at.

Many individuals have developed outrage due to the suffering that has occurred in places, such as Nigeria and Somalia towards fellow Muslim followers. This is also affected by individual experiences and geopolitical grievances that have been categorised into a general receptivity to jihadist interpretations of the world (Springer, 2009:133). At this stage, it is evident that the individual has become fully radicalised but has not yet transitioned into a jihadist.

Examining the Islamic approach to recruitment reveals that it is based on principles of justice and fairness, operating as a duty and responsibility, without any nepotism or favouritism. In the Quran it states that *“(4:58) Allah commands you to deliver trusts to those worthy of them; and when you judge between people, to judge with justice. Excellent is the admonition Allah gives you. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing”; “(4:59) Believers! Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and those from among you who are invested with authority; and then if you were to dispute among yourselves about anything refer it to Allah and the messenger if you indeed believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more commendable in the end.”*

These two verses from the Quran direct believers to entrust responsibilities only to those who are deserving and to judge people with justice. However, this guidance contrasts sharply with the practices observed in radical Islamic movements, where judgements and trust are often handled differently and not always based on merit.

Radicalisation is something that goes with recruitment and is a process where individuals are progressively motivated to join small, secretive groups whereby they use violence or the threat of violence to achieve their goals (Omenma, Hendricks and Ajaebili, 2020:8).

Kamil Yilmaz et al. (2014) stated five phases impact individuals entering into extremism. These **five phases** are as follows, the **first one** would be the circumstances in the individual's life and their experiences during their childhood and adolescence and what impact that would have on the individual, and how that experience has shaped the mind of the individual, the **second one** would be the individual's experiences in their education and schooling, where one should ask what that individual has endured, was that experience a good one or a bad one, and whether or not that child was educated on radicalisation or extremism, the **third one** would be their political socialisation, where we would need to consider what political group they belong to or have been exposed to in order to understand their ideas and beliefs, the **fourth one** would be the radicalisation phase, where the individual made the decision, whether it was a conscious decision or a decision the individual made through manipulation, to take measures to an extreme level, and lastly the **fifth one** would be their entry into terrorist organisations and by having all the phases in mind, looking at how all of these factors played a large impact in this being the final result.

Here is where he stated that “the transitions from one phase to another occur as a result of cumulative experiences obtained in the aforementioned phases and individual self-reflection, and they are marked by different turning points” (Yilmaz et al., 2014: 325).

However, investigating radicalisation reveals that religion, ideology, and politics all play significant roles in its process and development.

But what is the ‘content’ offered by these radical groups? And what promise is being held out by them to possible recruits?

Extremist groups make use of various tactics to recruit new members, often

categorised as enablers, drivers, strategies, or pull factors. These tactics can include tangible and intangible incentives, such as marriage, personal empowerment, financial benefits, or protection, all tailored to address the individual's economic and social needs. Some are given the promise of money or other material advantages. Evidence has shown a strong relationship between the presence of jihad and martyr culture, and its use in recruitment by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. Mohammed Yusuf, in a series of sermons and lectures between the years 2004 and 2009, had preached and trained his followers towards “spirituality, preparation for jihad, and the virtues of martyrdom” (Kassim, 2018:12). Over 280,000 Muslims joined Boko Haram from northeast Nigeria within the first few years of its emergence and were partly attracted by the promise of martyrdom (Omenma, Hendricks and Ajaebili, 2020:14).

Consider Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, these two groups use Wahhabism and Salafism as identifying ideologies. These two ideologies instruct Muslims to practice the norms and values of Islam in their “pure” forms (Omenma, Hendricks and Ajaebili, 2020:12). These Islamic radical groups remind Muslims of jihad seen as fard’ ayn (a personal religious duty), which every Muslim believer must fulfil, such as the five pillars of Islam (zakat, hajj, salat, sawm and shahada). The search for potential recruits usually takes place in schools, mosques, prisons, prayer groups, online platforms, and chat rooms, along with more intimate relations, such as friends and immediate family members. Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab use methods of persuasion and propaganda in their recruitment processes. Al-Shabaab makes use of public sermons and DVDs to convince believers or potential believers that other groups are infidels (Mantzikos, 2011). The messages are shown to attempt to portray Muslim Somalis in a way that makes them seem under threat from the Jews, Christians and the government representing foreign interests. One of the recruitment strategies used by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab is the use of the Promise of Martyrdom. Evidence and the strong relationship it holds between the presence of jihad and the martyr culture, and how it is used for recruitment by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab (Omenma, Hendricks and Ajaebili, 2020:14).

Mohammed Yusuf, the former leader of Boko Haram, delivered a variety of sermons and lectures between the years 2004 and 2009 where he preached and trained his followers on the “spirituality, preparation for jihad, and the virtues of martyrdom” (Kassim, 2018:12).

In one of Mohammed’s lectures, he discussed the exegesis of the Quran in Surah 9 verses 9-16, where he stated, “By Allah, we want to wage jihad even if we do not reach that stage; if we see those who have reached the stage we will join them in the jihad. There is nothing we hide from you. The *taghut* should know, and you, too, (the *Salafi* clerics) should know.” In another one of his lectures, Mohammed disclosed the clear goal of his group, “What will stop them from insulting the Prophet or killing the Muslims is jihad. But how are we going to carry out the jihad? With whom are we going to carry out the jihad? Allah made me understand that first and foremost, we must embark upon the preaching towards Islamic reform. Then, we will have to be patient until we acquire power. This is the foundation of this preaching towards Islamic reform. It was founded for the sake of jihad, and we did not hide this objective from anyone” (Kassim, 2018:12).

In Mohammed’s last official lecture before the uprising that happened in July 2009, Yusuf condemned the unjust treatment of his followers in Maiduguri and other northern Nigerian cities like Argungu, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Bauchi, where they were unfairly arrested by the State Security Service (SSS) and stopped from preaching. Despite these challenges, Yusuf was satisfied with the response from his followers along with their readiness for the upcoming demands of jihad. Here is where he stated in his lecture that “Glory be to Allah—this is a lesson to us. We had initially thought that our brothers had not reached this stage, but I can confirm they have reached it. When I approached the brothers, I asked each of them when they were shooting, “Where were you?” One of them replied to me, “I was here, I took this brother, and that brother.” I asked him, “Did the brothers flee?” He replied to me that no, rather than fleeing they were advancing towards them (the security forces). You never know when brothers have reached this level except in a state of oppression. This is a lesson and a gift from Allah. It is a sign of progress” (Kassim, 2018:14-15).

In the three instances where former Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf delivered lectures, he referenced the Quran and Allah to his followers and prospective supporters of his movement.

This plays a key role in the recruitment process, as thousands of Muslims have joined Boko Haram based on these statements, along with the attraction to the promise of martyrdom. Continuing our focus on Boko Haram, looking at how the group attempts to recruit the youth, they are offered free Islamic education, informal jobs, interest-free loans, employment schemes, wheelbarrow gifts, sewing machines, motorbikes, free wives and monthly salary (Omenma, Hendricks and Ajaebili, 2020:14). Most recruits are attracted by the promises that the groups offer and are mostly attracted by this due to the level of poverty and instability that these individuals endure in their regions. Although there is the factor of religion, serving more as a reassurance to these individuals, it makes them think that they are doing something according to or in line with their faith.

The recruitment strategies used by radical Islamic groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab demonstrate a complex combination of religious doctrine, ideological commitment, and strategic outreach. These groups effectively leverage religious texts and interpretations to rationalise and promote their extremist agendas, thus framing jihad as a personal duty and a righteous cause. By exploiting geopolitical grievances and personal suffering, they create a narrative that resonates and attracts potential recruits, who are disillusioned or are seeking a purpose in life.

The recruitment process is multifaceted and involves direct and indirect methods to attract new members. This includes offering material incentives, such as education and employment opportunities, and more abstract promises like martyrdom and divine favour. The strategic use of religious rhetoric, combined with tangible benefits, helps radical groups to maintain and expand their membership despite facing significant challenges from security forces and societal opposition.

The ability of these groups to recruit and radicalise individuals completely

underscores the importance of addressing the ideological and socio-economic factors that contribute to the appeal of extremist movements. Effective counter-radicalisation efforts must involve a comprehensive approach, aiming to address these underlying issues while still promoting alternative narratives and opportunities for the individuals being affected.

2.5 Conclusion:

In this chapter, how religious texts and their interpretations have significantly influenced the ideologies of radical Islamic movements in Africa, have been evaluated. This evaluation shows that radical Islamist groups often exploit and distort religious teachings to rationalise and legitimise their extreme ideologies and violent actions, in favour of their gain.

Religious verses from the Quran serve as foundational frameworks for radical movements. These texts are not merely spiritual guides but are repurposed to justify and expand on the ideologies of these groups. The way radical groups interpret and utilise these texts is crucial to understanding their motivations and actions. Ali Shariati's (1993) perspective provides a multifaceted role of religion. It shows it can act as a force for societal mobilisation and transformation, and a tool for oppression and violence, depending on how it is used and interpreted.

Early verses in the Quran and the Surahs outline a more defensive and regulated approach to conflict, emphasising balance and control. Islamic radical groups selectively interpret these texts to justify their approach and their acts of violence, and this is evident from their interpretation of specific verses. Extremists often exploit verses such as "sword verses" to legitimise their actions, despite interpretations conflicting with the Qur'an's broader ethical teachings on justice and peace. This selective use of religious texts creates a "theology of hate" that distorts the true message of Islam, contributing to a narrative of aggression and intolerance.

The concept of legitimacy is crucial to the understanding of the motivations and goals of radical Islamic groups. These groups challenge conventional ideas of

legitimacy, which are based on established political institutions and international norms. They create their frameworks of authority, often invoking historical symbols like the caliphate or the Mahdi to justify their actions. This reinterpretation of legitimacy is a theoretical exercise with tangible implications for their strategies and operations. By positioning themselves as the rightful bearers of religious authority, these groups seek to validate their violent actions and recruit followers.

These groups effectively use religious rhetoric to create a sense of duty and urgency, portraying jihad as a personal and communal obligation. They combine this with material incentives, such as education, employment opportunities, and social support to appeal to vulnerable individuals. This multifaceted approach helps maintain and expand their membership despite significant opposition from security forces and societal institutions.

The process of radicalisation involves several stages, from personal grievances and socio-economic frustrations to ideological indoctrination and recruitment. Using religious texts and interpretations in recruitment is not limited to abstract concepts but is actively integrated into the daily lives and experiences of recruits.

CHAPTER 3:

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the political objectives and goals of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab. Here the study examines the specific political objectives and goals of the radical Islamic movements in Africa, specifically the three main ones Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab. A brief overview of each group and a look into their history is done, to understand their main political objectives and goals.

Overview:

Boko Haram, originating in Nigeria, aims to establish an Islamic state governed by a strict Sharia law. The group's name, which translates to "Western education is forbidden," reflects its opposition to Western influences and education. The radical Islamic movement was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf and initially aimed to promote Islamic teachings. It has since changed as they began to engage in a violent insurgency that included attacks on civilians, military targets, and infrastructure.

Al-Qaeda is a global jihadist organisation founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. This Islamic radical movement aims to create a global Islamic caliphate through violent forces. Their main political objectives include the expulsion of Western influences from Muslim countries, the overthrow of governments deemed as "apostate" or considered non-Islamic, and the implementation of Sharia law. Al-Qaeda has conducted numerous high-profile attacks worldwide and seeks to mobilise Muslims to join its cause through direct action and ideological propaganda.

Al-Shabaab, which is based in Somalia, seeks to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and the broader Horn of Africa. The group, which emerged as a radical faction of the Islamic Courts Union in 2006, is committed to implementing a strict interpretation of Sharia law and has been involved in numerous attacks within Somalia and across the border in neighbouring countries, such as Kenya.

3.2 Boko Haram:

Modern day Nigeria emerged from the collaboration of two British colonial territories back in 1914 (Ochonu, 2016:1). This collaboration was seen as an act of convenience due to the British colonists' desire for the contiguous colonial territory that stretched from the arid Sahel to the Atlantic coast. The reason behind the merging of the two areas was that Northern Nigeria was not paying its dues whereas the Southern part of Nigeria had generated an excess of revenue from its administrative expenses, making it logical administrative sense to have one coherent British colony rather than having two. It also came to be logical to have a merging of the revenue-challenged colonial territory with a prosperous colonial neighbour, where the latter can subsidise the former, creating a strong support structure for the country (Ochonu, 2016:1). The amalgamation has some sense of it but is now seen by some as the foundation of the rancorous relationship between the two regions of Nigeria (Egbedike, 2019:97). Northern Nigeria is now divided into several states and has three geological blocs that are the majority of the Muslim faith and community (Walker, 2012:2). This area was seen as the centre of the pre-colonial Islamic empire called the Sokoto caliphate and its Muslim populations, especially those whose ancestors had been a part of the caliphate, looked to the Middle East and the wider Muslim section of the wider Muslim world (Ochonu, 2016:1).

The South is a more ethnically diverse region, containing six states and three geographical units predominantly of the Christian faith and community. The big socio-political influences there are Western and traditional African.

The differences between the north and South of Nigeria have been the main source of political disagreements and suspicions regarding these two regions, sourcing from colonial times. In addition to this, both regions contain ethnic and religious minorities who harbour grievances against ethnic and religious majorities whom they see as hegemonic oppressors (Ochonu, 2016:1).

These grievances are sometimes expressed through bitter political complaints, sectarian crises stoked by political elites, incendiary media rhetoric and violent

insurgencies (Ochonu, 2016:1).

Between 1947 and 1959 Nigerian nationalist leaders from various regional, ethnic and religious communities came together in a series of conferences and parliaments to negotiate the transition to self-rule and to map out a common future (Ochonu, 2016:1).

During these interactions and in the first few years after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the disrupting effects of arbitrary colonial unification manifested as seeming irreconcilable differences in aspirations, priorities and visions. The roots of these indifferences of religious and ethnic antagonisms were so deep that one northern Nigerian Muslim nationalist leader declared Nigeria "the mistake of 1914" while a prominent Southern Nigerian Christian nationalist figure called Nigeria "a mere geographical expression" (Ochonu, 2016:1).

The statements made by the northern Nigerian Muslim nationalist leader and the Southern Nigerian Christian nationalist figure reflect deep-seated historical and cultural divisions within Nigeria. The reference to Nigeria as "the mistake of 1914" by the northern leader suggests dissatisfaction with how the country was formed through the amalgamation of different regions by the British colonialists in 1914. However, the characterisation of Nigeria as "a mere geographical expression" by the Southern figure highlights the perception that Nigeria is a country with diverse ethnic and religious groups that may not always align in terms of identity and interests. These differing viewpoints underscore the complex nature of Nigeria's national identity and the challenges it faces in promoting unity and cohesion among its diverse population.

In Nigeria's national politics, Christians are anxious over Muslim domination of the national political space along with the fear that politically dominant Muslims would use their privilege to perch to Islamize national institutions and impose Islamic Sharia law on non-Muslims. This dates as far back as colonial times. Muslims, especially those from northern Nigeria have sought to fend off what they regard as unbridled westernisation and have sporadically sought refuge in parochial religious reforms (Ebim, 2021:1).

The mismanagement of Nigeria's natural resources and misrule by multi-ethnic and multi-religious coalitions and successive rulers since independence have impoverished and denied opportunities to most Nigerian nationals. Religious rhetoric blaming members of other religious communities and proposals for religious reform as a solution to society's ill have found purchase among the masses. This quest for a religious utopia has given opportunistic political gladiators an excuse to curry legitimacy through politicised appeals to piety and religious fervour (Ochonu, 2016:1).

Nigeria is split into two religious groups. The northern part of Nigeria is densely populated with believers of the Muslim and Islamic faiths, and on the Southern side, one will find predominantly Christian believers. Since the restoration of democracy in 1999, Christian governments have dominated the country at the federal level, while the Muslim-dominated northern Nigerian states came to implement a Sharia law that inhibits inhumane punishments that include flogging, amputations and stoning, causing a huge stir with the federal governments of Nigeria.

The religious conflict caused by Boko Haram has erupted several times since 2000 for a variety of reasons and these eruptions have often caused riots with several thousands of victims on either side. Since 2009 Boko Haram, the Islamic movement, has fought an armed rebellious movement against the Nigerian military, sacking villages and towns and causing thousands of deaths in the country through their massacres against all opposing their rule.

In the modern day, one can still see a massive sense of conflict, if not worse than before, where the faith of some can lead them to an unfortunate path of death or violence.

The terrorist group Boko Haram will be the focus throughout and how this specific terrorist group has created a conflict in the country and what they have done to make Nigeria an Islamic state. The Nigerian Islamic militant group Boko Haram has been considered one of the largest and fastest-growing terrorist groups in Africa as they have evolved so much over the last decade (Pham, 2016:1).

Just nine years ago in 2015, Boko Haram went through another evolution where they had a pledge of allegiance to the ISIL where they rebranded as the Islamic State West Africa (ISWAP) (Pham, 2016:1). Along with the Middle Eastern jihadists, Boko Haram occupied regions of the African continent using violence, rape and human trafficking to gain compliance from groups of people (Akinbi, 2015:32) When individuals denied the demands of Boko Haram, they would remove or deplete resources vital for the survival of these individuals to make a point. Studies have shown that some areas occupied by Boko Haram have seen severe poverty, starvation, denied access to fresh water and were denied medical care if they did not accept Boko Haram's means to "purify" the land to create an Islamic state in Nigeria and other surrounding areas (Akinbi, 2015:32).

Although Boko Haram had several other territories throughout the African continent, this terrorist group was prevalent in Nigeria, finding methods to infiltrate the Nigerian Government and Military forces making it difficult to make policy changes and implement them. This is not advertised to everyone and is done undercover. The Council on Foreign Relations describes Boko Haram as "a top-tier threat to Africa's most populous country. An insurgency led by the Islamist group has claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions more in recent years. At times, the violence has spilled over Nigeria's borders into other countries in the Lake Chad Basin" (Felter, 2018).

3.2.1 Main political aims and objectives:

Boko Haram aims to expel Western influence and create a Salafi-Islamist state within the areas of their operations. Boko Haram is an Islamic sect (Sunni, Shi'a, Ahmadiyya, Ibadi, Sufism) that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. The group aims to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by Sharia law (Walker, 2012:1).

Boko Haram is best known for its rejection of Western-style schooling. The

concept of Boko Haram encompasses a far more in-depth critique of Nigerian society.

Boko Haram's discontent with the Nigerian elite and Western-style education stems from broader frustrations within the region. Many Nigerians criticise widespread government corruption and the failure of educated elites to improve the country's conditions. In Northern Nigeria, where Islamic education holds significant sway, there is a tension between traditional Islamic values and Western educational systems. While Northern Muslims respect secondary and tertiary degrees and take pride in local universities, some feel that Western-style education undermines Islamic principles. Boko Haram embodies this extreme perspective, rejecting Western education, such as "Islamiyya" schools that bend government curricula with religious instruction, and its associated values, which they believe contradict Islamic teachings. They argue that Western schools promote immorality, and that pursuing material gain has led Muslims to overlook these contradictions. Mohammed Yusuf objected to the content and effects of Western-style education, such as Darwinism as he believed it contradicts the Quran. Yusuf continued stating, "our movement rejects work under any government that rule by something other than what God has revealed" (Thurston, 2016).

Yusuf's views on intra-Muslim solidarity, the rejection of democracy, and the dismissal of Western-style education were interlinked and formed a cohesive, radical ideology. In Northern Nigeria, Yusuf's extreme vision was distinct. While many Northern Muslims believe that Islamic principles should guide public policy, only a few prominent figures advocate for an Islamic state. The want for the establishment of Sharia law was driven by politicians from large, non-Islamist political parties, and collective support from a broad spectrum of Muslims, including Sufis, Salafis, and those that are not strictly affiliated with any group (Thurston, 2016).

Many advocates of Sharia in Nigeria viewed it as compatible with a federal, democratic system. They argued for elected officials to implement Islamic law rather than establishing a theocracy led by unelected clerics. In the 21st century,

Muslim activists have frequently asserted that "Islamic" institutions, such as courts, banks, and state-subsidised pilgrimages, can coexist with secular institutions at the state and federal levels (Thurston, 2016).

Non-jihadi Salafis may hold government positions or provide public "advice" to politicians, reflecting their fundamental acceptance of electoral politics and a secular framework for governance. For Boko Haram, politics means a complete dedication to Islam as the comprehensive societal framework (Thurston, 2016).

Yusuf argued that democracy places the people in opposition to God, as it allows majority rule to dictate what is right or wrong, contrary to the Quran and the Sunna. He criticised democracy for promoting various "evils" disguised as freedoms, such as the "freedom of belief," which he saw as leading to apostasy. Yusuf asserted that democracy is "the school of the infidels" and that participating in or endorsing it constitutes unbelief (Thurston, 2016).

Similarly, Shekau rejected democracy and Western-style education countering President Jonathan's portrayal of Boko Haram as a "cancer." Shekau used an alternative metaphor, describing unbelief as the true "disease," citing the Quranic verse, "Disorder is worse than killing" (Quran 2:191). He condemned democracy and the constitution as forms of unbelief, criticising Western schools for teaching things forbidden by the Quran and hadiths. Shekau denounced the National Pledge in government schools as a form of idolatry, claiming that the "disorder" mentioned in the Quran manifests in these heretical systems. He asserted, "Know, people of Nigeria and other places, a person is not a Muslim unless he disavows democracy and other forms of polytheistic unbelief (shirk)" (Thurston, 2016).

Boko Haram's primary objective is to create a radical Islamic state governed by Sharia law, adhering to a strict Salafi interpretation of Islam. After the death of Mohammed Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau took over leadership of the Islamic radical movement and expanded Boko Haram's insurgency beyond Nigeria's North-Eastern region. Under Shekau's command, the group has conducted violent attacks, including market bombings, village destruction, massacres, and the kidnapping of hundreds of women and girls. One of its most notorious acts was

when the group led the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from a village called Chibok in April 2014, this event has become known as the “Chibok girls” (Felter, 2018).

Following the death of Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau expanded Boko Haram's insurgency, carrying out a campaign of violence and terror, including the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014. Under Shekau's leadership, the group has continued its campaign of bombings, massacres, and kidnappings, reinforcing its commitment to creating a radical Islamic state. Boko Haram's approach represents a severe divergence from other Islamic movements in Nigeria, which often advocate for integrating Sharia within a democratic framework rather than establishing a theocratic state. In a society so strung between moderate to extreme views about Islam and Sharia, and between an educated but corrupt elite, and an illiterate or semi-literate but deeply religious and impoverished population, how Sharia is interpreted and implemented is bound to fuel conflicts (Badejogbin, 2013:14).

3.3 Al-Qaeda:

Al-Qaeda can be referred to as a global terrorist organisation that has had a significant impact on international relations and global security (Dasanayaka, 2023). Al-Qaeda is a transnational Sunni Islamic terrorist organisation with several networks of affiliates.

The origin of the group began in the late 1980s when Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi businessman, was radicalised by the Islamic extremist ideology. Since its founding, Al-Qaeda has been responsible for some of the deadliest terrorist attacks in history, including the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City (Dasanayaka, 2023). In 2004, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian national based in Iraq, founded the first Al-Qaeda affiliate, Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). By 2006, AQI had rebranded itself as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). As the security situation in Syria worsened in 2011, ISI expanded into Syria as the Nusra Front, which quickly became one of the most powerful armed groups in the country. In 2013, ISI leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi attempted to merge the Nusra Front into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, a move rejected by Nusra and Al-Qaeda. In

2017, Nusra Front merged with other Syrian factions to form Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS). HTS, which controls much of Idlib province, has distanced itself from Al-Qaeda and targeted some Islamic state members. A splinter group, Hurras al Din, remains closer to Al-Qaeda but is weaker than HTS. (2024 CRS Report)

U.S.-backed Saudi efforts dismantle an Al-Qaeda branch in Saudi Arabia by 2005, leaving only scattered cells. These cells united with Yemeni Al-Qaeda operatives in 2009 to form Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) that year. AQAP expanded rapidly amid Yemen's post-2011 instability and civil war and has attempted, perhaps more than any other Al-Qaeda affiliate, to carry out and inspire attacks in the U.S. and Europe. Despite being “in decline” due to counterterrorism pressure and internal conflicts, AQAP remains the most effective terrorist group in Yemen and has international operational intentions. Sayf Al-Adl’s son, reportedly close to AQAP leadership, is believed to be residing in Yemen.

Al-Qaeda's global reach attracted interest from similar groups, including Al-Shabaab. This Somali group, which was designated an FTO in 2008 and had historical ties to Al-Qaeda, pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2012. Al-Shabaab controlled territory in central and Southern Somalia in the mid-2000s and has conducted attacks both domestically and in neighbouring countries. U.S. officials have described it as Al-Qaeda’s largest and wealthiest affiliate, with about 7,000-12,000 fighters and generating over \$100 million in annual revenue. In August 2023, the Somali government launched an offensive against Al-Shabaab, which has since “stalled.”

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emerged from Algeria’s 1990s civil conflict and pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda, rebranding as AQIM in 2006-2007. After 2011, AQIM’s influence shifted southward and eastward, helping to form several splinter factions and local affiliates. The most notable is the Group for Supporting Islam and Muslims (JNIM), formed in 2017 from AQIM’s Sahel branch, Al Murabitoun, and two Mali-based groups. Designated an FTO in 2018, JNIM is active in Mali and Burkina Faso, where military juntas have taken power, expelled French counterterrorism forces, and bolstered security ties with Russia. JNIM has

oscillated between localised peace agreements and direct combat with the regional IS affiliate while expanding into parts of coastal West African countries (2024 CRS Report).

The earliest record of an attempt to organise foreign fighters was traced back to the creation of Al-Qaeda at a meeting in Pakistan in 1988. Since the start of this organisation, Al-Qaeda has had four stages of activity. The first stage would be the attacks in the U.S. on the 11th of September 2001. This was then followed by a downturn as a significant number of Al-Qaeda fighters were captured or killed in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.S. and several other countries worldwide (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:2).

The second stage was in 2003, this was after the U.S. invaded Iraq characterised by high-profile terrorist attacks in Iraq, Madrid, London, Casablanca and several other places. However, Al-Qaeda was heavily affected in 2006 after the British and U.S. intelligence agencies intervened in several of their operations, along with U.S. drones killing multiple high-ranking Al-Qaeda fighters in Pakistan (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:2).

The third stage was from 2007-2009 and resulted from the rise of AQAP. In January 2009, Al-Qaeda publicly stated that their Yemen and Saudi fighters had come together and had become a single unity in Yemen. The ending of this period was due to the death of Osama bin Laden and several other leaders in 2011 (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:2).

The final stage was assisted by the Arab Spring, as Al-Qaeda had taken advantage of the Arab uprisings, and the wars taking place in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Afghanistan. In 2014, Al-Qaeda, which was facing competition from ISIS, announced its expansion plans for its network with a new regional affiliate in the Indian subcontinent, leveraging local groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. By 2019-2021, among global instability and rising protests, Al-Qaeda was expected to enter a new phase marked by increased territorial control, recruitment, and high-profile attacks. The group's influence in the West has grown due to integration issues and inter-confessional conflicts. Key

factors influencing Al-Qaeda's future include political upheavals, such as potential new Arab Spring events or government collapses, and the U.S. military drawdown in Afghanistan. Regardless of their loss in leadership, Al-Qaeda strengthened their position in Syria, Yemen, and parts of Africa (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:2).

While global jihadist groups may differ in ideology, they are united by a militant Sunni Islamist ideology that seeks a return to "pure" Salafi Islam.

Initially, *jihad* referred to militant and non-militant efforts to defend Islam and promote the Prophet Muhammad's teachings. However, over time this concept has become far more radicalised. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, contributed significantly to this shift by declaring jihad the sixth pillar of Faith, thus making it a religious obligation for Muslims (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:3). Palestinian theologian Abdullah Azzam, mentor to Osama bin Laden, emphasised that "Jihad must continue until the caliphate is re-established from which Muslims must spread the light of Islam throughout the world" thus insisting that Jihad should persist until a caliphate is re-established to spread Islam globally (Vasiliev and Zherlitsyna, 2022:3).

Groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS advocate that violent jihad is the sole method for safeguarding the Islamic world. Despite the totalitarian nature of jihadist ideology, which is a closed system, it permits debate and disagreement over strategies, tactics, and other significant matters. A notable ideological divide within the broader jihadist movement, originating in the early 1980s, separated those who aimed to attack the "far enemy" (Western countries) from those focused on targeting "apostate" regimes within the Muslim world (Vasiliev and Sherilyn, 2022:3). Al-Qaeda chose a dual strategy, thus addressing both objectives simultaneously. After the death of Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda's founder and first emir, in 2011, appointed Ayman al-Zawahiri as their next emir. Ayman al-Zawahiri continued to state his guidelines for the work of the Jihad in 2013, where he stated "Al-Qaeda's military activities are directed, first against the head of the infidels (America and Israel) and secondly against our local allies who run our country"

(Clarke, 2017:1).

The Syrian conflict reinvigorated the Iraqi jihadist movement but eventually led to a split with Al-Qaeda's leadership. Zawahiri encouraged the Iraqi affiliate to move into Syria and establish a separate group led by Syrians to give it a local identity. This newly founded group, Jabhat al-Nusra, was viewed by Zawahiri as a positive development. However, Baghdadi with the Iraqi leaders was concerned that Jabhat al-Nusra was becoming too independent and neglecting Iraq (Byman, 2015:3). In their efforts to regain control and assert its dominance, Baghdadi declared Jabhat al-Nusra a part of his organisation, which then resulted in a power struggle. Nusra leaders resisted, pledging loyalty directly to Zawahiri to maintain their autonomy. Zawahiri became frustrated by this lack of unity and ordered Baghdadi to focus on Iraq. Baghdadi refused and asserted Nusra's subordination to him, thus creating conflict between the two groups. (Byman, 2015:3)

By February 2014, Zawahiri publicly disavowed Baghdadi, which put a formal end to their affiliation.

Then in June 2014, Baghdadi's forces made headlines by capturing large areas of Iraq (including major cities, such as Mosul and Tikrit) key resources, and strategic border crossings with Syria. Within a month, the group, now known as the Islamic state, declared a caliphate, with Baghdadi as the caliph and "leader for Muslims everywhere". This dramatic success turned Baghdadi into a serious rival to Zawahiri's authority and drew thousands of foreign fighters to join the Islamic state's cause (Byman, 2015:4).

3.3.1 Main political aims and objectives:

Islamic radical movement Al-Qaeda has the overall and ultimate goal of overthrowing the corrupt "apostate" regimes in the Middle East and replacing them with "true" Islamic Governments for them to be establishments of an Islamic caliphate while expelling Western influence and overthrowing secular and apostate governments (Byman, 2015:4).

Al-Qaeda's affiliates continue to be supported by centrally coordinated ideological outreach. For instance, in January 2005 an audiotape of Ayman al-Zawahiri was released where it outlined the "three foundations" of Al-Qaeda's political ideology where al-Zawahiri had applied these principles to events that had occurred in Iraq and beyond. These principles were reiterated in a video message in June 2005 that highlighted Al-Qaeda's core beliefs opposing secular and reformist ideologies promoted by other Muslims and recent U.S. support for democracy. The "three foundations," as described by al-Zawahiri, are (Blanchard, 2007:12):

- The Quran-Based Authority to Govern: Here Al-Zawahiri asserts that Al-Qaeda advocates for the establishment of an Islamic state governed exclusively by Sharia law. Secular governments or "man-made" laws are viewed as unacceptable and contrary to Islamic principles.
- The Liberation of the Homelands: Al-Zawahiri contended that true reforms and free elections cannot be achieved for Muslims without first securing "the freedom of Muslim lands from all aggressors." He also highlighted the need to gain control over the Middle East's energy resources and depicted the Muslim world as "powerless and vulnerable to the Israeli nuclear arsenal."
- The Liberation of the Human Being: Al-Zawahiri outlined a vision of a social contract between Muslims and their rulers, allowing individuals to choose and criticise their leaders while also obliging Muslims to resist and overthrow rulers who breach Islamic laws and principles. He criticised hereditary rule and emphasised the necessity to define the authority of a Sharia-based judiciary, ensuring no one could infringe upon the people's rights except under this judiciary (Blanchard, 2007:14).

Strategic thinking similar to these ideas was evident in statements from Al-Zawahiri and Al-Zarqawi between 2005 and 2007. The summary is as follows (Blanchard, 2007:14):

- Jihadist actions should be guided by a clear "thought or idea that outlines

its means and objectives.” Al-Adl advised Al-Zarqawi and his associates to declare their strategic aim as the reintroduction of the Islamic way of life through the establishment of an Islamic state, addressing all the nation's problems. And that this goal should be supported ideologically by “a circle of wise men and scholars” and promoted by “a dedicated da'wah (Islamic outreach) authority” (Blanchard, 2007:14).

The objective is to enhance the jihadist movement's ability to utilise “the nation's resources, including human and financial assets,” by attracting more supporters.

- The strategic goals of the jihadist movement should be grounded in and driven by what Al-Adl calls “the clear banner of Islam—the banner of ‘there is no deity, but God and Muhammad are the messenger of God.’” This core declaration of Islamic faith is intended to underscore the supreme importance of the principle of tawhid, which emphasises the unity and authority of God and religion within Al-Qaeda's ideological framework.
- The strategic and operational plans need to include short-term and long-term elements. Al-Adl attributes the failures of other “contemporary Islamic movements” to their “random actions.” He argues that “mujahidin should implement short-term plans to achieve interim goals and long-term plans to realise the overarching objective, which is the establishment of a state.” Although Al-Adl suggests that a comprehensive plan has been developed by Al-Qaeda's leaders, he refrains from providing specific details.

In a July 2007 statement, Al-Zawahiri outlined “a long-term plan” for achieving Al-Qaeda's objectives:

The long-term plan we envision is divided into two parts: The first part consists of earnest and diligent work for them to change the “corrupt and corrupt regimes”. The second part consists of hurrying to the fields of Jihad like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia for both preparation and training purposes. Thus, they must hurry to the fields of jihad for two reasons: the first is to defeat the enemies of Ummah and repel the Zionists, the second is for jihadi preparation and training to prepare for the next stage of jihad (Blanchard, 2007:15).

It is also known that Al-Qaeda's primary enemy is the United States (U.S.)

because it views it as the main reason for all the problems caused in the Middle East. By targeting the U.S., Al-Qaeda believes they can eventually force the U.S. to end their support to the Muslim state regimes and withdraw from their region, leaving the regimes vulnerable to attack from within (Byman, 2015:4). Al-Qaeda views Shi'a Muslims as apostates but sees their killings to be extreme, a waste of resources, and detrimental to the larger jihadist project (Byman, 2015:4).

Over the years Al-Qaeda has used a variety of strategies for them to achieve their main objectives. For them to fight the United States, Al-Qaeda orchestrates dramatic terrorist attacks designed to galvanise the Muslim world to back their cause and to persuade the United States to withdraw from Muslim-majority regions. This strategy is inspired by the U.S. retreat from Lebanon following Hezbollah's attacks on the Marine barracks and the U.S. embassy and the "Black Hawk Down" incident in Somalia. Al-Qaeda supports the insurgents fighting against U.S.-backed regimes and American forces, with the hopes of replicating the Soviet Union's experience in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda also engages in extensive propaganda to convince Muslims that jihad is a religious duty and to persuade jihadists to align with its broader goals rather than local objectives (Byman, 2015:5).

Al-Qaeda's strategies have changed numerous times due to the group's leadership that realised that establishing a caliphate stretching from historical Al-Andalus to Southeast Asia first requires gaining local legitimacy. For them to achieve this, Al-Qaeda has intervened in numerous civil wars, assisted in the spread of foreign fighters, destabilised regimes, and fostered anti-Western sentiment, especially among large Muslim communities in Europe. Despite these evolving strategies, Al-Qaeda's core objective remains to promote jihad and build a unified international jihadist movement. According to Al-Qaeda's organisational documents, all other goals are secondary to jihad: "An Islamic Group's sole mission is Jihad, as Jihad is the primary reason for the formation of Al-Qaeda. Other Islamic duties are pursued if feasible, but Jihad takes precedence over all other responsibilities in case of conflict".

Another key strategic goal for Al-Qaeda is to foster unity among global extremist factions, positioning themselves as a leading force that smaller groups should align with. Al-Qaeda's involvement in civil wars illustrates its pragmatic approach. In Yemen, Iraq, Mali, and Somalia, jihadists have infiltrated local rebel groups, protected specific local interests, and incited uprisings against "apostate regimes" (Grenshaw, 2017:62).

By engaging in high-profile and symbolic conflicts, such as the dispute over Kashmir, Al-Qaeda enhances its image as a leading force in Islamist insurgency committed to defending Muslims. For example, in July 2019, Al-Qaeda's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri released a video that was titled "Don't Forget Kashmir" (Roul, 2019:4). In this message, he called for violence against India and Pakistan and criticised these countries for their treatment of Muslims in Kashmir. Al-Zawahiri described Kashmir as a "bleeding wound" for all Muslims and urged clerics globally to preach that jihad in Kashmir is a religious duty for every Muslim. Although Al-Qaeda has struggled to gain a strong presence in this area, it still views Kashmir as a crucial part of its South Asian campaign. Since July 2017, Al-Qaeda has collaborated with the local group Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, which demonstrates a sense of solidarity in their jihadist goals and aims to establish a caliphate in Kashmir under Sharia law (Usama, 2017).

Al-Qaeda's main goal is to overthrow what it considers corrupt and apostate regimes in the Middle East, replacing them with Islamic governments that align with its vision of an Islamic caliphate. The group aims to expel Western influence and secular governance, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Al-Qaeda's strategy includes targeting the United States, viewing it as the primary source of their problems in the Middle East and seeking to force a withdrawal of U.S. support for Muslim-majority regimes.

Al-Qaeda's strategic approach has evolved. Early strategies involved dramatic terrorist attacks to galvanise Muslim support and pressure the U.S. to retreat from Muslim regions. This approach drew inspiration from past U.S. retreats following attacks in Lebanon and Somalia. The group has also supported insurgents and engaged in extensive propaganda to promote jihad and unify global jihadist

movements.

Key to Al-Qaeda's strategy is gaining local legitimacy and fostering unity among global extremist factions. The group's involvement in civil wars and support for local insurgencies illustrate a pragmatic approach to achieving its goals. Despite various strategic shifts, Al-Qaeda remains committed to its core objective of promoting jihad and building a unified jihadist movement. The group's involvement in symbolic conflicts, such as the Kashmir issue, further highlights its efforts to position itself as a leading force in Islamist insurgency and defend Muslim interests globally.

3.4 Al-Shabaab:

Somalia, one of the world's poorest nations, has experienced frequent shifts in militant groups amid its prolonged political instability over the last couple of years. Analysts have identified al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI, or "Unity of Islam") as a key forerunner to Al-Shabaab. AIAI, a Salafi militant group that flourished in the 1990s following the collapse of Said Barre's regime and the onset of civil war, consisted of Somali extremists educated in the Middle East and received funding and arms from Osama bin Laden. (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:1)

Somalia has endured civil conflict since the 1980s, marked by Western intervention, piracy, humanitarian crises, famines, and a proliferation of warlords and militias. The after-effect of this led the extremist jihadist group Al-Shabaab to emerge as a major threat to the country's stability and security. Al-Shabaab has recruited individuals from as far as Britain and the United States. Al-Shabaab has maintained strong ties with Al-Qaeda Central, inspired some "homegrown terrorism" in the West, and committed severe acts of violence against civilians and those they deemed to have violated their strong interpretation of Islamic law, including amputations and stoning. The group promotes a Wahhabi version of Islam, which is in contrast with the predominantly Sufi beliefs of most Somalis. Al-Shabaab originated as the radical youth sector of the now-defunct Union of Islamic Courts, which controlled Mogadishu in 2006 before being ousted by Ethiopian forces (Alvi, 2019:123).

In the early 2000s, a schism emerged within AIAI. Here is where their older faction aimed to establish a political front, while the younger members pursued creating a "Greater Somalia" governed by fundamentalist Islamic principles. The hard-liners allied with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a coalition of Sharia courts, and became its youth militia. Al-Shabaab and the ICU took control of Mogadishu in June 2006, which raised major concerns about the potential jihadi violence potentially going to or already spreading to neighbouring Ethiopia. In December 2006 Ethiopia (A majority-Christian country) invaded Somalia and ousted the ICU from Mogadishu with little to no resistance. The intervention, requested by Somalia's transitional government, is said to have radicalised Al-Shabaab. As the ICU members fled to neighbouring countries, Al-Shabaab retreated southward and began conducting guerrilla operations that included bombings and assassinations against the Ethiopian forces. Experts argue that during this period, Al-Shabaab evolved into a fully-fledged insurgency, expanding its control over various areas in the central and Southern parts of Somalia (Klobucista, Masters, Sergie, 2022:3).

The Ethiopian occupation was pivotal in "transforming the group from a small, relatively insignificant faction within a more moderate Islamic movement into the most powerful and radical armed group in the country" (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:4). Addis Ababa described its intervention as a "reluctant response" to the ICU's calls for jihad against Ethiopia and its renewed territorial claims against Ethiopia and Kenya. The Ethiopian government emphasised that the intervention had the backing of the United States, the African Union, and other allies (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022).

Between 2006 and 2008, Al-Shabaab's ranks grew from about four hundred fighters to several thousand, strengthened by the new Islamist-nationalist recruits. During this period, the group's connections to Al-Qaeda became evident, with Al-Shabaab leaders endorsing Al-Qaeda and condemning the alleged U.S. crimes against Muslims. The State Department declared Al-Shabaab a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in 2008, and in 2012 the group's leadership declared their allegiance to Al-Qaeda. In 2022 it was estimated that Al-Shabaab's membership was

between seven and twelve thousand, with many recruits joining either through coercion, particularly children, or voluntarily for financial reasons (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022). The current leader of Al-Shabaab is Ahmed Diriye, also known as Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah, he assumed leadership of the group in 2014 following the death of their previous leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike. Despite early concerns from analysts about Diriye's ability to lead, many observers believe that Al-Shabaab remains a unified group under his command. The organisation is primarily governed by an executive council, or shura, consisting of about a dozen members who handle the main decision-making processes (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:5).

Foreign jihadists coming from neighbouring countries and countries, such as the United States and Europe, have travelled to Somalia to give their support to Al-Shabaab. The group has also explored potential alliances with Boko Haram and AQIM to expand and further their shared goals (Alvi, 2019:124). In January 2014, Al-Shabaab considered pledging allegiance to ISIS but decided against it, leading to a small faction breaking away. Hence, why Al-Shabaab can now be viewed as the regional "foot soldiers" of Al-Qaeda Central in East Africa (Alvi, 2019:124).

Al-Shabaab is responsible for several terrorist attacks they have facilitated, not only in Somalia but in Kenya and Uganda. Mimicking the "Mumbai Attacks" model, Al-Shabaab staged a massacre at Nairobi's Westgate Shopping Mall in 2013, where they besieged the building and killed 67 civilians. In 2010, Al-Shabaab facilitated the bombing of a rugby club and restaurant situated in Uganda's capital city Kampala killing 74 people watching the World Cup final. In January 2016, Al-Shabaab also conducted a major attack on a Kenyan military base in el-Ade, Somalia, resulting in approximately 180 soldier casualties according to Somalia's then-President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Through these acts of terrorism, Al-Shabaab made themselves transparent in what their intentions are and what measures they will take to get the attention they require (Alvi, 2019:124).

The Kenyan military contested against the reported death toll, however, they never released a statement regarding the official number of individuals killed in the attacks carried out. Al-Shabaab has also carried out several attacks in Kenya,

including the 2015 massacre that occurred at Garissa University where 148 people were killed by gunmen who stormed into the campus and targeted specifically Christian students who attended the university (Alvi, 2019:124).

In response to Al-Shabaab, the African Union (AU) and U.S. forces implemented several counterterrorism measures to attempt to combat these issues and have these measures in place to prevent acts of terrorism from being carried out by the group. According to the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), the U.S. strategy involves collaboration with the Federal Government of Somalia, the Federal Member State administrations, and several other international partners that include the AU, the United Nations, and various countries, such as the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. This effort supports Somali-led stabilisation and rebuilding initiatives along democratic and federal lines (Alvi, 2019:124).

Two major events that have had a major impact on Al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadist groups, such as Boko Haram, AQIM, Al-Shabaab, and other jihadist organisations in Africa would be, one in Libya and the other in Iraq and Syria. The first major event was the 2011 anti-Gaddafi U.S.-led NATO military campaign in Libya along with its aftermath. The second major event was the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq in 2013 and 2014, forcing various Al-Qaeda cells in Africa, and worldwide, to make decisive pledges to remain in the Al-Qaeda orbit or to join the newer, more violent and extremist ISIS (Alvi, 2019:125).

3.4.1 Main political aims and objectives:

Al-Shabaab broadly seeks to overthrow the central government, expel foreign forces from Somalia, and establish an Islamic state following its version of Sharia. To gain legitimacy among Somalis, the group must provide services, such as dispute resolution that the government has struggled to offer. The American Enterprise Institute notes that Mogadishu cannot compete with Al-Shabaab's effectiveness in areas where the group is dominant (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:5).

While Al-Shabaab has expressed broader ambitions, internal factions differ on their goals. Most commonly, the group seeks to unify the Somali ethnic areas of East Africa, though a smaller faction desires expansion beyond this region and closer alignment with Al-Qaeda (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022:5).

In the territories that they have under their wing, Al-Shabaab insists on having strict Sharia laws, the banning of various forms of entertainment, such as movies and music, and the sale of khat, smoking, and beard shaving. The group enforces harsh punishments, such as stoning and amputations, for alleged crimes like adultery and theft, it also prohibits cooperation with humanitarian agencies, exacerbating the difficulties during severe droughts (Klobucista, Masters and Sergie, 2022).

Al-Shabaab rejects democracy and aims to unite the ethnic Somali regions of Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia under its version of Sharia law. It views the Somali government as an illegitimate and apostate authority under the influence of foreign powers. The group's leaders have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to global jihad. They justify their attacks outside Somalia as retaliation against countries involved in military operations in Somalia and as revenge for perceived abuses against Muslims. Al-Shabaab has described the Manda Bay and DusitD2 attacks in Kenya as in line with Al-Qaeda's directives to target U.S. and Israeli interests and labelled the airfield as a "launch pad for the American crusade against Islam in the region." More broadly, Al-Shabaab's activities in Kenya appear aimed at creating internal discord and encouraging an insurgency, with some attacks specifically targeting non-Muslims (CRS report, 2023).

Their strategy is to first establish an Islamic state in Somalia and then gradually expand their main objectives to other regions in the Horn of Africa. According to Ali (2008:3), Al-Shabaab's initial aim was to create an Islamic Emirate in Somalia, including Kenya's North-Eastern region, Ethiopia's Ogaden region, and Djibouti.

(Llewellyn and Nweke 2020) stated that the training programmes set out for the members of Al-Shabaab were specifically designed to support the establishment

of an Islamic state. Omar Hammami, the American commander of Al-Shabaab (also known as Abu Mansour al-Amriki), had carefully articulated the group's global ambitions and goals, including the aim for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate worldwide (Llewellyn and Nweke, 2020).

The establishment of the Islamic state aligns with Al-Shabaab's objectives, which are shared with their partners, Al-Qaeda. Statements from Al-Shabaab leaders have revealed a clear sense of identity and operational boundaries that distinguish them from others, justifying their aggressive actions against those they perceive as obstructing their goals. Regarding Sharia law implementation, Al-Shabaab enforces a strict interpretation, evident in the harsh laws and punitive measures they impose. David Shinn (2009:2) noted that one of the main goals that Al-Shabaab wanted to enforce is a draconian version of Sharia law, the application of these rulings can differ from one Al-Shabaab-controlled area of Somalia to another (Llewellyn and Nweke, 2020).

Jihad against the West and foreigners aims to expel non-Muslims and outside influences from what they consider Islamic territory. The group seeks to remove foreign presence and undermine their declared objective of establishing an Islamic state. Al-Shabaab targets Western interests within and beyond Somalia, driven by a firm resolve. According to Sheikh Mukhtar Roobow, Al-Shabaab's spokesman and spiritual leader, "terrorizing non-Muslims who come to your land is a religious obligation." Al-Shabaab has focused on attacking Western interests inside and outside of Somalia (Llewellyn and Nweke, 2020).

Al-Shabaab's overarching goals include overthrowing the central Somali government, expelling foreign forces, and establishing an Islamic state governed by their strict interpretation of Sharia law. Al-Shabaab's strategy involves first gaining control from within Somalia and then expanding into neighbouring regions of the Horn of Africa, such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.

Despite differing internal factions, Al-Shabaab broadly aims to unify Somali ethnic areas under its rule, with some factions seeking further alignment with Al-Qaeda and expansion beyond East Africa.

To gain legitimacy among Somalis, Al-Shabaab has provided services and enforced strict Sharia laws in territories under its control, often filling gaps left by the ineffective Somali government. The group's harsh measures, including severe punishments and bans on various activities, reflect its commitment to a draconian version of Sharia law, although enforcement can vary by region.

Al-Shabaab also maintains a strong anti-Western stance, targeting Western interests within Somalia and outside of Somalia. This global jihadist approach is justified by the group's leaders, as retaliation against foreign military involvement in Somalia and perceived abuses against Muslims. Through these aims and objectives, Al-Shabaab's goal is to isolate Somalia from external influences and promote its version of an Islamic state.

3.5 Comparative Analysis of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab

Similarities:

The main ideology behind Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab is based on Wahhabism. This doctrine, originating in what is now Saudi Arabia, emphasises a rigid interpretation of Islamic orthodoxy and conservatism, viewing the world in absolute terms. Wahhabism advocates strict adherence to early Islamic practices, rejecting religious innovations and polytheism (Afriyie et al., 2020).

According to Wahhabist beliefs, there are two types of people: the "Salafists" (or Wahhabis), who are considered to follow God's will and are thus destined for heaven, and everyone else, including other Muslims and non-Muslims, who are denounced. As Wahhabism becomes increasingly radical, it can undermine the core principles of Islam and serve as the ideological foundation for extremist groups, such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab who use their interpretation of Wahhabism to justify and rationalise their extreme actions (Afriyie et al., 2020:9).

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab engage in tactics, such as targeting government officials, police officers, journalists, and civilians, including international aid workers and diplomats. They employ bombings, shootings, and suicide attacks to further their goals, which often involve weakening government authority and

creating ungoverned spaces. Both groups have been involved in kidnappings, sexual violence, and forced recruitment of combatants, including children. Reports indicate these groups impose strict codes of conduct for women, with severe punishments for violations, including death (Afriyie et al., 2020:9).

Salafist Roots: All three groups emerge from the Salafist interpretation of Islam (Salafism is prevalent in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Al-Qaeda's founder, Osama Bin Laden), which is characterised by a literal reading of the Quran and early Islamic texts. This moralistic approach emphasises strict adherence to Sharia law and harsh punishments. Despite their extreme methods, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and Al-Qaeda all share a common Salafist objective. These groups have all arisen in regions with a history of colonialism, elite exploitation, poor governance, and widespread marginalisation of the populace. This historical context has contributed to the environments in which these extremist movements thrive, something all three groups have in common (Campbell, 2015:1).

There are similarities that these three groups share that make them seem alike, however, their differences want to define each of the Islamic radical movements and separate them from each other.

Differences:

Regarding **Strategic Focus** Al-Shabaab's primary aim is to overthrow the Somali government and establish an Islamic Emirate in Somalia, governed strictly by Sharia law. They impose severe penalties for violations, such as amputation and stoning, and ban activities they deem un-Islamic, including Western music and certain forms of dress. Boko Haram's primary objective is to eradicate Western influence and education in Nigeria and replace the secular democratic system with an Islamic state governed by Sharia. The group, whose name translates to "Western education is forbidden," focuses on opposing Western education and values (Afriyie et al., 2020:10).

When looking at **Organisational Structure** Boko Haram has a decentralised structure as the group is led by a Shura Committee of 30 members that oversees

all regional cells, including various specialised committees, such as the military, explosives, welfare, and intelligence. Al-Shabaab operates with a hierarchical structure led by an Emir, currently Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah. The Emir oversees regional commanders and a Shura Council, which sets out all policies for the territories under their control (Afriyie et al., 2020:11).

The **recruitment methods** used by Boko Haram capitalise on the socio-economic hardships in North-Eastern Nigeria. They recruit through coercion, pressure from associates, and abduction of prisoners. They also exploit local grievances to attract members. Whereas Al-Shabaab recruits extensively through propaganda, including social media and radio broadcasts, targeting Somalians and the diaspora. They use advanced media strategies and sometimes abduct children from schools to fill their ranks (Afriyie et al., 2020:11).

Regarding the group's **funding sources**, Boko Haram finances itself through the hawala system, local fundraising, bank robberies, extortion, smuggling, and ransom payments. They also receive funding from AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and allegedly from local politicians. Al-Shabaab funds its operations by taxing communities, conducting business activities, and soliciting support from Somali-based companies and private donors (Afriyie et al., 2020:11). These differences highlight the distinct operational and ideological frameworks of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, and their varied approaches to recruitment, funding, and organisational management (Afriyie et al., 2020:11). Despite their religious claims, the ultimate objectives of groups, such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram are to overthrow or reform existing political systems and replace them with alternatives reminiscent of pre-colonial governance. These organisations, once seen as region-specific, increasingly expanded their reach internationally. All these groups share a core extremist, fundamentalist ideology that masks their political ambitions. While their adaptability and international presence can be advantageous, internal rivalries and power struggles may weaken these groups, potentially facilitating counterterrorism efforts (Aleksander & Błażej, 2019).

The primary difference between Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab lies in their strategies and motivations, despite both being rooted in Sunni-Salafist ideology

and jihadist Salafism. Boko Haram is characterised by its extreme brutality, aiming to impose its ideological dominance through severe violence. This organisation is focused on its domestic struggle against the Nigerian Government and can be classified as a nationalist jihadist group. Only its splinter group, Ansaru, has shown a broader anti-Western orientation (Eichhorn, 2022).

In contrast, Al-Shabaab exhibits a more complex orientation between nationalist and anti-Western internationalist jihad. The organisation is divided into factions with differing focuses: one stream concentrates on the fight within Somalia, while another advocates for a broader regional or global jihad. This internal division has led to significant conflicts within the group (Eichhorn, 2022).

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab seek to establish an Islamic state or caliphate based on their interpretation of Sharia law, but their objectives reflect what their regional contexts are. Boko Haram aims to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, reflecting its historical ties to northern Nigeria's Islamic heritage and strong anti-Western sentiments. Al-Shabaab seeks to unify Somalia within a larger Islamic caliphate influenced by the Wahhabi movement and the historical context of the Somali Islamic revival (Eichhorn, 2022).

Despite their ideological similarities, the distinct historical and regional influences on Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab shape their strategies and goals (Eichhorn, 2022).

Regarding Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram integrates a more pronounced millenarian. Millenarianism is the belief that a fundamental transformation of society is coming, one that will bring a golden age of peace and prosperity (Flanagan, 2023), aspect into their ideologies and propaganda compared to Al-Qaeda. Their focus is on establishing God's kingdom on earth and preparing for the End Times (Campbell, 2015:1). Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to ISIS, aims to establish God's kingdom by enforcing Sharia law rigidly. Their primary focus is on dismantling the Nigerian state to achieve this, with limited interest in expanding beyond Nigeria and its neighbouring regions that were once part of pre-colonial Islamist kingdoms (Campbell, 2015:1). ISIS and Boko Haram use extreme

violence as a propaganda tool, featuring brutal punishments such as hand-chopping, beheadings, and even crucifixions and burnings, echoing ancient practices (Campbell, 2015:1).

In contrast, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates are more politically oriented. Their primary objective is the expulsion of Western influence from the Middle East and North Africa, rather than the apocalyptic goals of ISIS and Boko Haram. Al-Qaeda's approach is characterised by a political strategy and tactical considerations, avoiding indiscriminate violence against Muslims. For instance, Al-Qaeda affiliates have taken measures to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims in their operations, as seen in their attacks on Westgate and Bamako (Campbell, 2015:1)

3.6 Conclusion:

This chapter has examined the political objectives and goals of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, three of the largest and most influential radical Islamic movements operating in Africa. Each group's origins, historical context, and ideological motivations reveal the complexity of their ambitions and the far-reaching impacts of their activities.

This chapter has described Boko Haram, establishing that their main aim is to establish an Islamic state governed by strict Sharia law. In the discussion of Al-Qaeda, it was concluded that with their global jihadist perspective, they seek to expel Western influences from Muslim-majority countries by overthrowing what they consider apostate regimes and establishing a global Islamic caliphate. Lastly, Al-Shabaab, based in Somalia, shares a similar goal of establishing an Islamic state, but its focus differs as it is more regional, targeting the Horn of Africa.

Boko Haram primarily targets Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Kenya with a focus on eradicating Western influence and education. Its decentralised structure and use of extreme violence, including kidnappings and brutal punishments, reflect its aim to replace the secular Nigerian Government with an Islamic state. The group's millenarian outlook emphasises the establishment of a divine kingdom and a

transformative societal change.

Al-Qaeda operates with a broader, more global perspective, targeting Western interests and seeking to expel foreign influence from the Middle East and North Africa. Its strategy combines political objectives with tactical considerations, aiming to create a global jihadist movement while avoiding indiscriminate violence against Muslims. Al-Qaeda's focus on political strategy contrasts with Boko Haram's apocalyptic vision and intense regional focus.

Al-Shabaab seeks to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and expand its influence in the Horn of Africa. The group enforces a draconian version of Sharia law in controlled territories and demonstrates a strong anti-Western stance. Their immediate goals are region-specific and share strategic ties with Al-Qaeda, reflecting its broader ambitions for regional dominance. These groups distinctly demonstrate their strategic priorities that are uniquely shaped by their specific regions and the objectives they plan to portray within them. Their opposing approaches to governance, recruitment, and funding illustrate the diversity within the global jihadist movement. A comparative analysis, provides the similarities and differences these groups share, thus making it easier to distinguish each group's aims and objectives, linking it to the rest of the chapter.

Chapter 4:

4.1 Introduction:

In this chapter, the societal and regional impacts caused by Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab in the areas where they are active or were active, are discussed. The impact of extremist organisations, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab extends far beyond their immediate acts of violence. These groups, each with their distinct objectives and operational methods, have profoundly influenced the societal and regional dynamics in the areas where they operate. Boko Haram's insurgency has devastated North-Eastern Nigeria and neighbouring regions, leading to widespread displacement and economic disruption. Al-Qaeda's activities have spanned across North Africa, creating instability and strife in countries like Algeria and Mali, while also affecting broader geopolitical landscapes. Al-Shabaab's insurgency in Somalia has created conflict within the country and has affected the Horn of Africa, which has contributed to regional instability and humanitarian crises.

This chapter explores the multifaceted impact of extremist organisations, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab on the societies and regions in which they operate. Each group, driven by distinct religio-political ideologies, has profoundly shaped the societal and regional dynamics. By linking these observations to the main focus of the dissertation it shows how these extremist movements use their ideologies and objectives and how they impact the regions on a societal level.

This chapter explores the multifaceted impacts of these organisations on the societies and regions they have affected. The chapter shows how their activities have influenced local economies, governance structures, social cohesion, and regional security.

4.2 List of Boko Haram Attacks and the Societal Impact Caused:

There has been a major increase in terrorism in Nigeria, with a staggering increase in deaths rising by 34%. 2024 marks Nigeria's highest death toll since 2020 and was driven by a surge in conflicts between ISWA and Boko Haram. If it were not for this conflict between these two groups, the terrorism deaths would have seen a decrease of 18%. According to the Global Terrorism Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, the most targeted group were civilians, with law enforcement and military personnel coming in a close second (Global Terrorism Index 2024).

Between the years 2011 and 2023, Boko Haram has been responsible for thousands of deaths in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (Sasu, 2023:1).

The North-Eastern side of Nigeria has registered the highest number of deaths with Borno being the most affected state, causing over 38,000 deaths in this area. Among the news on attacks mostly present in the media, the kidnapping of 276 female students from a secondary school in Borno in 2014 received a global response. From April 2021, there were over 100 girls who were still declared missing, while six students were believed to have died (Sasu, 2023:1).

The conflict between ISWA and Boko Haram began to increase and intensify in 2023, with ISWA attacks resulting in the death of 167 Boko Haram militants, this being the most deaths of the opposing group since the two groups split in 2016. Boko Haram has also now recorded its deadliest year since 2020, with 29 attacks leading to 151 deaths, a significant rise from the nine attacks and 72 deaths recorded in the previous year (Global Terrorism Index 2024).

The worst terror attack of 2023 occurred in Borno State, where 60 terrorists were killed in a battle between ISWA and the Boko Haram gunmen in August. Boko Haram reportedly lost more fighters than ISWA in this attack, along with the death of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau in May 2021, which intensified these conflicts between the jihadist factions. Although ISWA remains the more dominant group, Boko Haram continues to be a strong, albeit weakened, adversary (Global Terrorism Index 2024).

By providing a table that lists all the attacks done by Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda, we can gain a far greater understanding of the group through various channels. Providing a table that lists all the attacks carried out by Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda offers a deeper understanding of these groups through various channels. Analysing the frequency, scale, and distribution of the attacks can assist in identifying patterns, trends, and the intensity of the group's activities. The geographic impact of the different groups illustrates the geographic spread of their attacks, thus highlighting which regions are most affected, crucial for understanding the group's operational reach and the areas most affected by their violence. It can also reveal patterns, such as heightened areas of activity, seasonal variations, or changes in their tactics. This can provide insights into the group's strategic adaptations and operational shifts. The table also provides the reader with information on the number of deaths, property damage, and other impacts, which is essential for assessing the broader humanitarian and societal consequences of their activities.

Table 4. 1 *List of the different attacks led out by Boko Haram from 2009-2023 in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger.*

Date of Attack:	Incident:	Impact:
26-07-2009	The Boko Haram uprising marks the beginning of the insurgency in Northern Nigeria.	About 1000 people were killed in the clashes between the security forces and the Boko Haram militants.
07-09-2010	Boko Haram members stormed a prison in Bauchi State, freeing over 700 prisoners including about 100 sect members.	Seven guards were killed with five civilians.
11-10-2010	Bomb attack in Maiduguri Police station.	The station was destroyed and three people were injured.
December 2010	Violent extremists detonated explosives in Jos, Plateau State.	An estimated number of at least 32 people were killed and several

		others were left injured.
31-12-2010	Attack at Mammy market in Mogadishu Army Barrack-Abuja.	Eleven people were killed.
28-01-2011	Boko Haram militants attacked the Borno State All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP).	The Borno State ANPP gubernatorial candidate was killed, along with six others including policemen and the younger brother of the incumbent governor of Borno State.
31-05-2011	Three suspected Boko Haram gunmen killed the younger brother of the Shehu of Borno at his residence in Maiduguri. (The Shehu of Borno serves as the second-ranking traditional ruler in Nigeria after the Sultan of Sokoto). The armed men attacked from a motorcycle with automatic rifles.	One person died.
16-06-2011	A terrorist detonated a VBIED in the parking lot of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) headquarters in Abuja.	One police officer was killed, the driver of the car that exploded, and at least two other individuals. The blast damaged at least 50 vehicles and shattered windows on the south side of the NPF headquarters building.
04-08-2011	Damaturu attacks.	About 150 people were killed in the attacks.
26-08-2011	A terrorist rammed two exit gates of the United Nations (UN) headquarters compound in Abuja and crashed into the lobby of the building before detonating his VBIED.	Twenty-four people were killed and 120 people were injured.
16-10-2011	Suspected Boko Haram pre-dawn bomb attack on the 34th mobile police force base in Gombe state.	One policeman was killed, 15 vehicles were burnt, a building was

		destroyed, and they looted an armoury restocked with weapons and ammunition.
25-12-2011	The bombing of St Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla.	Forty-six people were killed.
20-01-2012	Multiple attacks in Kano were carried out on at least 12 targets including police stations, an immigration office, and the Kano residence of an Assistant Inspector General of Police.	Over 150 people were killed and hundreds left wounded.
29-04-2012	Attack on the Bayero University in Kano State.	Thirteen undergraduate student worshippers, one non-teaching staff member and two professors were killed.
17-06-2012	Three church bombings in Kaduna.	At least 10 people were killed and 78 were left injured.
19-01-2013	A military convoy of buses carrying Nigerian troops to be deployed to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces in Mali were bombed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) placed in the road near Lokoja in Kogi state.	Seven soldiers were killed, and many others were wounded in the attack.
18-03-2013	Kano bus station bombing.	About 65 people were killed.
16-04-2013	Baga massacre in Borno state.	One hundred and eighty-seven people were killed.
06-07-2013	Yobe state school shootings.	Forty-two people were killed.
12-08-2013	Attacks in Maiduguri Mosque.	Fifty-six worshippers were killed.
12-0-2013	Military convoy ambushed by Boko Haram.	Forty military officers were killed.

12/18-09-2013	Nigeria military offensive against Boko Haram.	One hundred and fifty militants and 16 soldiers died.
19-09-2013	Benisheik attacks by Boko Haram.	Sixteen people were killed.
29-09-2013	Guiba College of Agriculture massacre Yobe State.	Fifty undergraduate students were killed.
29-10-2013	Raids on Damaturu.	One hundred and twenty-eight people died, among whom 95 Boko Haram militants, 23 soldiers, eight policemen and two civilians.
14-01-2014	An IED detonated in a crowded area near the main market in Maiduguri, Borno state.	Thirty-one people were killed, and 50 others injured.
16-02-2014	Izghe Massacre.	One hundred and seven people were killed.
25-02-2014	Attack at the Federal Government College of Buni Yadi in Yobe state.	Fifty-nine male students were killed.
14-03-2014	Attack on Giwa Military Barrack in Maiduguri.	Approximately 600 prisoners were freed in the attack, which was filmed in a video released by the group.
14-04-2014	Chibok Girls Secondary School attack. Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau stated in a video that the girls were considered “spoils of war” and would become brides of Boko Haram members.	Two hundred and seventy-six girls were abducted, however 57 escaped.
14-04-2014	Two devices placed in vehicles were detonated in a motor park in Nyanya, a suburb of Abuja, in the FCT.	100 people were killed and around 200 people were left injured.
01-05-2014	Abuja car bombing.	One hundred and nineteen people were killed.

05-05-2014	Gamboru Ngala attacks in Borno State.	About 300 people were massacred in cold blood.
20-05-2014	Jos car bombing.	At least 118 villagers were killed.
27-05-2014	Buni Yadi attacks in Yobe State.	Fifty-eight people and 40 soldiers were killed.
02-06-2014	Gwozoa massacre.	Two hundred people, mostly Christians, were killed in several villages in Borno State.
20/30-06-2014	Borno State attacks.	70 people were killed, and 91 women and children were abducted.
23/25-06-2014	North Central Nigeria (Middle Belt) attacks.	About 171 people were killed in a series of attacks in towns and villages.
02-07-2014	A car bomb exploded in a busy market area of Maiduguri.	Fifty-six people were killed.
04-07-2014	About 200 members of Boko Haram attacked the Damboa LGA in Borno state, destroying the divisional police headquarters, markets, homes, and vehicles. The attackers used IEDs, rocket-propelled grenades, and anti-aircraft weapons to attack the Nigerian Army's 7th Division.	Twelve soldiers, three police officers, and four civilians were killed.
12-07-2014	Two suicide bombers wearing niqabs blew themselves up in Fotokol, on the border with Nigeria,	10 civilians and one soldier died.
19-07-2014	Over 80 assailants stormed and set fire to the village, near Lake Chad in the northern strip of Cameroon.	Twenty-four civilians, including multiple children in Kamouna, were killed.

22-07-2014	Two bombers detonated themselves near the central market in Maroua and its adjoining Hausa neighbourhood.	Twenty-one people died, and 85 were left wounded.
25-07-2014	A suicide attack in Maroua.	Twenty-three civilians were killed, and 80 were left wounded.
26-07-2014	Boko Haram set the gendarmerie post on fire.	Four people were killed.
28-07-2014	Suicide bombing attack.	Three were killed, 7 left wounded.
30-07-2014	Suicide bombing in Kano.	Two killed.
06-08-2014	Boko Haram fighters captured the town of Gwoza in Borno.	Almost 100 people were killed, and the divisional police headquarters, the LGA secretariat, and other public buildings were burnt down.
06-09-2014	Boko Haram took control of the town of Gulak in Adamawa state.	About 40 civilians were killed.
10-11-2014	A suicide bomber dressed as a student detonated a bomb at a boys' school in Potiskum, Yobe State.	Forty-seven people were killed and 79 people were left wounded.
25-11-2014	Suicide bombing attack in a crowded Maiduguri market in Borno.	At Least 30 people were killed.
28-11-2014	Three bombs were detonated in an armed raid on the Central Mosque and other locations in Kano.	Over 100 people were killed and over 120 injured. Several others were killed when police opened fire to disperse the crowd.
10-12-2014	Double attack by two young female suicide bombers near a market in Kano.	At least four people were killed and seven injured.

13-12-2014	Gumsuri kidnapping in Borno State.	Over 175 women and children were kidnapped and 35 people were killed.
January 2015	Boko Haram kidnapped 80 people in Mayo Tsanaga and killed four villagers.	
3/7-01-2015	Baga massacre.	Two thousand civilians were killed.
25-01-2015	Boko Haram offensive against the Nigeria security forces in Maiduguri.	About eight civilians 53 militants and an unspecified number of Nigerian soldiers were killed. Boko Haram captured the town.
06-02-2015	Boko Haram terrorists attacked Diffa town and Bosso town in Diffa.	One civilian was killed.
24-02-2015	Suicide bombing attack in Kano.	Thirty-four people were killed.
06-03-2015	Maiduguri in Borno State, the Baga Fish market, mosque, and bus terminal were all attacked.	Fifty-four people were killed.
09-04-2015	Boko Haram fighters wearing Nigerian Army uniforms infiltrated the village of Guoues, located nine kilometres from the Dabanga border post.	The attackers killed eight people including Issa Sale, the village chief.
16-04-2015	A large Boko Haram force attacked the villages of Blabline and Bia, in the Kolofata district.	Twenty-four civilians were killed, houses were set on fire, and many cattle were stolen.
15-06-2015	Three suicide attacks against two police targets.	Thirty-three people were killed.
22-06-2015	Suicide bombers hit Maiduguri Mosque as they marked the start of Ramadan by targeting a Mosque that they saw as falling short in the footsteps of prophet Muhammed.	Thirty worshippers were killed.
01-07-2015	Multiple mosque massacres.	Forty-eight people were killed in the first

		mosque with many wounded, in another, 97 worshippers, mostly men, were also killed with unspecified numbers of female worshippers with their children.
05-07-2015	The bombing of a mosque in Plateau State.	Fifty-one people were killed.
11-07-2015	A suicide bombing attack in N'Djamena's main market.	Fifteen people were killed.
16-07-2015	Jos bomb attack.	Forty-four people were killed.
27-10-2015	Boko Haram killed civilians in the village of Ala in Diffa.	Thirteen civilians were killed.
08-11-2015	Suicide bombing attack in Ngouboua, Lake Chad Region.	Two killed, 14 injured.
30-11-2015	Attacks in Bam and Gajigana villages.	Seven civilians were killed, and an unspecified number of teenage girls were kidnapped.
06-01-2016	Boko Haram gunmen raided Izageki village close to Sambisa Forest.	Seven people were killed.
13-01-2016	A suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque in Kouyape close to the Nigerian border.	Twelve people were killed, and many were left wounded.
18-01-2016	A suicide bomber attacked a mosque in the village of Nguetchewe in the north of Cameroon.	Four people were killed.
25-01-2016	Four suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers attacked Bodo in north Cameroon in a busy market.	Twenty-five people were killed and 65 were left severely wounded.
27/28-01-2016	Weekend of rampage at Dalori, on the outskirts of Maiduguri, Borno State.	At least 100 people were killed, and many were left wounded.

31-01-2016	A suicide bomber blew himself up on a motorcycle in Guie Miterine, Chad Republic.	There were many casualties.
09-02-2016	Two suicide bombers attacked a funeral gathering in the north-east of Cameroon.	Six people were killed and 30 were wounded.
09-02-2016	Two female suicide bombers sneaked into Dikwa IDP camp.	Sixty people were killed, and 78 others were wounded.
12-02-2016	Attack in Kachifa village.	Eight people were killed.
13-02-2016	Attack on Yakshari.	Twenty-two people were killed.
19-02-2016	Two Suicide bombers attacked a market in the north of Cameroon.	Twenty-four people were killed and 112 people were left wounded.
16-03-2016	Three female suicide bombers attacked Umarari village, Maiduguri, Borno State.	Twenty-two people were killed and 18 injured.
30-03-2016	A military formation in the south-east of Niger was attacked.	Six Niger soldiers were killed.
05-04-2016	Attack in Izige in Nigeria.	Two Nigerian soldiers and two civilian vigilante members were killed.
20-04-2016	Female suicide bombers killed themselves in IDP camps.	Eight people were killed.
24-04-2016	Alua village in Borno State was attacked.	Thirty people were killed.
04-06-2016	Attack in Bosso, Niger and Waramide.	Thirty-two people were killed and 67 were left injured.
01-11-2016	A vehicle exploded near a military checkpoint in Gubio north-east Nigeria.	Nine civilians were killed, and several others were wounded.

08-11-2016	Attack in Maru (a remote area of north-east Nigeria).	Thirty gold miners were killed.
28-11-2016	Attack on the Nigerian military convoy.	An undisclosed number of soldiers were killed.
09-12-2016	Madagali suicide bombing.	Fifty-seven people were killed and 177 were left injured.
11-12-2016	Twin suicide bombing in Maiduguri, Borno State.	Three people were killed.
13-12-2016	A military base in Kamuya Borno State was attacked.	Several undisclosed deaths.
25-12-2016	Suicide bomb attack in Mora Cameroon Republic.	Two people were killed, and five others were left injured.
07-01-2017	The Nigerian army base in Buni Yadi of Yobe State was attacked.	Five officers were killed.
13-01-2017	Nigerian troops in Kangarwa and Madagali Borno State were attacked.	Three Nigerian soldiers were killed, and 27 others were injured.
08-06-2017	Boko Haram targeted mosques where Muslims gathered for prayers and worship.	Twenty-four people were killed, and several others were wounded.
09-06-2017	A bomb concealed in a polythene bag exploded.	Two teenage boys were killed.
10-06-2017	Militants raided a village in Hambagba, near Gwoza, on the Cameroon border.	Six people were kidnapped, and four others were killed.
29-06-2017	Suicide bombers attacked a refugee camp in the Niger Republic in the city of Diffa.	Two people were killed, and 10 others were wounded.
11-07-2017	Boko Haram publicly executed villagers in the north-east who opposed the enforcement of their extreme version of Islam.	Eight villagers were executed.
19-02-2018	Abduction of 110 girls from the Government Technical Girls College in Dapchi, Yobe State.	

22-03-2019	Boko Haram attack.	Twenty-three Chadian soldiers were killed.
16-06-2019	Triple suicide attack in Konduga, Borno.	Thirty people were killed.
19-01-2020	Boko Haram ambushed and killed civilians in Ganse.	Six civilians were killed.
20-01-2020	A suspected Boko Haram suicide bombing attack in Kaiga Kindjiria.	Nine people were killed.
23-03-2020	Suspected Boko Haram militants attacked soldiers near Boma in the Lake Chad region.	Ninety-eight Chadian soldiers were killed.
09-02-2020	Travellers are burnt to death while sleeping in their vehicles during an overnight stop on the A3 road in Borno.	Thirty people were killed.
23-03-2020	Nigerian soldiers ambushed and attacked near Goneri village in Borno.	Fifty soldiers were killed.
05-04-2020	Suicide bombing attack in Amchide.	Ten civilians were killed.
28-11-2020	Massacre of farmers in the fields near the villages of Koshobe and Zabarmari, Jere Local Government Area.	Over 100 people were killed.
11-12-2020	Over 330 students from the Government Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State are abducted.	
13-12-2020	Suspected Boko Haram members attacked the village of Toumour in the Eastern Diffa region.	Thirty people were killed, and an estimated 800 homes were destroyed.
24/26-12-2020	Boko Haram attacked six villages from Borno and Adamawa State.	Twenty people were killed, and 12 others were abducted.
08-01-2021	Suicide bombing attack in Mozogo.	Thirteen civilians were killed.
23-02-2021	Attack in Maiduguri by rocket-propelled grenades.	Sixteen people were killed, including nine children.

18-03-2021	Attack in Kangaleri.	Two civilians were killed, and 52 homes were burnt down.
09-04-2021	Attack in Adamawa State.	Five civilians were killed, 30 women were abducted, 50 homes were set on fire and churches, schools, and government buildings, causing 5000 people to be displaced.
08-10-2021	Boko Haram attack in Assighassia.	Seven civilians were killed.
22-02-2022	Ambush of Chadian soldiers refuelling.	Five soldiers were killed.
23-02-2022	Raid in Koza.	Three civilians were killed.
07-03-2022	Boko Haram militants attacked the village of Lada, Diffa Region.	At Least 10 people were killed, many left wounded and an unknown number of women were abducted.
30-05-2022	Boko Haram terrorists set fire to a military post in Hitawa, Tourou.	Three soldiers were killed as well as four civilians.
14-08-2022	Attack near Bol in the Lac region.	Two civilians were killed.
17-09-2022	Attack in Hadjer-Lamis, twelve miles from N'Djamena.	Four soldiers were killed, including a brigade commander and a judicial police officer.
10-10-2022	Siege in Mokolo.	Four civilians were killed.
22-11-2022	Attack on the Chadian Army outpost by the Bouka-Toulloroum, Lac region.	Thirty-eight soldiers were killed.
24-12-2022	Attack in Mafa, Borno.	Seventeen people were killed.

31-12-2022	The clash between Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA).	Thirty people were killed.
25-02-2023	Boko Haram attacked voters in Gwoza, Borno.	No casualties.
08-03-2023	Attack by Ngala LGA in Borno.	Thirty-five fishermen were killed.
09-03-2023	Boko Haram abducted seven people in Magumeri, Borno.	
03-04-2023	Attack in Hong, Adamawa.	Three people were killed.
13-04-2023	Attack in Gujba, Yobe.	Eleven people were killed.
14-06-2023	Attack in Jere, Borno.	Fifteen people were killed.
22-06-2023	Attack in Mafa LGA and Jere LGA in Borno.	Eight people were killed.

The information given in this table was taken from the U.S. Department of State Country Reports, The Council on Foreign Relations and a secondary source (Ebi, 2018:56-63).

In Nigeria, violent Boko Haram define themselves in religious terms, especially through their willingness to be recruited and to die for the Islamic objective. These terrorists aim to inflict fear through their attacks, propaganda, and the framing of the government. Such attacks and negative narratives usually have a divisive impact on society and affect regional security.

Boko Haram has long posed challenges for Nigeria's neighbouring countries (Chad, Cameroon, Niger). In 2012, Nigerian authorities detained suspected Boko Haram affiliates in Diffa, a regional capital close to Maiduguri. The group reportedly recruited members of the Nigerian youth through the offering of various financial incentives and operated openly in some of the local mosques (Thurston, 2016:24). In Cameroon, Boko Haram dispatched preachers who used the money they had collected from people and used religious rhetoric to attract followers, thus leading to raids and kidnappings. Chad's situation is unclear due to their

inconsistent evidence and political biases. However, concerns are present regarding their potential recruitment within displaced persons camps, despite the limited evidence gathered/provided. Several factors contribute to the vulnerability of Nigeria's neighbours to Boko Haram recruitment. Intra-Muslim conflicts, particularly among Salafi groups, provide fertile ground for extremist voices. The poverty and weakness of countries like Niger and Chad, which are both near the bottom of the Human Development Index, make them more susceptible. These regions, including Niger's Diffa and Cameroon's Far North, are also geographically isolated from their capitals, adding to their vulnerability. Additionally, political constraints and responses to Boko Haram, such as Niger's arrest of critics and Chad's harsh measures like banning full-face veils and executing suspected members, may exacerbate grievances and strengthen Boko Haram's narrative (Thurston, 2016:24).

As regional efforts to combat Boko Haram intensify, these states have faced retaliation, including massacres in Niger and bombings in Chad. Nigerian President Buhari aims to enhance regional cooperation and assert Nigeria's leadership by relocating the military headquarters to Maiduguri and visiting Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. He has also appointed a Nigerian leader for the Multinational Joint Task Force, which seeks to deploy 8,700 troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin. Buhari's strategy departs from former President Jonathan's policies by emphasising regional collaboration while maintaining Nigerian sovereignty. While these efforts might dismantle some Boko Haram cells and bolster security around Lake Chad, they could also reinforce the erroneous belief that defeating Boko Haram is mainly a matter of military action (Thurston, 2016: 22-23).

This study identifies a three-dimensional relationship between the political environment, economic conditions, and social issues in Nigeria, noting that conflict in one sector often has a rollover effect and can create more issues in other surrounding areas. Political instability typically leads to economic difficulties that could trigger social unrest among civilians.

According to Ofoche (2012:18), the solutions for the prevalent socio-economic

problems in Nigeria can be in the political, economic, and social dimensions of the country. However, this can also be within religion through factors such as:

The Nigerian Government should, at the Federal, State and Local Levels, adopt a far more open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards the religious groups in the country and have anyone in a position of power in a multi-religious country should not be allowed to use his religious inclination to override common interests. Nigerians should be treated equally and be given equal rights and privileges despite their religious background (Sulaiman, 2016:1).

Religious leaders should also preach the actual teachings of their respective religions about peace to their followers. Sulaiman (2016:1) stated, "All religions could promote peaceful and harmonious coexistence among people if only their teeming followers are informed of the erroneous consideration of anyone outside their faith as an antagonist. Biblical and Quranic injunctions are germane for promoting love and religious peace in contemporary Nigeria."

Another factor could be that all religious bodies should work together to identify the fundamental aspects of religion relating to complex national and international issues (Balogun, 1988: 23-30). To put it into perspective, what does religion say about corruption, child abuse, secret cultism, terrorism and poverty? These communities should unite their knowledge and work together to address these social issues, rather than relying on broad generalisations and superficial expressions of concern from various religious groups (Sulaiman, 2016:1).

These are just some factors that could be used from a religious perspective to attempt to combat these issues at their core. It would take strict implementation of these factors from the government and religious leaders in the country for it to work, which is not impossible but could be challenging.

The high rate of unemployment, specifically among the youth aged 18-30 who are often university graduates, contributes to restlessness and may be a driving factor for some individuals to join terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram as they seek stability or financial gains to support themselves or their families. Unemployment, in this context, is a major factor behind youth discontent and related social issues

(Ofoche, 2012:11). Nigeria faces severe internal socio-economic and security threats, which encompass social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions. These issues are interconnected and include ethnic militias, religious conflicts, poverty, terrorism, armed robbery, political corruption, and environmental degradation (Ogundiya, 2009: 281–292).

Boko Haram attacks have significantly disrupted trading, business activities, entrepreneurship, investment, and employment. The violence has helped to destroy private and public property, displacing millions and causing substantial financial losses (Securipedia 2013). The group's actions have destabilised socio-economic activities, causing massive crimes and scaring away foreign investors. Students have been forced to flee educational institutions, and state governments have restricted students from the northern regions for studies or work, undermining the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme's unifying objective. The unity of Nigeria is at risk due to the sect's impact on socio-economic activities.

Terrorism incurs significant costs, not only in terms of direct damages but also through the increased expenditure on the prevention, detection, and prosecution of these violent acts (Securipedia 2013). The economic impact is evident in disruptions to the physical and human capital and towards the consequent increase in security measures and costs that the government endures. Terrorism affects multiple economic actors, individual households, private sector companies, and public authorities (Securipedia 2013).

Zalman (2013:6) notes that while economists and scholars have long sought to measure terrorism's economic impact, analyses often start with high-profile events like the 9/11 attacks. Terrorism creates various immediate costs on productivity and prompts increased government spending on defence and security. In Nigeria, the impact extends to global supply chains, leading to far higher transportation costs, with the challenges faced in combating poverty (Morag, 2006:4).

Additionally, terrorism has broader social and economic effects, including

heightened security concerns, reduced consumer confidence, and altered investor behaviour. Klein (2007:3) emphasises that terrorists aim to cause psychological and economic damage that alters business practices and leads to increased security costs. The indirect economic impact of terrorism includes the loss of time, increased security measures, inefficiencies, and the devaluation of their currency (Zalman, 2013:10). The impact is also particularly severe on education, agriculture, tourism, and religion, which are critical to societal development (Zalman, 2013:12).

4.3 List of Al-Shabaab attacks and the societal impact caused:

In East Africa, the Somalia-based terrorist group Al-Shabaab has remained a major threat to the regional stability of the country, having regained territory in various parts of Southern and central Somalia. As the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) reduced its offensive operations to pre-emptively address Al-Shabaab, the terrorist group regrouped and recruited new fighters, gaining valuable time and space. The organisation upheld its allegiance to Al-Qaeda and persisted in its efforts to isolate and defeat the expanding faction of ISIS supporters in Somalia. Although ISIS took credit for several small-scale attacks in Somalia and Kenya, the group did not execute a major attack in East Africa.

Table 4. 2 List of the different attacks that were led out by Al-Shabaab from 2009-2023 in Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Ethiopia.

Date of Attack:	Incident:	Impact:
24-05-2009	Suicide bombing attacks the police headquarters in Mogadishu.	Six policemen and one civilian were killed.
18-06-2009	Suicide bombing attack in Beledweyne.	Thirty-five people were killed, including the TFG Security Minister Omar Hasgi Aden.
10-07-2009	Al-Shabaab militants in the city of Baidoa publicly beheaded seven people accused of being Christians or spies for the TFG.	Seven people were killed.

14-07-2009	Al-Shabaab kidnapped two French security advisers from their hotel in Mogadishu. One escaped and the second was still being held at year's end.	
17-07-2009	Armed men possibly linked to Al-Shabaab kidnapped three foreign aid workers, including one American citizen in Mandera, Kenya, and took them across the border into Somalia. All were released in October.	
14-09-2009	Two Al-Shabaab suicide bombers in stolen UN vehicles attack an AMISOM base in Mogadishu.	Twenty-one people were killed, including the deputy AMISOM commander and 16 other peacekeepers.
03-12-2009	A suspected Al-Shabaab suicide bomber disguised as a woman.	At least Twenty-three people were killed, including three government ministers, at a graduation ceremony for a university in Mogadishu.
14-12-2009	A roadside bomb attack in Bosasso.	Three policemen were killed.
December 2009	Al-Shabaab militants attack people praying at the grave of a famous Sufi sheikh in Lower Shabelle region.	Over 10 people were killed.
01-05-2010	Twin explosions inside a packed mosque in the Bakara market of Mogadishu.	Forty-five worshippers were killed and about 100 others were injured, including top Al-Shabaab militants.
02-05-2010	Attack in Kismayu after congregational prayers.	Two people were killed and 13 were injured.
11-07-2010	Two Al-Shabaab suicide bombers attacked an Ethiopian restaurant and a Rugby Club in Kampala where Ugandans and others gathered to watch the World Cup finals.	Seventy-six people were killed and many more were wounded.

24-08-2010	Two Al-Shabaab gunmen disguised in TFG military uniforms made a forced entry into Hotel Muna in Mogadishu's Hamarweyne district. The two attackers, according to TFG official sources, went on a shooting spree while inside the hotel before one of them blew himself up with a suicide.	Thirty-one of the guests were killed, including members of parliament and other government officials.
10-11-2010	Al-Shabaab militia beheaded four people in Galgaduud for their suspected association with Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), a moderate Islamic organisation that often fights against Al-Shabaab and has links, albeit weak, with the TFG.	Four people were killed.
10-06-2011	Al-Shabaab-affiliated family member detonated a suicide vest.	The TFG Minister of Interior was killed at his residence.
August 2011	Al-Shabaab attacked youths suspected of being spies in the Huriwaa and Dayniile districts of Mogadishu.	Twelve youths were beheaded.
04-10-2011	Al-Shabaab was attacked by a truck bomb that detonated in Mogadishu.	Over 70 people were killed, including many students waiting outside the Ministry of Education.
05-11-2011	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants hurled grenades into a Pentecostal church in Garissa town. The same day, a police vehicle escorting a UN convoy to the Dadaab refugee camp sustained minimal damage when it hit an IEDs.	Two people were killed and five were left severely injured.
22-11-2011	The vehicle was ambushed by suspected Al-Shabaab militants near Liboi (near the Somali border).	Two police officers were injured.

26-11-2011	Suspected Al-Shabaab fighters raided a police post near Mandera seizing weapons and burning a mobile phone transmission mast.	There were no injuries or deaths reported in the attack.
05-12-2011	An assassination of a prominent Islamist scholar, Ahmed Hadji Abdirahman, in Bossaso, Puntland.	One person was killed.
10-04-2012	Al-Shabaab detonated an explosive device in a Baidoa food market.	Thirteen people were killed and 40 were left wounded, most of whom were female traders, street vendors, and customers.
June 2012	Al-Shabaab decapitated men and women accused of collaborating against the group in the Galgaduud and Hiraan regions.	At Least 13 people were killed.
01-07-2012	Church attack with guns and grenades.	Seventeen people were killed and 40 were left injured.
20-09-2012	Multiple suicide bombings at a restaurant in Mogadishu.	At Least 14 people were killed, including three local reporters.
18-11-2012	A minibus explosion in Eastleigh occurred.	Ten people were killed and 34 were left injured.
14-12-2012	Al-Shabaab attacked an AMISOM convoy with a car bomb in Mogadishu, which an Al-Shabaab spokesman claimed was an attempt to target individuals they believed were American.	
18-03-2013	Al-Shabaab detonated a car bomb near the National Theatre in Mogadishu.	Ten civilians were killed and 15 were injured, including Somali intelligence Chief Kahlif Ahmed Ereg.
14-04-2013	Nine heavily armed Al-Shabaab suicide bombers raided Mogadishu's Supreme Court	Thirty people were killed and 35 were left injured. Then later that day, two Turkish aid

	complex (the Benadir Regional Courthouse) and then executed a vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIED) secondary attack on first responders and onlookers. Later in the day, al-Shabaab attacked a Turkish NGO vehicle with a VBIED in Mogadishu.	workers were killed along with other civilians.
19-06-2013	Al-Shabaab attacked the UN Common Compound, located 100m from Mogadishu International Airport, using a VBIED. Attackers entered the compound with a secondary vehicle.	Twenty-two people were killed, including three international staff, and many more were left injured.
12-07-2013	Al-Shabaab struck an AMISOM convoy near Mogadishu International Airport. Al-Shabaab later publicly admitted that they had tried to target U.S. intelligence officials.	
27-07-2013	Al-Shabaab attacked the Turkish Embassy housing complex in Mogadishu, using a VBIED and small weapons.	All three Al-Shabaab attackers died, along with one Turkish security guard and seven Somali security guards. The attackers also injured 13 others.
03/04-09-2013	Al-Shabaab attacked the convoy of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud with IED as the President travelled to Merka, Lower Shabelle.	
07-09-2013	Al-Shabaab executed a two-part VBIED and suicide attack against the popular Villa Restaurant in Mogadishu.	Killing at least 18 civilians.
21-09-2013	al-Shabab attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall which lasted four days.	67 shoppers were killed, the youngest being an 8-year-old child.
13-10-2013	Two suspected Al-Shabaab operatives, identified by the	Both operatives were killed. Police immediately detained

	Ethiopian government as Somali nationals, detonated an explosives-laden vest while preparing for a suicide attack against an unspecified target in Addis Ababa.	at least three individuals associated with the plot and announced in December that five additional suspects had been arrested.
08-11-2013	Al-Shabaab failed to detonate a sophisticated IED embedded in a laptop at the popular Maka al Mukarama hotel in Mogadishu, frequented by high-level government and security officials.	The attack killed six and injured 15 when a secondary VBIED detonated in the parking lot.
19-11-2013	Al-Shabaab attacked the police station in Beledweyne with a VBIED, grenades, and small weapons.	Twenty-one Somali police were killed as well as one Djiboutian AMISOM soldier.
15-06-2014	Armed attacks in the village of Mpeketoni in Lamu County.	At least 48 people were killed.
22-11-2014	A bus hijacking in Mandera County in Northeast.	Twenty-eight people were killed.
02-12-2014	An armed attack at a quarry in Mandera County While Kenya had seen deadly attacks in these counties near the Somali border before, the brutality of the Mandara County attacks in which non-Muslims (including women) were singled out for killing, was especially troubling and prompted some non-Muslims, particularly civil servants and teachers, to flee the areas.	Thirty-six workers were killed.
01-01-2014	Al-Shabaab targeted the Jazeera Hotel in Mogadishu using suicide vehicle-borne IEDs (SVBIED) in a staggered assault. After the first SVBIED detonated at the hotel frequented by Somali government officials and foreigners, a second VBIED exploded shortly after first	According to Somali officials, at least 20 people were killed and another 30 were wounded.

	responders arrived at the scene to tend to the injured.	
13-02-2014	An Al-Shabaab SVBIED hit a UN convoy outside the main gate of Mogadishu International Airport.	The attack killed multiple bystanders but no UN employees.
21-02-2014	Al-Shabaab militants launched a complex attack against the Presidential Compound, known as Villa Somalia, using a VBIED and a team of attackers, some armed with AK-47s and suicide vests.	All militants were killed and at least five security officials died.
March 2015	Al-Shabaab terrorists launched a complex attack against the Hotel Maka al-Mukaram in Mogadishu, detonating a vehicle-borne IED (VBIED), followed by a ground assault using small weapons and grenades. Al-Shabaab controlled the hotel for at least 4 hours until security agents from the National Intelligence and Security Agency's (NISA) elite paramilitary unit "Gaashaan" regained control.	At least 13 people were killed, while approximately 20 others were left injured.
April 2015	Al-Shabaab attacked Garissa University College The attack in Garissa was the worst single terrorist incident in Kenya since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.	At least 147 people were killed.
24-05-2015	Al-Shabaab terrorists launched a complex attack against the Somali Parliament compound in Mogadishu using a VBIED and a ground assault team of about seven to eight attackers armed with AK-47s.	Two members of parliament reportedly sustained injuries when the terrorists detonated the VBIED at the main gate. Security forces reportedly killed all the terrorists during the attack. Casualties included around 12 security officials from AMISOM, NISA, SNA, and the Somali Police Force (SPF). In addition,

		about 24 security officials and civilians sustained injuries.
June 2015	Al-Shabaab executed a complex attack on the popular Sahafi Hotel in Mogadishu, detonating two VBIEDs and executing a ground assault by a small group of attackers.	Up to 15 individuals were reportedly killed.
July 2015	Assumed Al-Shabaab attacks.	Fourteen people were killed near a military camp, 11 quarry workers in Mandera County, and five people in a firebomb attack on a vehicle in Lamu County.
04-08-2014	Al-Shabaab used suicide vests to attack the Bosasso City Police Commissioner and bystanders in Bosasso City.	Four people were killed including the City Police Commissioner.
31-08-2014	Al-Shabaab militants attacked the NISA Godka Jilicow Detention Facility in central Mogadishu. The attackers reportedly employed a VBIED at the front gate of the facility followed by a ground assault using small weapons and grenades.	NISA officers reportedly killed all the attackers, preventing them from breaching the interior of the facility.

September 2015	Al-Shabaab attacked a Ugandan AMISOM forward-operating base in Janale, Lower Shabelle regions. After breaching the gate with a VBIED and bombing a bridge to cut off a potential escape route and AMISOM reinforcements, Al-Shabaab entered and took over the base for a limited amount of time until AMISOM troops retook the area.	Between 20-50 Ugandan AMISOM soldiers were killed.
September 2015	Al-Shabaab attacked a UN convoy as it was exiting the Somali Presidential Palace in Mogadishu,	Approximately 11 people were killed, including two soldiers and the bomber, in addition to injuring several other victims.
12-10-2014	Al-Shabaab launched VBIED attacks against a cafe and restaurant frequented by Somali government officials in Mogadishu. According to a senior police official, a VBIED detonated at the Aroma Café may have been triggered by a remote control.	Eleven people were killed, and eight others were wounded.
08-11-2014	Al-Shabaab fighters attacked the Interim Juba Administration (IJA) security Forces (IJASF) at Koday, Lower Juba Region. Al-Shabaab militants retook control	Many casualties were recorded.

	of Koday, which had fallen to pro-government forces during AMISOM operations October 25-27.	
16-11-2014	Al-Shabaab targeted Villa Somalia with mortar shells.	No reported casualties or damage.
03-12-2014	A suicide bomber detonated a VBIED within 200m of the main gate of the Mogadishu International Airport.	Eight AMISOM soldiers, an American citizen contractor, a Ugandan citizen contractor, and a Kenyan citizen contractor, were all killed.
25-12-2014	Al-Shabaab operatives launched an attack using small weapons and IEDs inside the Mogadishu International Airport compound. This attack was the first one inside the airport compound since September 2009.	
15-01-2016	About 300 Al-Shabaab fighters attacked the El Adde military base.	One hundred and forty Kenyan forces under AMISOM were killed. This was Kenya's largest number of casualties from a conflict since its independence in 1963.
02-02-2016	An IED concealed in a laptop exploded on an aircraft shortly after departing MIA.	The bomb failed to destroy the plane, which returned to MIA, or kill any passengers other than the bomber. Ten defendants were convicted in a Somali court, including two Al-Shabaab members.
May 2016	On the southern coast of Kenya, there were separate incidents in Kwale County.	One former Al-Shabaab member and three community policing officers working with returned Al-Shabaab fighters were killed.
June 2016	Al-Shabaab attacked a passenger bus in Mandera.	Five police officers were killed.
July 2016	Al-Shabaab attacked a passenger bus in Mandera.	Six passengers were killed.

26-07-2016	Al-Shabaab detonated two VBIEDs on a road outside of MIA's main gate. One of the attackers was a former Somali member of parliament.	At Least 13 people were killed.
21-08-2016	Al-Shabaab targeted a Puntland government office near an open-air market in Galkayo with two sequential VBIEDs. Al-Shabaab used a common tactic of waiting for first responders and onlookers to gather at the scene of the first explosion before detonating the second VBIED.	At Least 23 security personnel, government officials, and civilians were killed, and about 80 people were left injured.
25-08-2016	Al-Shabaab detonated a VBIED near the Banaadir Beach Hotel and Restaurant on Lido Beach, one of several attacks in 2016 targeting the popular Somali beachfront area.	The attack killed five civilians, two security personnel and injured seven others.
30-08-2016	Al-Shabaab detonated a VBIED at the Somali Youth League Hotel. The hotel is near Villa Somalia, home to the executive branch of the federal government where government officials typically hold meetings.	At Least 20 security guards, personnel, members of parliament, and civilians were killed, and over 50 people were left injured.
October 2016	Al-Shabaab carried out separate attacks in Mandera.	At Least six people were killed at a workers' dormitory and at least 12 people at a hotel.
01-10-2016	Al-Shabaab militants launched a VBIED attack near the Blue Sky restaurant in Mogadishu. This popular restaurant is near the Somali NISA headquarters and the Jilaow Prison, where Al-Shabaab fighters are often held.	At Least three people were killed and five were left injured.
02-11-2016	Two armed men shot and killed a Lower House delegate in Wadajir. According to the UN, the assassins were members of	One killed.

	the Amniyat, al-Shabaab's intelligence operations wing.	
02-01-2017	Al-Shabaab employed two VBIEDs to attack a perimeter checkpoint at Mogadishu International Airport, which additionally houses the UN and AMISOM headquarters and numerous diplomatic missions.	At Least seven security personnel and civilians were killed and approximately 17 people were injured.
27-01-2017	Al-Shabaab fighters, including Somalis and Kenyans, attacked a KDF camp at Kolbio, on the Somali border, using VBIEDs, mortars, and small arms.	The KDF claimed nine Kenyan service members and 70 Al-Shabaab terrorists died, while media reported at least 20 KDF soldiers had been killed.
16/25-05-2017	Four attacks from May 16-25.	Thirty security officials and civilians died, including five police officers in an attack on the Mandera County Governor.
07-06-2017	Al-Shabaab fighters using VBIEDs, small arms, and mortars attacked and overran an SNA base in Puntland.	Approximately 70 soldiers and civilians were killed.
08-07-2017	On July 8 and September 6 attacks in Lamu County.	At Least 13 civilians were killed through beheading.
13-07-2017	Al-Shabaab militants in Lamu County attacked the vehicle of, and attempted to abduct, the Principal Secretary of the national Ministry of Public Works, who later died.	At least six police officers died in the ambush and subsequent rescue operation.
14-10-2017	A VBIED exploded at a major traffic crossing in Mogadishu.	Over 500 people were killed and approximately 300 were injured.
28/29-10-2017	Al-Shabaab fighters attacked a Mogadishu hotel with a VBIED and small arms, followed by a lengthy standoff with police.	At least 29 police and civilians were killed.

14-12-2017	Suicide bombers attacked the SPF Academy.	At least 18 officers were killed and 15 were injured.
16-02-2018	Al-Shabaab attack at Wajir County.	Three teachers were killed.
02-03-2018	Al-Shabaab assaulted Somalia and AMISOM forces in Lower and Middle Shabelle.	Seven Burundi National Defence Force troops were killed, multiple vehicles were destroyed, and they stole logistics equipment and weapons.
08-05-2018	IED attack in Lamu County.	Eight Kenyan soldiers were killed and two were left injured.
06-06-2018	IED in Liboi.	Five paramilitary police officers were killed.
13-08-2018	An IED attack destroyed a Kenyan police vehicle in Mandera.	Ten people were killed.
14-09-2018	Eight Al-Shabaab terrorists stopped a bus bound for Garissa.	Two passengers were executed.
01-10-2018	Al-Shabaab conducted a suicide VBIED attack on a European Union Training Mission convoy leaving the SNA Headquarters on Industrial Road in Mogadishu.	
13-10-2018	Al-Shabaab conducted twin suicide bomb attacks in the Southwest State (SWS) capital of Baidoa.	Twenty-two people were killed and another 40 wounded.
07-11-2018	Al-Shabaab abducted three NGO workers in the Gedo region while they were undertaking a healthcare outreach programme.	
09-11-2018	Al-Shabaab conducted a complex attack involving three VBIEDs and five shooters at a hotel in Mogadishu, breaching the hotel wall, but failing to enter	Fifty-two people were killed and 106 were injured.

	the hotel before being killed by responding security forces and hotel security.	
15/16-01-2019	Attack on the Dusit2D hotel complex in Nairobi.	Twenty-one people were killed and 28 were wounded.
16-02-2019	Al-Shabaab attacked Christian teachers at a primary school in Wajir County, a predominantly Muslim region.	Three teachers were killed.
28-02-2019	Three VBIED attacks in Mogadishu.	At Least 30 were killed.
23-03-2019	An attack that lasted several hours, after detonating multiple IEDs in Mogadishu.	At least five people were killed, including the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
15-04-2019	Attack in Mandera town.	One police officer was killed, and two Cuban doctors were abducted.
15-06-2019	IED attack in Wajir County.	Eleven police officers were killed, one left injured and three Kenya Police Reservists were abducted.
12-07-2019	A complex attack occurred involving a VBIED and multiple gunmen at the Asasey Hotel in Kismayo, Somalia.	One U.S. citizen died along with 27 other individuals.
24-07-2019	A suicide bombing attack occurred during a security meeting in the mayor's office.	A blind female suicide bomber killed herself and seven other people, including Mogadishu Mayor Abdirahman Omar Osman.
30-09-2019	Assailants detonated a VBIED outside Baledogle Military Airfield, then launched an attack at the SNA base. On the same day, a VBIED targeted an EU convoy in Mogadishu, injuring multiple Somali civilians.	SNA forces repelled the attack with no deaths however, multiple Somali citizens were injured.

26-10-2019	IED attack in Garissa County.	Eleven General Service Unit (GSU) officers were killed.
06-12-2019	Attack on a public bus in Wajir County.	Six police officers and four civilians were killed.
28-12-2019	A truck bomb occurred on the outskirts of Mogadishu.	Over 80 people were killed.
05-01-2020	Al-Shabaab operatives attacked Camp Simba at Manda Bay.	Three U.S. citizens were killed.
08-01-2020	Attackers detonated a VBIED near parliament and other government buildings.	Five people were killed and 10 more were wounded.
13-01-2020	Attack in Kamuthe, Garissa County.	Three non-local teachers were killed, and a communications mast and a police post were destroyed.
23-06-2020	A suicide bomber attacked a Turkish military base in Mogadishu.	
20-07-2020	Twenty Al-Shabaab gunmen attacked and destroyed a communication mast in Garissa County.	
10-08-2020	Al-Shabaab prisoners at the Mogadishu Central Prison staged a riot that allowed Al-Shabaab members to escape. These prisoners conspired with outsiders to smuggle weapons into the facility.	
16-08-2020	Militants detonated a VBIED and conducted an armed assault on a beachside hotel in Mogadishu.	Eighteen people were killed and 25 were left injured.
21-09-2020	Al-Shabaab operatives attacked a KDF convoy with small arms and grenades in Mandera County.	One KDF soldier and five Al-Shabaab operatives were killed.
06-10-2020	Suspected Al-Shabaab operatives attacked a highway	Eight Civilians were injured.

	bus with small arms in Mandera County.	
27-11-2020	A suicide bomber targeted a popular gelato shop near Aden Adde International Airport (AAIA).	Eight people were killed.
16-01-2021	Suspected Al-Shabaab Operatives attacked the village of Waco Dadacha in Mandera about 150 km from the Kenya-Somalia border.	One civilian was killed and major damage to property.
31-01-2021	A car bomb was detonated at the Hotel Afrik in Mogadishu.	Five people were killed before security forces were notified.
05-03-2021	An attack on the Bosasso Puntland jail.	Seven security officers were killed, and they freed about 400 prisoners including Al-Shabaab members.
24-03-2021	A bus operating between the cities of Lafey and Mandera hit an IED planted on a busy highway in Mandera County.	Four people were killed and 10 were severely wounded.
02-04-2021	A car bomb detonated the SNA base at Bariire in lower Shabelle while another attack occurred at a nearby Awdheegle SNA base with a car bomb and fighters.	Forty-eight soldiers were killed.
10-05-2021	A suicide bombing occurred.	Six police officers were killed and another 6 were wounded at the police station in Mogadishu. 1 American citizen was also killed in this attack.
28-06-2021	Multiple car bombs were used in an attack at the military base in Galmudug, creating conflict between government troops and the armed locals.	Thirty people were killed, including both soldiers and civilians.

24-07-2021	An attack occurred in Dhobley, Garissa County, near the border of Somalia.	Three non-local construction workers were killed, and one was wounded.
12-10-2021	A KDF vehicle was detonated.	Six KDF personnel were wounded, and one was left in serious condition.
25-11-2021	A suicide car bomb attacked a UN convoy in Mogadishu.	About eight people were killed and 17 were wounded.
31-01-2022	An IED placed by suspected Al-Shabaab militants struck a passenger vehicle in Mandera County.	Seven people were killed and 13 people were injured.
11-03-2022	The attack occurred in Lamu County.	Four Construction workers were killed and two were left injured.
03-05-2022	Al-Shabaab attacked an African Union Transition Mission by the Somali base in Ceel Baraf where around 300 Al-Shabaab soldiers breached the base perimeter using two car bombs followed by heavy gunfire.	About 35 Burundian soldiers were killed.
20-07-2022	Al-Shabaab militants attacked various towns along the border of Ethiopia in the Bakool region. The militants clashed with the Ethiopian paramilitary forces, starting a three-day battle.	Over 100 Al-Shabaab militants were killed but the number of civilians and officials killed is still unknown.
21-07-2022	Al-Shabaab attacked the town of Hulhul in the Somali region.	Regional security forces repelled the terrorists.
29-07-2022	An attempted second attack occurred at the Ferfer in the Somali region.	Regional security forces repelled the terrorists.
01-08-2022	An attack occurred at a police base in Mandera with explosive devices.	Three Officers were injured.
03-10-2022	A triple car bombing attack occurred in Beledweyne in central Somalia.	At Least 20 people were killed.

08-10-2022	Suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked a pub near a military base in Lamu County.	
19-08-2022	Al-Shabaab lauded a complex attack on Mogadishu's Hayat Hotel that only ended after a 40-hour siege. This attack marked the first hotel attack in Mogadishu since the 21st of January.	About 32 people were killed.
29-10-2022	Two vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDS) were detonated near the Zobe junction in Mogadishu. This was seen as the largest civilian attack since a suicide VBIED attack occurred in the same area in 2017.	About 121 people were killed and 330 people were left injured.
27-11-2022	A high-profile complex attack was launched on the Villa Rays Hotel in Mogadishu's highly protected government mall area which lasted 22 hours.	Nine people were killed and five were left wounded, including the Minister of Internal Security.

The information given in this table was taken from the U.S. Department of State Country Reports and The Council on Foreign Relations.

Society often undergoes significant changes when faced with challenges, such as terrorism, as individuals tend to become more vigilant about their surroundings. According to Godefroidt and Langer (2020), terrorism creates a division among people and takes away their social trust, which is crucial for a functioning society. They noted that communities with high levels of social trust tend to experience much better economic growth, greater political and institutional stability, improved health, reduced conflict, and higher overall satisfaction.

Terrorism also alters the perceptions of certain groups as people may become more wary of Arabs or Muslims, thus leading to the increase of racial and religious prejudice. For instance, look at the rise in Islamophobia in the U.S. increased following the 9/11 attacks. Similarly, stereotyping is also on the rise due to

terrorism leading to the segregation of races, religions, and social groups associated with terrorists. This widely contributes to hostility and suspicion as the stereotyped groups are seen as threats to security despite their innocence. Terrorism aims to cause fear and concern over safety, which contributes to the supplication of terrorists' demands. People tend to avoid social places associated with possible terror attacks. This restriction on socialisation reduces the quality of life and prevents people from enjoying their life (Abdi, 2021:25).

Terrorism has negative effects on a country's political and economic state and the lives of its innocent citizens. In Somalia, for instance, the lawlessness caused by Al-Shabaab's actions has led to societal collapse. The group's activities, including murder, torture, mutilation, kidnapping, arson, and extortion have fostered an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among the civilians (Richardson, Gordon, and Moore, 2008). The threat to civilian life is severe, with terrorists targeting civilians, children, and women, which exacerbates social discord.

Al-Shabaab's control over certain areas of Somalia has allowed the group to engage in illicit activities, such as money laundering, smuggling, and extortion of local workers and traders. These criminal activities have hindered economic development in the affected regions. The immediate impacts of their attacks include loss of life and property, disruption of social structures, and deprivation of livelihoods. This destruction leads to profound social implications for the people who are affected, and their communities, including the loss of support networks for those who have been harmed or killed (Jackson, 2011).

Al-Shabaab's violent actions have had a profound social impact on regions, such as Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, which have all been affected by their terrorism. The group's violent actions lead to several negative consequences:

1. **The Disruption of Social Structures:** Al-Shabaab's attacks have dismantled community cohesion by creating and causing the displacement of families and the destruction of people's homes. This all disrupts traditional social

networks and their support systems. This also disrupts the image of religion as this could affect how Islam is perceived and could lead to individuals categorising Islam in a category of violence that is not truthful. This is why the understanding of the difference between Islam and Islamism holds so much value, as it can be categorised together if not properly understood.

2. **Psychological Trauma:** The violence and brutality inflicted by Al-Shabaab result in significant psychological trauma among civilians, including chronic stress, anxiety, depression, fear and uncertainty of what will happen next, or whether or not they are in a position of risking their lives by doing basic duties in their lives such as going to church, going to school, going to get food etc.
3. **Loss of Education:** Schools and educational facilities are often seen as Al-Shabaab's main targets of attacks and are forced to close due to insecurity of having the children or students in them due to the high risks of bombings, abductions and deaths. This deprives children and young people of their education, affecting their prospects and perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability.
4. **Economic Hardship:** The group's activities, including extortion and destruction of infrastructure, severely disrupt local economies. This leads to an increased percentage of unemployment, poverty, and economic instability, increasing social tensions and the risk of civilians turning to these groups for some security and income.
5. **Family Disintegration:** The loss of family members due to violence or kidnapping creates orphans and widows, often leaving them without adequate support and increasing their vulnerability to these terrorist groups and their actions.
6. **Social Unrest:** The fear and mistrust sown by Al-Shabaab contribute to societal fragmentation, with communities becoming divided and more suspicious of each other, which undermines social unity and cooperation as the civilians residing in areas are unsure of who or what to trust.
7. **Displacement:** The actions led out by Al-Shabaab have caused thousands of individuals and their families to be displaced due to the terrorist attacks

affecting them, their families, their homes and the security of the area they reside in.

4.4 List of Al-Qaeda attacks and the societal impact caused:

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is a Salafi-jihadist militant organisation designated as a FTO by the U.S., primarily operating in the Sahara and Sahel regions. Originating from Algeria's civil war in the 1990s, AQIM has evolved over the past decade into an Al-Qaeda affiliate with broader regional ambitions. The group, along with its offshoots, represents a significant transnational terror threat in North and West Africa. A successful Algerian counterterrorism campaign compelled AQIM to relocate from its operational base near the Mediterranean to the Sahel region, encompassing Niger, Mauritania, and Mali, where the group has since established footholds. During the 2003-2011 conflict in Iraq, AQIM members also participated in the insurgency against U.S. forces (Laub and Masters, 2015).

According to the State Department, AQIM has approximately one thousand members in Algeria and smaller numbers in the Sahel region, including parts of Chad, Mali, and Mauritania. The group also maintains a foothold in Libya, Nigeria, and Tunisia (Laub and Masters, 2015).

Table 4. 3 A list of the different attacks led by Al-Qaeda and affiliate group Al-Qaeda in The Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) from 2009-2023 in Africa.

07-08-1998	Operatives conduct near-simultaneous attacks using truck bombs against the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.	Two hundred and twenty-four people were killed and over 5,000 injured.
12-10-2000	A small explosives-laden vessel, operatives attack the U.S.S. Cole in the port of Aden.	Seventeen people were killed and 39 were left injured.
11-12-2007	AQIM attacks UN offices and Algeria's Constitutional Court with car bombs.	Sixty people were killed.
11-12-2007	Bombing of the UN headquarters building and an Algerian government building in Algiers.	Sixty people were killed.

January 2010	Two residents reported that two vehicles allegedly carrying AQIM-affiliated personnel were spotted in northwestern Niger looking for Westerners to kidnap. A Nigerien patrol sent to the area was attacked and the perpetrators fled towards the Mali-Niger border. Hunted by a Nigerien security force.	Fifteen AQIM members were killed, along with four Nigerian soldiers.
23-02-2010	AQIM released French citizen Pierre Camatte who was taken hostage in Menaka, Mali in November 2009. The release occurred after Malian courts tried the four AQIM operatives taken into custody in April 2009 for the misdemeanour of arms possession and released them for time served.	
08-03-2010	In what was believed to be a revenge attack for the January clash, AQIM attacked a Nigerian armed forces forward-operating post with a vehicle bomb, mortars, heavy machine guns, and small arms.	Five Nigerian soldiers died in the attack.
16-04-2010	AQIM released two Italian citizens, Sergio Cicala and his wife Philomene Kaboure, who had been held hostage in Mali since their kidnapping in December 2009 in Mauritania.	
25-08-2010	A car bomb drove through a checkpoint and exploded at the entrance of military barracks in Nema, 1200 km east of Nouakchott.	The driver died instantly, and three soldiers were wounded.
16-09-2010	Five French nationals, one Togolese, and one Malagasy, all sub-contracted employees of the French uranium mining firm Areva, were kidnapped in Arlit. Nigerien	

	forces followed the tyre tracks to the border with Mali.	
05-01-2011	Bechir Sinoun, a Tunisian national who had received training in AQIM camps in the north of Mali, repeatedly fired a handgun and attempted to detonate an IEDs in front of the main gate of the French Embassy in Bamako. He was eventually overcome by a Malian pedestrian and was subsequently arrested.	
07-01-2011	Two French citizens were kidnapped from a restaurant in Niamey.	The two hostages died during an immediate rescue attempt by French and Nigerien forces near the Malian border.
24-02-2011	AQIM released two Africans and a female French national who had been kidnapped in Arlit in September 2010. Four male French nationals taken in the same incident remained in AQIM captivity at year's end.	
26-06-2011	Operation Benkan in Mali.	Fifteen AQIM members and Mauritanian soldiers were killed.
23-10-2011	The AQIM-affiliated group kidnapped three aid workers, two Spanish and one Italian, from a Polisario-run refugee camp near Tindouf. AQIM is suspected of holding the hostages on Malian soil.	
23/24-11-2011	Armed individuals possibly affiliated with AQIM kidnapped two French nationals in Hombori, Mopti Region, and reportedly delivered them to AQIM, which is believed to be holding them on Malian soil. Malian security forces arrested two suspects involved in the kidnapping, investigations continued at year's end.	

25-11-2011	Armed assailants possibly affiliated with the AQIM attack in the Timbuktu Region.	Three European tourists were kidnapped, and a 4 th was killed in Timbuktu city. The individual who was killed, a German national, died while resisting the kidnapping attempt. Malian security forces reportedly arrested two of the assailants. The investigation continued at year's end.
20-12-2011	AQIM abducted a gendarme from his post in Adel Bagrou, approximately 1,700km east of Nouakchott near the border with Mali. The abduction followed a series of successful Mauritanian military operations against AQIM.	
16-01-2013	AQIM splinter group al-Mulathamun Battalion seizes the In-Amenas natural gas plant.	Thirty-seven hostages died during a rescue attempt by Algerian forces.
28-09-2013	Suicide bombers targeted a Malian military camp in Timbuktu and detonated a VBIED.	Killed several Malian civilians and injured six Malian soldiers.
02-11-2013	Attack in Kidal.	Two French journalists were kidnapped and killed.
02-07-2015	Attack on the Goundam Road near Timbuktu.	Six Burkinabe soldiers with the MINUSMA peacekeeping mission were killed and five were injured.
20-11-2015	AQIM and al-Murabitun attack the Radisson Blu Hotel.	At Least 100 hostages were taken and 27 people were killed, including a U.S. international development worker.
15-01-2016	AQIM militants attack a luxury hotel and police station.	Thirty people were killed and approximately 100 people were taken hostage.
13-03-2016	AQIM gunmen attack a coastal resort.	At Least 16 civilians and three special force soldiers were killed.

07-01-2016	A Swiss citizen was abducted in Timbuktu.	
18-03-2016	Projectiles struck a gas plant operated by Statoil and BP in Krechba, in the southern Algerian desert.	No casualties.
21-03-2016	Gunmen attempted to attack the European Union training mission headquarters at Bamako's Hotel Nord Sud.	One attacker was killed trying to breach the perimeter. One was arrested shortly.
31-08-2017	A man wearing an explosive belt blew himself up at the entrance to the Tiaret police station, about 270 km southwest of Algiers.	Two police officers were killed.

The information given in this table was taken from the U.S. Department of State Country Reports and The Council on Foreign Relations.

4.5 Conclusion:

Throughout this dissertation, the profound and far-reaching societal and regional impacts of extremist organisations such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab have been examined. Boko Haram's insurgency has become a major humanitarian crisis in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria and its neighbouring regions, displacing millions and disrupting the local economies, undermining its governance and social cohesion. Al-Qaeda's actions across North Africa have destabilised countries like Algeria and Mali, contributing to broader geopolitical instability and affecting international relations. Al-Shabaab's ongoing conflict in Somalia has perpetuated internal strife and extended its repercussions throughout the Horn of Africa, exacerbating regional instability and humanitarian challenges.

These groups have not only inflicted immediate violence but have also altered the socio-economic and political landscapes of their respective regions. Their presence in these regions has weakened the governance structures, disrupting their economies and major social divisions.

This chapter reviewed a list of attacks carried out by each movement, though it may not be exhaustive. From the attacks listed, one can conclude these groups inflict large amounts of violence in the areas they are active, creating a massive humanitarian problem, and inflicting fear and uncertainty on the civilians that reside in these areas.

Chapter 5: Concluding Summary

5.1 Introduction

This dissertation evaluated Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. These three radical Islamic movements were chosen due to their shared similarities, but distinct differences. These groups influence the African continent, fostering understanding and relatability to facilitate connections and create familiarity, driven by their popularity among individuals.

This dissertation has used a religio-political framework to find out how their religious beliefs have influenced their political dynamics, especially regarding the influence that radical Islamic movements, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, have in the political changes within a country or specific region. This methodology used sources such as news articles, academic research, and policy documents to identify patterns and trends in the strategic orientations of these groups, thus offering insights into their impact on regional stability and governance through a religio-political lens.

This study aimed to enhance the understanding of the interplay between religion, politics, and the conflict in Africa, with the potential to inform policy measures and interventions aimed at countering radicalisation and creating peace throughout these affected regions.

5.2 Summary

These groups, among others, have effectively made use of their religious beliefs using promises of education, employment, social support, and financial incentives, and used it as a method for them to instil a sense of duty and urgency, portraying jihad as a personal and communal obligation. This strategy enables them to sustain and expand their membership despite facing significant opposition from security forces and societal institutions.

Chapter 1 outlined the scope and significance of the dissertation, which sought to investigate how these three radical Islamic movements in Africa have articulated

and portrayed their religio-political ideologies and objectives in their active regions. By focusing on Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, this research aimed to unravel the complexities behind their radicalisation processes and political aspirations.

Throughout the chapter, the historical overview of security threats in Africa has been established, tracing the origins of these groups from post-colonial territorial conflicts to the rise of non-state actors. This sets the stage for a greater understanding of how these groups use religious rhetoric and terrorist tactics to assert their influence and challenge existing power structures.

The research methodology used encompassed a religio-political analysis that referred to how factors of religion impact the political world, such as how radical Islamic movements, are connected to the politics and political change within a country. This methodology used sources, including news articles, academic research, and policy documents. This approach allows for identification patterns and trends in the ideological and strategic orientations of these movements, offering insights into their impact on regional stability and governance, through a religio-political lens.

This study aimed to contribute to a far deeper understanding of the interactions between religion, politics, and conflict within Africa. This has the potential to inform policy measures and interventions aimed at countering radicalisation and creating peace throughout these affected regions.

These groups effectively use religious rhetoric to create a sense of duty and urgency, portraying jihad as a personal and communal obligation. They combine this with material incentives such as education, employment opportunities, and social support for them to appeal to vulnerable individuals. This multifaceted approach helps them maintain and expand their membership despite significant opposition from security forces and societal institutions.

Radicalisation involves several stages, from personal grievances and socio-

economic frustrations to ideological indoctrination and recruitment. Using religious texts and interpretations in recruitment is not limited to abstract concepts, it is actively integrated into the daily lives and experiences of potential recruits.

Chapter 2 evaluated how religious texts, and their interpretations have significantly influenced the ideologies of radical Islamic movements in Africa. This evaluation proved that radical Islamist groups often exploit and distort religious teachings to rationalise and legitimise their extreme ideologies and violent actions, all in favour of their gain.

Religious verses from the Quran served as a foundational framework for these radical movements, proving these texts are not merely spiritual guides but are repurposed to justify and expand on the ideologies of these groups. The way radical groups interpret and utilise these texts is crucial to understanding their motivations and actions. Ali Shariati's (1993) perspective provides a multifaceted role of religion and shows it can act as a force for societal mobilisation and transformation and a tool for oppression and violence, depending on how it is used and interpreted.

By examining verses from the Quran, we are able to see how they tend to outline a more defensive and regulated approach to conflict, emphasising balance and control. Islamic radical groups selectively interpret these texts to justify their approach and acts of violence, as evidenced by their interpretation of specific verses. Extremists often exploit verses such as "sword verses" to legitimise their actions, despite interpretations conflicting with the Quran's broader ethical teachings on justice and peace. This selective use of religious texts creates a "theology of hate" that distorts the true message of Islam, contributing to a narrative of aggression and intolerance.

The concept of legitimacy is crucial to understanding the motivations and goals of radical Islamic groups. These groups challenge conventional ideas of legitimacy, based on established political institutions and international norms. They create their frameworks of authority, often invoking historical symbols like the caliphate or the Mahdi to justify their actions. This reinterpretation of legitimacy is not a

theoretical exercise but has tangible implications for their strategies and operations. By positioning themselves as the rightful bearers of religious authority, these groups seek to validate their violent actions and recruit followers.

Radicalisation involves several stages, from personal grievances and socio-economic frustrations to ideological indoctrination and recruitment. Using religious texts and interpretations in recruitment is not limited to abstract concepts but is actively integrated into the daily experiences of potential recruits.

Chapter 3 examined the political objectives and goals of Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, three of the largest and most influential radical Islamic movements operating in Africa. The origins, historical context, and ideological motivations of each group highlight the complexity of their ambitions and the wide-ranging impacts of their activities.

This chapter examined Boko Haram, identifying its primary goal as establishing an Islamic state governed by strict Sharia law. It analysed Al-Qaeda, concluding their global jihadist agenda, and their aim to expel Western influences from Muslim-majority countries by overthrowing regimes they deem apostate and establishing a global Islamic caliphate. Finally, it explored Al-Shabaab, based in Somalia, which shares the goal of establishing an Islamic state, but with a more regional focus, primarily targeting the Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab aims to create an Islamic state within Somalia and extend its influence across the Horn of Africa. The group enforces a draconian version of Sharia law in controlled territories and demonstrates a strong anti-Western stance. While acknowledging that its immediate goals are region-specific, Al-Shabaab maintains strategic ties with Al-Qaeda, reflecting broader ambitions for regional dominance.

These three groups have distinct strategic priorities specific to the regions in which they operate and the unique objectives they seek to achieve. Their contrasting approaches to governance, recruitment, and funding reveal the complex and diverse nature of the global jihadist movement. For example, while Boko Haram focuses on establishing an Islamic state governed by strict Sharia law in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Al-Qaeda pursues a broader global jihadist agenda

aimed at expelling Western influence from Muslim-majority regions and establishing a global caliphate, and Al-Shabaab focuses regionally, seeking to impose its version of Islamic governance in Somalia and extend its influence throughout the Horn of Africa.

These differing strategic goals shape their operational tactics and methods of engagement with local populations. Boko Haram, for instance, relies heavily on terror and coercion to control territory and recruit members, often exploiting socio-economic grievances to bolster its ranks. In contrast, Al-Qaeda emphasises a strategic narrative that combines political and religious motivations, seeking to appeal to a broader base of support across multiple countries. Al-Shabaab, while similarly using violence and coercion, also employs a sophisticated propaganda network and provides basic social services in some areas under its control to gain local legitimacy and support.

Chapter 4 examined the societal and regional impacts of extremist organisations, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab are profound and far-reaching. Boko Haram's insurgency has become a major humanitarian crisis in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria and neighbouring regions, displacing millions and disrupting the local economies while undermining both its governance and its social cohesion. Al-Qaeda's actions across North Africa have destabilised countries like Algeria and Mali, contributing to broader geopolitical instability and affecting international relations.

Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda all have distinct strategic priorities specific according to the regions in which they operate and the unique objectives they seek to achieve. Their contrasting approaches to governance, recruitment, and funding reveal the complex and diverse nature of the global jihadist movement. For example, while Boko Haram focuses on establishing an Islamic state governed by strict Sharia law in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Al-Qaeda pursues a broader global jihadist agenda aimed at expelling Western influence from Muslim-majority regions and establishing a global caliphate, and Al-Shabaab focuses regionally, seeking to impose its version of Islamic governance in Somalia and extend its influence throughout the Horn of Africa.

The strategic goals of these three groups are all different and are vital in shaping their operational tactics and methods of engagement with their local populations. For example, when we look at Boko Haram, we can see that they rely heavily on terror and coercion as a method for them to control territory and recruit more members by making use of socio-economic grievances to bolster their ranks. In contrast, Al-Qaeda emphasises a different strategy that combines political and religious motivations, seeking to appeal to a broader base of support across multiple countries. Al-Shabaab, while similarly using violence and coercion, also makes use of sophisticated propaganda networks and provides basic social services in some areas under their control to gain local legitimacy and support.

This diversity in strategies, objectives, and operational methods reflects the adaptive and context-specific nature of the global jihadist movement, making it a complex and multifaceted threat that requires nuanced and regionally tailored responses.

Their presence in these regions has weakened the governance structures, disrupting their economies and major social divisions. This chapter looked at a list of attacks that each movement has carried out. From the attacks that have been listed, these groups have inflicted large amounts of violence in the areas they are active, creating a massive humanitarian problem, and inflicting fear and uncertainty on the civilians that reside in these areas.

The chapter looked at a detailed list of attacks carried out by each movement, showing the extreme and often devastating impact of their activities. These violent campaigns have included bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and armed assaults, targeting not only military and governmental institutions but also civilians, schools, markets, and places of worship. Such indiscriminate violence has led to a massive humanitarian crisis in the affected regions, with millions of people displaced from their homes, and struggling to access necessities, such as food, clean water, and medical care.

The violence that these groups have carried out has created a deep sense of fear and insecurity amongst the local populations and has profound psychological and

social consequences, where entire communities have been uprooted, with families forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in overcrowded camps or across borders, thus creating a complex and prolonged refugee crisis. This displacement has disrupted traditional livelihoods and social networks, further exacerbating poverty and social fragmentation.

Communities are left traumatised and distrustful, complicating efforts to rebuild social cohesion and establish long-term stability. These extremist movements have also divided societies, often aggravating the existing ethnic, religious, and political tensions. These violent acts have not only inflicted physical harm but have also created psychological damage in these regions for the civilians that reside within and around them.

This dissertation explored the three Islamic radical movements, from looking at their origins, all the way through to the impact they have had on societies and regions in the modern day. By using a religio-political lens in this dissertation, we have found that the use of religion has a strong impact on how these groups operate and the strategies they use to recruit new members and gain the support of the locals. Sanam Vaghefi states that (Vaghefi, 2023:1):

Politics and religion are two social phenomena that are both related to value systems and power relationships. While religion shapes one's value systems by setting moral rules and regulations, politics shapes individuals' rights and obligations. While the connection between politics and religion can be direct or indirect depending on the political system of a country, the connection always exists since both religious beliefs and political affiliations shape one's power in a community and society.

Islamic radical movements in Africa, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, demonstrate the powerful interplay between religion and politics. These groups use religious ideology to shape moral values and justify their actions, framing their violent campaigns as religious obligations. By doing so, they seek to gain legitimacy and mobilise support within their communities. Politically, these movements challenge state authority and aim to reshape political power structures by establishing Islamic states governed by their strict interpretations of Sharia law. Their activities reflect how religious beliefs, and

political goals can gain power and influence in society. The complex relationship between religion and politics allows these groups to exploit socio-political grievances, attract followers, destabilise regions, and reshape the socio-political landscape in Africa through violent and ideological means.

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