



A World of Terror: An Intra-Faith Dialogue Crisis

Badru Hasan Segujja

Zanzibar University, Kampala International University

Editor's Note:

Certain aspects of this essay are not definitive, but they serve as didactics for us to ponder and for those interested to continue the investigation.

Abstract

This study about *a world of terror* and *intra-faith dialogue crisis* investigates the impact of modern religious terrorism and establishes how intra-faith dialogue can be employed in managing this crisis before a political solution could be explored. The study identifies many terrorist groups formed under the umbrella of freedom fighters that escalate violence, causing innocent religious followers to become victims of circumstances. The study also discovers that, in a number of faith-based organizations, little or no efforts have been put in place to conduct dialogue concerning contentious issues that drive certain religious groups to embrace terrorism driven activities. In many cases the religious role of bridging gaps between human beings has been turned upside-down as some faith-based leaders are at the forefront in fueling violence in the name of religion. The study concludes that the level at which terrorism is justified in the name of religion is alarming. Boko Haram in northern Nigeria and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army from northern Uganda to the Great Lakes region of Africa are known examples. Faith-based organizations are therefore encouraged to stand up in favor of peace by facilitating intra-faith dialogue. The study recommends that, since terrorist acts are committed by a few individuals with selfish interests, the entire community members should not be criminalized. The world of terror can be transformed into a world of peace through dialogue. Intra-faith transformation provides an indispensable foundation on which interfaith dialogue and transformation could be achieved.

Keywords: state, violence, conflict, Islam, Christianity, religious leaders, negotiation

Introduction

Religion is a synthesis of beliefs and practices with a guiding body of literature (or oral tradition), places of worship, doctrine, and leaders. Religion plays a pivotal role in constructing individuals' spiritual awareness and social values from which a society can work toward peaceful co-existence. In addition to the social harmony promoted through religion, state actors often employ coercive pressure in order to promote stability. The effects of this state coercion are evident in some nations like Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and South Sudan. Instead of stability, these states are experiencing internal violence and crippling damage. Used alongside secular security functions, religious engagement and leadership can amplify harmony and values-based cooperation, resulting in a more holistic religious and secular stability within a state. Cultural and religious leaders understand that harmony and peaceful co-existence are possible where religious values are adhered to through embracing a spiritual doctrine of peace, forgiveness, and love for one another.

Even with the violence of the past, a peaceful future is possible in many troubled nations. Yet one question remains: who is to take over responsibility for implementing a successful peace process where the state is the source of instability, terrorizing its own people? Iraq experienced this problem during the 1980s when hundreds of thousands of men, women and children associated with a Sunni political movement suffered imprisonment, torture, chemical weapons attacks, and mass execution at the hands of the Saddam Hussein's regime (Roukes, 2006). As seen in Iraq, when religious institutions fail to speak out in opposition to political coercion that runs counter to social peace and cooperative stability, the likelihood of internally-directed state violence may increase.

In addition to providing a necessary counterbalance to state-sponsored internal violence, religious institutions, through cross-cutting social values and cooperative messages, can play a key role in countering terrorism within and across state borders, especially when terrorist organizations claim a religious justification for their violent actions. When, as happened in Iraq, religious institutions remain silent in the face of state-sponsored or terrorist violence, religious leaders must engage in a frank dialogue to confirm the critical role of their institutions in promoting peace and stability. Often, this effort comes in the form of inter-faith dialogue whereby religious leaders address the points of contention and cooperation among religions in conflict. This intra-faith effort is often seen among institutions of the Abrahamic religions (Gopin, 2002). In cases where terrorist groups are claiming religious legitimacy for their violence, however, religious institutions must conduct intra-faith dialogue to reclaim the fundamental values of their faith, after which inter-faith dialogues will be more effective in producing workable solutions to counter terrorism. Intra-faith effort is necessary in the context of domestic terror groups hiding under the umbrella of religious freedom fighters. Conventional wisdom reminds us that it is not easy to respond to the neighbors' call to stop fire when your house is burning at the same time.

Problem Statement

The world has become a permanent home for terrorists who claim they are fighting for freedom in the name of religion. While many of these groups are dedicated to liberating the oppressed or reclaiming fundamental social values, they too often perpetuate (or at least convey the image of) religious violence, of which their own innocent followers, communities, and even states are often victims. In these cases,

servants of terror have co-opted the message of faith while driving religion towards the ever-escalating violence. In many cases, this happens with the total silence of the faith-based institutional leaders who concentrate on resolving external conflicts and forget the internal violence within their area of control. This can create a long-term crisis within a society and relinquish the responsibility for conflict resolution in the hands of external stakeholders or secular leaders who may not embrace the cooperative power of religious messaging in their attempt to force peace. By focusing on inter-faith issues at the expense of intra-faith issues, religious leaders risk excluding themselves from the pursuit of peace in the communities and societies where they serve. Such an exclusion can have disastrous and violent consequences.

Religious leaders and institutions have assumed the role of promoting cohesion, fellowship, and peaceful co-existence within and among societies. As an extension of this social role, Faith-Based Organizations (to be abbreviated as FBOs in this paper) are naturally more inclined to providing safe homes and hospitable centers for conflict negotiation, mediation, and arbitration for both perpetrators and victims in the pursuit of reconciliation and peace. However, the vast number of terrorist groups claiming religious foundations, coupled with the speed at which religious armed conflicts escalate among religious organizations, complicates the degree to which FBOs play active roles. Instead, FBOs are too often relegated to the role of observer, cataloguing religious conflict and focusing on reactive efforts to mitigate suffering. High risk of violence and sometimes direct threats often impede FBO effectiveness in intervening to prevent or stop violence once it starts.

The decreasing effectiveness of religious institutions in responding to violent conflict creates a large gap between religious and political efforts to secure peace and stability. As a result of this gap, coercive state security and stability measures have produced millions of refugees whose return to their ancestral homes is next to impossible. As terrorist violence increases in response to state coercion, people are too traumatized to speak out, or even reach-out to their neighbors in acts of fellowship and community, especially when the perpetrators of violence have power over the victims and at times occupy political offices. This paper, therefore, investigates the impact of modern religious terrorism on the ability or inability of religious institutions to play a proactive role in intervening and ending violent conflict alongside secular state institutions, and further explores the role of intra-faith dialogue in managing the dialogue crisis within religious institutions and setting the conditions for these institutions to counter terrorist violence that hides behind religious messaging.

Methodology

This study employs descriptive and qualitative research methods. Descriptive methods provide information on characteristics of particular individuals or groups, their contextual situation, and their methods of operation (Dulock, 1993). Qualitative research draws conclusions from data not in the form of numbers, but in words (Punch, 1998; Wangusa, 2007; Amin, 2005). To this end, the study focuses primarily on in-depth interviews and group discussions. When primary sources were not possible due to lack of access to data or security constraints, the study utilized secondary data sources. The author interviewed a number of people from areas experiencing faith-based armed conflicts who were interested in providing information. Some key subjects at one time worked in security organizations, were eye witnesses, or were employees and/or volunteers in international organizations providing humanitarian services in areas experiencing religious conflict. These sources made it possible to collect information

from some countries, including Kenya and Somalia where Al-Shabab has been active, Uganda's western and northern districts impacted by the Allied Democratic Forces, Lord's Resistance Army, West Nile Bank Front, and Nigeria where Boko Haram is an active sectarian group. Data on Seleke and Anti-Balaka rebels in Central African Republic, Southern Sudan, Mali, Syria, and the ISIS/Al-Qaida dominated regions come from secondary sources.

To some extent, FBOs were also given special opportunities to participate in this study through interviews in order to expand the religious perspectives on these conflicts (Cauvery, Nayak, Girija, and Meenakshi, 2000). Religious leaders from Christianity and Islam presented a variety of views and increased the level of detail in understanding the issues examined in this study.

To avoid bias, the study employs an inter-disciplinary approach. Respondents were selected based on their social status, commitment to faith, maturity, and experience in problem solving. Christian and Muslim volunteers helped to identify and vet study participants. As a result, the research study discovered exhaustive information that provides a clear background to the study of terrorism, its causes, impact, and challenges to faith-based organizations, as well as points to the way forward.

Theoretical Perspective

Religious institutions (including FBOs) have a role to play in a broader state effort to counter international and domestic violent terrorism. These institutions can reinforce larger efforts in terms of negotiation, mediation, and arbitration where religious skills can be employed hand in hand with political solutions. This study was guided by Campbell's modern realist theory (Campbell, 1960) which asserts that intergroup conflicts can arise due to competing goals and limited resources. Modern realist theory also offers an explanation for the feelings of prejudice and discrimination towards the out-group that accompany intergroup hostility, and finally calls for diversity of conflict mitigating efforts. This theoretical call for diversity asserts that international law, morality, and international organizations, rather than state power alone can influence international relations and work together to overcome communal problems.

Campbell's theory emphasizes that leaders must adopt moral standards different from those of an individual in order to ensure peace, especially in cases of conflict over limited resources. This is important with regard to the way leaders at all levels require the capacity to deal with disputes internal to their institution(s) in order to reduce expenses and stress of mitigating broader disputes after they have escalated. However, the modern realist theory requires political environments where secular leaders can create opportunities for religious leaders to participate in solutions to political matters.

Literature Review

To guide the application of descriptive and qualitative research findings, this study also draws from published secular and religious sources covering several topic areas.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

While the international community monitors acts of violence around the world, relatively little effort has been made to encourage the top leadership of FBOs to forgive perpetrators of violent terrorism within their institutions. Forgiveness is one of the most common components shared by religions around the world. In Judaism, forgiveness is both a religious and moral value. The Qur-an talks about forgiveness in a number of areas: Al-baqarah, 2:157, 163, 173, 175, 178, 182, 192, 199, 218, 225, 226, 235, 263, 268, 271, 284., & Al-nisaa'I, 4:99, 149, and so many other areas of the Qur-an. In a similar vein, the Bible stresses forgiveness in the following verses: Revelation 2:15; Mathew 5:22-24, 6:15, 7:12; and John 20: 23-25.

Forgiveness is a complex factor in addressing conflict. In some cases, forgiveness has supported solutions to end violence in a number of countries. In other cases, however, efforts to promote forgiveness have created disaster. In the case of the Republic of Rwanda, the Tutsis had historically suffered at the hands of the Hutus from 1959, culminating in the cataclysmic genocide of 1994. Post-genocide reconciliation efforts sponsored by religions institutions and FBOs lacked effectiveness due to the inherent use of churches and religious institutions by Hutu genocidaires in organizing and carrying out the genocide. Faith-guided principles of forgiveness failed in Rwanda due to lack of trust.

In some post-conflict contexts, people are leaving peacefully together in spite of unresolved issues stemming from the conflict (Johnson, 2000); while in other areas, institutionalized efforts at reconciliation have produced positive results. In South Africa, for example, whites reconciled with the blacks and now live in comparative peace and stability. Reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa provides a potential model for other states to follow. However, what about cases involving terrorism? It has become more common to see marginalized populations and/or organizations resort to terrorism in the pursuit of political, religious, social, economic, and cultural objectives. Religious institutions should try to understand how this increasing likelihood of violent terrorism and/or intimidation impacts the potential for efforts at forgiveness and reconciliation in transforming conflict to stability and peace. Religious leaders must understand that silence in the face of internal religious terrorism erodes the foundations of religious institutions' ability to promote healing and peace.

Delay of Justice

Although justice plays a vital role in conflict management processes (Lyons, 2009), peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms can lead to peace. These have not yet been well implemented within the intra-faith communities. In the event that intra-religious dialogue, mediation, arbitration, and litigation are not given room to exist, the conflicting parties will fail to move towards a common goal. Instead, they will retreat further into the social isolation contexts from which they terrorize (often their own) communities.

Failure to realize opportunities for dialogue can delay or deny justice. Lack of institutional justice provides a vacuum into which interested parties may insert other mechanisms to seek relief. Often these mechanisms can be violent. In many cases where a judicial authority is absent, communities present their grievances to ethnic leaders for solutions, which may develop or strengthen ethnic hatred. Religious leaders and/or institutions may play a key role in addressing denied or delayed justice in cases where a state's justice mechanism is absent (UNDP, 2009).

The international community also has a potential role to play in mitigating delayed or denied justice through diplomatic missions and good offices to make sure that terrorist acts all over the world are managed through peaceful means, thereby avoiding loss of innocent lives. This role requires goodwill from all stakeholders including faith-based organizations. International involvement could also address the issue of safe havens in conflict areas such as between India and Jammu Kashmir or Israel and Palestine where terrorist organizations can grow and thrive.

State Resources and Terrorism

In some contexts, a state's development is tied to the equitable distribution of revenue from extracted natural resources. It is therefore very important to say that revenue from resources in certain nations have also given birth to a number of terrorist activities around the world. In most cases, this comes as a result of inequitable distribution of revenues in support of development programs, and people end up suffering in poverty (Shrivastava and Mirof, 2017). A case in point is that of West African countries and the Great Lakes region where terrorists compete aggressively for natural resources, as opposed to nations such as South Africa and Botswana where economic policies support sustainable development and revenue distribution. Governments, therefore, need to develop economic policies that manage the distribution of state resources in such a manner that reduces violence and denies terrorist organizations the ability to use resource inequity as a recruiting tool.

Faith-Based Terrorism vs. World Peace

Messengers of God traditionally called people towards a right course. In some situations where the actions of some rulers and people perhaps threatened violence against innocent populations, prophets invited powerful leaders and their people to the faiths. As an apostle, Paul wrote to the Romans, Colossians, Galatians, and Philippians. Also, the prophet Muhammad wrote letters to the kings of Egypt (Jurayj bin Mat'ta-Muqawqis), Rome (Har'qal-Qaysar), Ethiopia (As'hamat bin Al-Abjar), Yemen (Hudha), Oman (Jayfar Abd Inay Al'julandiy), Syria (Al'harith bin Abi Shamr), Bahrayn (Al'mundhir bin Saawi), and Italy (Sha hansha'a-Kisraa) (Swafiyu, 2013).

The laws presented by the prophets differed from one another. The laws of prophet Easa (Jesus) are different from those of prophet Moosa (Moses) in some respects. Similarly, the laws of the last prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are different from the laws of Moosa (Moses) and Easa (Jesus) (Al-Ashqar, 2005). This is further testified in the Holy Qur-an: "...To each among you, we have prescribed a law and a clear way..." (Qur-an 5:48). These differences may be seen in contemporary religious conflict. Muslims express dissatisfaction with inequitable treatment and injustice in Christian dominated nations. Christians do the same in Muslim majority countries. Absurdly, members of the same religion also take up arms to fight their fellow brothers internally, though with no justifiable reason other than radicalism. Yet, the Almighty emphasizes peace amongst his servants and that violence against others should be avoided (Holy Qur-an Albaqara 2, Yunus: 10).

This trend of intra-religious violence has been increasingly evident since the end of world war two, when the world started experiencing intra-religious misunderstandings that spill over to violent religious conflicts, in many cases with little understanding of the root causes of the conflict. Within this

context of national and sub-national religious conflict, asymmetrical techniques used by terrorists run directly counter to the message of the prophets, increasing the breadth and depth of the divisions and trauma among and between states, religions, communities, and individuals.

With extreme violence and crimes ranging from permanent displacement of people, abduction and training of young children into the armed insurgencies, and suicide activities, the terrorists' goals and methods cannot be accepted by any Abrahamic faith. Violent acts by radical religious groups have greatly affected the infrastructures in many nations and communities where they operate. Damages caused by terrorism are very difficult and costly to repair, demonstrating the danger that juxtaposing religious ideology and violent extremism carries for any state or community.

In the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's Goma province, the Hema fought the Lendu. Despite the fact that the majority of these two tribes were Protestants and the church was well-informed, people developed hatred along religious lines. Similarly, in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, acts of terrorism were committed in the places of prayer in Kibeho and Kibungo provinces where the faith-based leaders were very influential in supporting and coordinating the genocide. Many of these leaders remain in positions of authority today. Accordingly, some survivors find themselves depending on those who murdered their families. This poses significant challenges to reconciliation because people cannot forget what happened to them despite the social reconstruction initiatives undertaken by the government (Clark and Kaufman, 2008).

It is therefore clear that intra-religious people must endeavor to create unity among themselves through religious teachings, thus creating a future generation free from terrorism. This endeavor must include the support of secular leaders and institutions in order to create lasting change. In most cases this has not been possible especially in countries where the rule of law is not given a chance to prevail. In addition to the absence of secular support for religious efforts for reconciliation and stability, religion has been excluded from peace efforts which have, in turn, given terrorist organizations an opportunity to utilize religion to expand and consolidate influence.

Discussion of Findings

The study identified many terrorist groups in the world that are based on religion and are strongly supported by the total silence of their respective faith leaders. These have created a negative image of the role religion plays in local, regional, intra-state, and inter-state conflict.

The Impact of Terror Acts

The presence of so many terrorist groups in the world has increased religious marginalization, unemployment and poverty among the youths; yet there are fruitful jobs and resources in several nations. The youths in terrorist zones are among the worlds' least privileged, most unhappy, and poorest communities. Residents of these communities are often inaccurately assumed to be actively or passively complicit in terrorist activity and are often unjustly targeted by the authorities. This situation is a vicious circle that promotes the hopelessness and despair that support the expansion of terrorist organizations.

In the world today, many religious institutions accuse one another of backing terrorism-related violence. As the killings intensify, hundreds of thousands of people are made physically disabled beyond

repair. Basic human needs such as social centers, transport, and shelter are terrifically diminished; and academic institutions are forced to close as children become targets. Economic activities come to a standstill for a good number of years while looting is also the order of the day. These acts of terror put everyone including humanitarian workers in a catastrophic situation. It is difficult to identify the culprits, their intentions, and the next possible attacks.

A significant number of people die daily as a direct or indirect result of violence caused by terror acts. This makes it a silent world war because of the intervention of religion on one side and secular governments on the other. It is difficult to know whether religion is in support or against the wars that are fought under its name. As a result, the world appears to be a worst place for human beings to stay (Segujja, 2016). This therefore calls for the need to create a terrorist free generation - a generation free from terrorism crimes and crimes against humanity dominating the society's cultural, political, social, economic and other aspects of life. On the other side, the states will not blame societies for collaborating with terrorism. This is because terrorist activities are a result of dissatisfaction in the social, economic, religious and political services.

The international community has not been able to exercise its role in preventing the transfer of arms and training of terrorists. In most cases, those who are trained are minors.

It is also important to mention that the degree to which states engage in and support inter-faith dialogue is quite high as compared to their participation in intra-faith dialogue. Creating a balanced intra-faith dialogue on pertinent issues regarding human security has become an issue left to, if anyone, non-stakeholders from the international community. By leaving this function to an uninterested outsider, states are failing to support their own economic interests as tied to the conflict while at the same time compromising the effectiveness of religious leaders and institutions in addressing the religious roots of certain terrorist activities and applying religious doctrine to counter these activities.

In support of states' efforts to counter terrorism and promote peace and stability, FBOs can work together to develop guidelines on how intra-faith dialogue can advance collective security, arbitration treaties, disarmament conventions, and the growth of democracy. Religious organizations are an important partner in any coalition against aggression, and they recognize the role of economic and social development if accompanied by the good will of good governance. The degree to which a government supports intra-faith dialogue will influence the efforts made in peacebuilding and achieving stability and may determine the state of the nation that the future generation will inherit. All too often, though, secular leaders exclude religious leaders until it is too late for the latter to influence the factors of inequity and disharmony that lead to increased instability, conflict, and terrorist violence.

In some isolated cases, states have implemented initiatives within faith-based schools right from the lowest levels to teach tolerance, respect, democratic values and patriotism in conjunction with academic programs. Unfortunately, the lack of evaluation and reinforcement often lead to students leaving these lessons behind. Also, nobody monitors whether and how these pedagogical initiatives will be practiced. Education officials could design peace education curricula incorporating resources such as peace-related programs, conflict resolution, and violence prevention. This would increase popular knowledge and competence in ways of conflict resolution and peacebuilding without violence (Veeraphadrappa, 2007). Such programs thrive in liberal democracies, but often fail in undemocratic states, where they are most needed.

International Response to Terrorist Activities

It is worth noting that in the wake of World War II, the international community paid little or no attention to the issue of terrorism. Institutional leaders in government and the private sector focused on building and strengthening relations and improving development. By focusing primarily on growth, the international community ignored the potential for groups marginalized by modernization and development to organize asymmetrical violent responses to perceived inequity and threats to cultural identity (fundamentalism). This unrealized danger in the wake of global conflict allowed martial competence and military techniques to spread from former combatants into marginalized violent organizations (terrorists) determined to fight under the umbrella of faith. The disastrous effects of this transfer of martial capability was evident in Rwanda and DRC's genocide, characterized by rape, defilement and other types of violence that are described as the worst in the world.

Today, nations and faiths need a holistic long-term plan that goes far beyond military and security concerns to address terrorism. The sources, types, and actors of terror for which the military has to plan for have become less predictable and the environments in which they must operate have become more chaotic and complex. Today's asymmetric conflict zones are far more deadly than any seen before and require significant investment in manpower and treasure to address the asymmetrical threat of terrorism. This growing threat of terror is felt keenly by societies across the world in ever-increasing numbers, and countering that threat requires a society-wide effort that transcends military and security considerations. Religious institutions must play a key role in this holistic approach, but must first address their own internal issues posed by faith-based terrorism. Thus, these future problems urgently require religious leaders to invest in intra-faith dialogues aimed at removing their religions from the toolkit of the terrorist.

The nature of security requirements changes based on military constraints (Zalmay, 1998). The more a state invests in military infrastructure, the more limited that state becomes in applying non-military solutions to reduce the threat of terrorism. Zalmay (1998) proposes that the key security concern for a country is not military preparedness, but the degree to which it is prepared to keep and maintain peace and security among its people and its closest neighbors. Commitment to maintaining regional stability highlights the importance of avoiding unnecessary wars and re-investing excess military spending in peacebuilding mechanisms and other war preventive means. Committing resources to support intra-faith and inter-faith organizations and dialogue efforts can produce a solid return-on-investment with regard to maintaining regional stability within and among religious populations.

Towards a Terror Free World

Limiting the effort to reduce the threat of terrorism to military capabilities creates a global paradigm that validates terrorists' reliance on asymmetric violence. Similarly, any state facing an asymmetric military threat will characterize that threat as terrorism, creating a self-sustaining cycle of violence. There are a number of ways through which states can meet human needs without violence. Governments can guarantee the rights of people, thereby empowering individuals to challenge all cases that lead to terrorism, including ethnic discrimination, religious radicalism, and political enslavement. With the power of public opinion released to support counter terror efforts, states have more nonviolent tools at their disposal to reduce the risk of violence through religious terrorism and ethnic cleansing. In the absence of an overwhelming military response and, more importantly, overwhelming military investment on the part of the state, the asymmetric violence of the terrorist model loses much of its

potential to affect change in the behavior of the state. Thus, an empowered and engaged population is a key element in the reduction process of the threat of terrorism.

In order to create a terror free world, regional stakeholders, including politicians, religious leaders, and local and traditional leaders, need to come together to work for the betterment of their nations rather than individual interests. Countering terrorism requires the applications of all instruments of power. An important factor in gathering and employing such state-wide power comes from collective networking and religious support. Once religious institutions have de-coupled their message from that of terrorists through intra-religious dialogue, religious leaders can mobilize their faithful to conduct inter-faith dialogues. These dialogues provide a valuable mechanism that supports a state's anti-terror efforts through a permanent and constant process to reduce misunderstanding and promote mutual understanding among regional religious traditions. Unlike the more rigid, result-focused diplomatic efforts of the state, this process of religious dialogue is fluid and mutable, with efforts surging and ebbing as necessary to improve understanding. This process can help inform a world-wide effort to develop a clear road-map to peacebuilding. The mutual understanding promoted by this process can increase the level of tolerance around the world in such a way that people can close their eyes to the imperfections of others, respect others' ideas, and forgive everything that is forgivable (Gulen, 2011).

A World of Firearms: A Great Terrorist Motivator

The global availability of firearms presents a threat to developing an empowered and engaged population. Most states are militarized and spend disproportionately more of their budgets on defense as opposed to education and health. This imbalance demonstrates that states are aware of and primarily concerned with the threat of armed conflict from its neighbors or within itself (Segujja, 2012). This focus on arms drives a massive global market in weapon manufacturing and trade. While the African continent has never participated in the field of arms manufacturing, a number of countries have arms that are acquired by civilians who could bear arms in support of goals ranging from political, to economic, to religious given the opportunity.

According to the African demilitarization conference of Arusha held late July 1998, it was observed that every year, millions of automatic assault rifles and small weapons are written off as lost or destroyed by manufacturers and dealers in eastern and western Europe, only to re-emerge in the African conflict zones due to high demand and low production cost. An AK-47 type of rifle costs only \$200-\$250 apiece when purchased in large quantities from international weapons dealers. Further, in some parts of Africa, like southern Sudan and Karamoja which is located in north eastern Uganda, an AK-47 can be traded for a chicken or a bag of maize depending on the demand and the season of transaction.

Global Terrorism and Post-Election Violence

Terrorism during elections present another threat to an empowered and engaged population. At times, the parties in the elections end up terrorizing their opposition or rivals, often without any accountability for their actions. This sort of partisan violence marred the 2007 Kenyan presidential election when the electoral commission declared the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, the winner in a very

close race. Violence started in Kenya in a number of religious institutions from the day the president was announced, as if this was part of the agenda of elections. It took the United Nations close to a month to establish power sharing negotiations in Kenya following the violence and almost 3 years for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue indictments to those accused of initiating violence and murder following the election.

Global Anti-Terrorist Movements

As leaders around the world explore and invest in military solutions to the problem of terror, they will do well to pursue non-military options just as vigorously. Efforts supporting reconciliation may yield less tangible results at first, but in the long run non-military solutions support lasting change instead of protracted conflict. We need to change our attitude from zero tolerance to reconciliation as the situation was before 9/11. We have the capacity to teach our people how to live in the world instead of occupying or conquering it (Mamdan, 2004).

The message of Christ is one of peace. The world has a large number of soldiers of Christ who strive to maintain the nonviolent philosophies of Jesus. In doing so, they, like Christ, lead by example; refusing to give burdens on others they would never carry themselves (Harr and Herr, 1998). We make our voices sound bold and clear, creating a church message in the Mosque and a Mosque message in the church. Muhammad (pbuh), like Jesus (as), was never violent, even in the face of violence. Their messages all encouraged peace, and it is our generation that has encouraged its absence. It is upon this background that our message to the world should call for the intra-faith peace before we come for inter-faith dialogue. If religious leaders can set their own houses in order by denying sanctuary to violent philosophies, then the next step would be working together between faiths to find common understanding and cooperative coexistence.

Terrorism and Politics in Africa

On the African continent, the term terrorism has become a socially acceptable term that is always spoken about without fear. To some extent, acts of terror are becoming such a commonplace and an integral part of life that people are inured to the point of complacency and resignation. This familiarity with terrorism leads people to abandon hope of improvement.

In Kenya, some people reported the details of their torture during the 2007 election and, in coordination with certain human rights activists, challenged the government to address election violence. The ICC prosecutor, Luis Morino Ocampo, confirmed that all the terror attacks occurred in a uniform and coordinated fashion among perpetrators targeting civilians who supported Orange Democratic Movement (ODM).

Such violence can escalate quickly, especially in the case of retaliation when people feel that their ethnic values are under attack. According to a member of the national Security Council, the likelihood and severity of violence increases significantly in this environment.

However, even with the gravity of such terrorist offenses, justice is elusive, and suspects are most likely to walk free from their cells because it is difficult to get evidence. Corruption and lack of justice encourage other actors to engage in continued violence, often with help from authorities, and can put the goal of reconciliation out of reach.

When Faith-Based Leaders Become Terrorists

As a result of the soft touch sometimes given to terrorist criminals due to lack of evidence, people have opted to train for terrorism with the view that, they can use minimum means and create a bigger impact in their efforts to achieve their goals. This situation has been repeated for so many times in different countries, but with minimum response from the religious institutions where terrorists originate.

As a result of silence in the Abrahamic religions, a number of fake cults have risen. The best example is Pastor Joseph Kibwetere who founded his African Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments in 1980 and burned over 1000 of his followers in his church on 17 March 2000. The followers of Kibwetere thought that they were gaining religious and political freedom and ended up in the hands of a religious terrorist under the umbrella of a faith-based leadership.

When Terrorists Become Freedom Fighters and Freedom Fighters Become Terrorists

Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities have all spawned terrorist groups from efforts to defend their interests as marginalized populations, quite often with minimal awareness on the part of community leaders. These types of terrorists include: Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) with Jamil Mukulu (Stephen Kyagulanyi as his name before conversion to Islam) in Uganda who used religion more as a unifying factor than the cultural aspect; The Holy Spirit Movement; Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); The Army of God that was responsible for killing homosexuals in U.S.A (in the 1980s); Eastern Lighting or Church of the Almighty; Ant Balaka group in Central African Republic that practices cannibalism on the Moslem dead bodies; and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army whose political rallying point was religion.

Some Muslim groups and individuals that have been active in the work of terror across the African continent and the world include Al-Qaida that was formed by Abdullah Azam and Usama bin Laden in 1989. This movement has given birth to a number of terrorist groups including: Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (Mali); Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula; ISIS; ISIL (Syria, Iraq and Lebanon); and Alshabab. These are also related with other groups like the Taliban in Afghanistan, Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya, Jamatul Islamiah in Tunisia, Abu Sayaaaf, Ansar Baytu Almaqdis, Hizbul Islami, Hizbu llah in Lebanon, Jayshu Muhammad, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Seleke in Central African Republic, and many others.

In response to the spread of violence caused by terrorists in the name of faiths, and terrorism growing as an international threat to world peace, the United Nations' Security Council passed resolution 2249 in 2015, unanimously adopting measures to reject and prevent terrorism. As a result of terrorist attacks in Sinai Peninsula, Lebanon, France, Turkey, Russian Federation, Tunisia and other states, the resolution declares that those who commit, or are otherwise responsible for terrorist attacks or violations of human rights may be held accountable. This has had the effect of moving some terrorist centers of activity into rural or wilderness areas, which remain fertile safe havens for rebellions and insurgencies that rely on terrorist violence to pursue their goals.

Associating terrorist organizations with a particular faith complicates efforts by religious leaders to deny the same linkage. Terms like, Muslim terrorists, Islamists, religious groups, and even fundamentalists perpetuate the linkage whether or not that association is deliberate on the part of the

terrorist organization. Much as religion is used as an identity marker by organizations such as Alshabab, Boko Haram, ISIS, ADF, LRA, and West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), there is a global need to understand that the majority of the followers of any given faith do not support terrorism in the name of that faith.

Terrorists without Genuine Reasons

In some cases, terrorism seems to lack any rational motivation. One example of this phenomenon is Alice Auma Lakwana, a young Ugandan woman who was said to heal individuals, soldiers, and barren women, and founded the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) in 1986. Her objectives were to wage war against witches and improve soldiers, to which ends she created complex initiation and purification rituals for her followers. Her intent in these rituals was to free the HSMF soldiers from witchcraft and evil spirits. Invoking supernatural powers, Auma promised her armed men protection against the enemy's bullets. If one of her followers was wounded or killed, he or she was assumed to have had a back slide from the state of purity. In these cases, death appeared as a punishment of one's own misdeed (Behrend and Cerry, 1986-1997).

The HSMF prohibited theft, looting, lying, killing, sex, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol. When Alice Auma became possessed by a spirit called Lakwana, she believed that everybody in her occupied territory must believe and abide by the above-mentioned prohibitions.

Auma had grander objectives to purify the world of sins and bring up a new world in which humans and nature would be reconciled. Her HSMF prospered in the chaos following the defeat of the Acholi-dominated Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) at the hands of the National Resistance Army in 1986. When Auma was defeated, her father Severino Lukoya took over the HSMF which afterwards changed into the LRA's bloodiest armed group and Africa's oldest rebel group, fighting without any political agenda other than killing Africans and destabilizing the great lakes region.

The two-decade long war in the northern Uganda also negatively affected the northern Ugandan population. It is therefore true to say that the HSMF, LRA, and ADF which are all in Uganda acted under religious cover and committed all sorts of crimes against their fellow countrymen. The LRA, especially, is accused of committing war crimes and atrocities in four African countries. Since Uganda's independence in 1962, the country has experienced tyranny, violations of human rights, genocide, state terrorism, and civil wars that contributed to internal conflicts as a result of power struggle (Kumar, 1998; Okot, 2012; UNHCHR/UHRC 2007-2011).

It should be noted that the LRA leadership was invited to participate in mediation led by former Mozambique president, Joachem Chissano, and other members from the Sudan and Ugandan government. The LRA representative, Joseph Kony, ignored the invitation and the LRA did not sign the peace agreement. The LRA continues to commit atrocities throughout the region.

As much or more so than political terrorists, religious cults that subscribe to no discernable rational agenda demonstrate the need for religious institutions to sever all connections to terror, whether cultivated or perceived, and pursue internal reconciliation through intra-faith dialogue.

Conclusion

The results of our interviews and examination of secondary sources support the conclusion that the world is continuously producing terrorist groups under the umbrella of religious freedom fighters. These groups destroy communities, damage the environment, and kill indiscriminately. Their victims include innocent children, women, elderly people, and any others as they deem necessary in the name of religion. The connection between religion and terrorism places members of that religion under triple threat from religious terrorists, the government fighting against religious terrorists, and the general population who may persecute religious civilians in an effort to counter religious terror.

Faith-based organizations have for a long time acted swiftly on matters of inter-faith dialogue, while paying very little attention to intra-faith dialogue, thus causing an international crisis within the human society. Worse, in some areas of the world custodians of faith, assisted by political leaders, have betrayed their followers as they take part in fueling intractable conflicts and so end up forcing conflict resolution responsibilities to outside stakeholders who may not support the best interests of any parties of the conflict.

The study also discovered that, given an opportunity, religious institutions are still safe homes for conflict negotiation, mediation, and arbitration for both perpetrators and victims. Religious leaders can utilize these spaces to facilitate intra-faith dialogue and, where possible, encourage forgiveness and reconciliation to manage conflicts before they escalate into terrorism.

Recommendations

As Pope Francis declared in Poland in 2016, terrorism is the product of individuals with selfish interests and should not be attached to any faith. Members of all faiths are all complex individuals leading their lives along the spectrum between virtue and wickedness. Our concern is not to kill the bad; it is rather to try to make them be good as well since they are our children, relatives and neighbors. Our faith can help us all practice to be our best selves.

Terrorism has no military solution as it is conducted in isolation. It is better to join hands together in order to manage it out of our communities through equity and cooperation today and forever.

We should believe that the peoples of the world, all faiths and states and ethnicities can coexist peacefully together. This global cooperation requires political, economic, social, and religious good will and commitment to succeed. Peace and stability are everybody's concern; all individuals, communities, states, and institutions must participate in their safekeeping.

Peace processes fail when negotiated by politicians who lack moral authority to address the grievances of traumatized communities, especially in cases of civil or intra-communal warfare where fighting and killing among family members are possible. Religious leaders should always contribute to policy formulation, United Nations meetings, parliaments, and so on.

Leaders and members of the Abrahamic faiths should engage with one another in dialogue, perhaps facilitated, especially in countries where intractable conflicts are taking place. This dialogue should occur annually or seasonally depending on the subject matter and the magnitude of the problem.

References

- Al-Ashqar, U. S. (2005). *The messengers and the messages in the light of the qur'an and sunnah*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House.
- Al-Mubarkafur, S. R. (2013). *Arrahiiqul makhtoum: A study in the history of the prophet*. Cairo: Dar Al-Ghad Algadeed.
- Amin, M. E. (2005). *Social science research: Conception, methodology and analysis*. Kampala, Uganda: Makerere University Press.
- Behrend, H. (1999). *Alice lakwena and the holy spirit: War in northern uganda*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Boot, M. (2002). *The savage wars of peace: Small wars and the rise of american power*. New York: Basic Books.
- Campbell, D., Realistic conflict theory. (1960). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved May 31, 2017, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realistic_conflict_theory
- Cauvery, R., Nayak, S., Girija, M., & Meenakshi, R. (2000). *Research methodology*. New Delhi: S. Chand and Company limited.
- Dulock, H. L. (1993). Research design: Descriptive research. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 10(4), 154–157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104345429301000406>
- Goldstein, J. S. (2001). *International relations* (4th ed.). Paris: Longman.
- Gopin, M. (2002). *Holy war, holy peace: How religion can bring peace to the middle east*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gulen, F. (2004). *Toward a global civilization of love and tolerance*. New Jersey: The Light, Inc.
- Gurtlerman, A. (2015, January 29). States with most gun deaths have high gun ownership and weak gun laws. *HuffPost*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/29/weak-gun-laws-and-high-gu_n_6572384.html.
- Herr, J. Z., & Herr R. (1998). *Transforming violence: Linking local and global peacemaking*. Harrisonburg: Herald Press.
- Johson, E. A. (2000). *Nazi terror: The gestapo, jews and ordinary germans*. New York: Basic Books.
- Khalilzad, Z., & Lesser, I. O. (1998). *Sources of conflict in the 21st century: Regional futures and US strategy*. Washington DC: RAND.
- Lindberg, S. I. (2006). *Democracy and elections in africa*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Lyons A. (2016, March 14). Restorative justice vs. Conflict resolution: Assessing for intervention [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://justoutcomesconsulting.com/restorative-justice-vs-conflict-resolution-assessing-for-intervention>
- Muhammad Alkhadhar, Samir Ahmad Al-Ataa. (2010). *Noor al-yaqiin: Fi siirati sayyidil mursaleen*. Cairo-Egypt: Darul Hadith.
- Press, R. M. (2006). *Peaceful resistance: Advancing human rights and democratic freedoms*. London: Routledge.
- Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to social research*. London: Sage.
- Rouke, J. T. (2006). *International politics on the world stage* (11th ed.) Columbus: McGraw Hill.
- Rupesinghe, K. (1998). *Conflict resolution in uganda*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Said, M. M. (2004). *Good muslim; bad muslim: America, the cold war and the roots of terror*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Segujja, B. H. (2012). *The impact of Armed conflicts on the great lakes region: A case study of democratic republic of congo (1998-2008)* (Doctoral dissertation, International University of

Africa, Khartoum, Sudan).

- Segujja, B. H. (2016, April). *Faith based organizations and african faith based armed conflicts*. A paper presented at Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution. California State University, Sacramento, U.S.A.
- Shrivastava, P., & Mitroff, I. I. (n.d.). *The ecological roots of terrorism*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University. Retrieved from <https://www.bucknell.edu/news-and-media/op-ed-columns/archives/roots-of-terrorism>
- UNDP. (2009). *Why dialogue matters for conflict prevention and peacebuilding*. Retrieved from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/dialogue_conflict.pdf
- Veeraphadrappa, R. P. (2007). *Teaching of peace and conflict resolution*. New Delhi: Lotus Press.
- Wangusa, T. (2007). *Essentials of research methodology in human and social sciences*. Kampala: Bow and Arrow publishers.