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Civil Society and the Eastern Africa Counterterrorism Agenda: A Critical Account

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Abstract

Terrorism continues to pose serious challenges to states in Eastern Africa. Mutating and elusive repertoires around the vice have proven difficult to muster for many a government in the region and beyond. Lately however, counterterrorism efforts on the part of governments have tended to pit them against civil society organizations. More often than not, the bone of contention has been that governments, on the one hand, have accused a number of civil society actors and/or groups of funding, aiding or otherwise facilitating terror. On the other hand, civil society organizations have launched counter-accusations on the premise that governments have failed to diligently perform their core task of protecting the life, liberty and property of citizens, and have instead chosen to direct their 'frustrations' on the civil society- a state of things which is seen to not only contravene the ethos of democracy but also encourage abuse of human rights. This paper attempts to decipher critical issues in this debate with the aim of addressing pertinent questions concerning the role of the civil society in counter-terrorism in Eastern Africa. Key questions herein include: what is the role of the civil society in counterterrorism? Is it an actor or a mere spectator in this process? How best can it be involved and its role mainstreamed in the region? In the final analysis, the discussion thrushes-out pertinent academic and policy issues in this debate by shedding light on current

challenges and future prospects, before projecting into the future by making recommendations on the same.

Introduction

Over the past two decades or so, acts of international and localized terrorism in Africa and elsewhere in the world have not only caused wanton human suffering but also constituted a direct threat to state survival. Terrorism continues to pose serious challenges to states in Africa. Mutating and elusive repertoires around the vice have proven difficult to muster for many a government in the region. While regional governments, singly or collectively, have continued to enhance their counterterrorism strategies and capabilities, from time to time, serious qualms have emerged concerning the extent to which these processes have contravened and/or fell short of international human rights commitments and expectations on the part of states (Boer, 2008).

More often than not, governments have found themselves on the receiving end in this debate. Accusations and counter-accusations have been traded in various circles over atrocities and/or excesses on the part of governments in their efforts to prevent, contain and punish terror. For the most part however, concerned governments have maintained that human rights platforms have been, more often than not, unduly exploited by civil society actors to the extent of aiding and abetting terror and/or extremist ideologies and, thereby, jeopardizing and further convoluting counterterrorism efforts in the region. Subsequently, counterterrorism efforts on the part of governments have tended to pit them against various civil society organizations (Rosand and Ipe, 2008). Often, the bone of contention has been that governments, on the one hand, have accused a number of civil society actors and/or groups of funding, aiding or otherwise facilitating terror (Bandyopadhyay et al, 2010). On the other hand, civil society organizations have launched counter-accusations against the premise that governments have failed to diligently perform their core task of protecting the life, liberty and property of citizens and instead chosen to direct their ‘frustrations’ on civil society- a move construed to not only contravene the ethos of democracy but also encourage the abuse of human rights (Brysk and Gershon, 2007). This paper attempts to decipher critical issues in this debate with the aim of addressing pertinent questions concerning the role of civil society in counterterrorism. Taking an analytical approach, the paper examines the nuances occasioned by the civil society counterterrorism debate in the Eastern Africa region before proffering pertinent academic and policy recommendations in as far as charting out a “working formula” around the issue is concerned.

Key questions herein include: what is the role of civil society in counterterrorism? Is it an actor or mere spectator in this process? How best can it be involved and its role mainstreamed in the region? In the final analysis, the discussion thrushes-out

pertinent academic and policy issues in this debate by shedding light on the current challenges and future prospects on the same, before projecting into the future by making pertinent recommendations going forward. Be it as it may, the scourge of terrorism on the continent remains real and imminent, one that more than ever before requires pertinent strategic and sustainable solutions that are alive to the realities of globally tenable human rights norms and practices.

Some Theoretical Premises

The issue of how one “civil society” can find a place in another- “counterterrorism” calls for a theoretical explanation. A good starting point in this discourse would be to first define these concepts clearly and examine their theoretical conceptualizations in the literature. According to Edward Shils (1991: 2), “the idea of civil society is about a part of society which has a life of its own which is distinctly different from the state and is largely in autonomy from it. Civil society lies beyond the boundaries of the family and the clan and beyond the locality”. Jean Francois Bayart (1986:105-125) describes civil society as “society in confrontation in so far as its relation with the state is concerned. More precisely, this entails a process by which society seeks to breach and counteract the simultaneous totalization unleashed by the state.”

The idea of civil society has three main components: “One: a part of society comprises a complex of autonomous institutions e.g. religious, economic, intellectual etc. distinguishing from the family, the clan, the locality and the state; Two: a part of society processing a particular complex of relationships between them which safeguard the separation of state and civil society and maintain effective ties between them; and Third: a widespread pattern of refined or civil manners.”

“Civil society is not totally separate from the state. It would not be part of the society as a whole it were totally separated. The state lays down laws which set the outermost boundaries of the autonomy of the diverse spheres and sectors of civil society. Civil society on its part lays down limits on the actions of the state. Civil society comprises of all non-state actors. Civil society and the state are bound together by the constitution and by tradition which stresses the obligation of each to the other as well as their rights vis-à-vis each other. Civil society is not necessarily embodied in a single identifiable structure. It is by its very nature plural and it covers all sorts of different practices.” According to Patrick Chabal, “the right to hold rulers responsible resides not only in form of constitutional devices that is part of the social fabric in society. Above all else, it is embodied/symbolized in the relation between the state and civil society. In situations where formal institutions of political representation have been overpowered by executive monopoly, accountability comes to depend almost entirely on the ability of civil society to curb the hegemony of the state classical traits on political pluralism tend to portray civil

society as a buffer against the state.” Michael Bratton, (1997) however, argues that civil society is not at odds with the state but the need to leave room for engagement between state and society may be congruent as well as conflictual. Anyang Nyon’go (1987), on the other hand, points out that “the relationship between the state and civil society in Africa is rough and exploitative. The state’s weakness in Africa derives from its subordination to stronger institutions. It has sponsored the formation of a strong bureaucratic class. Internally, state elites seek to monopolize economic activity and resent the formation of social constellations with an independent base.” Victor Azarya (1994) argues that “influence and authority is not the exclusive domain of the state. Various segments of society manage to maintain patterns which are of variance with the state code.

Groups in civil society hence, correspond accordingly to the policy initiatives of the state.” In the words of Rothschild and Chazan, (1988) “Civil society operates in arenas beyond state control and influence and has an independent effect upon economy and society, as well as upon the formation, consolidation and performance of the state itself. In Africa, civil society manifests itself in informal rather than formal linkages. In authoritarian regimes where the opposition may be outlawed, civil association is forced to occur underground. Formal organizations in civil society include NGOs, employer organizations and producer unions. These elements of the civil society expand as the state contracts and are currently playing a critical role in key sectors of African economies. The emergence of an active civil society depends also to a great degree, on indigenous capitalist industrialization as well as developed social classes”. Finally, Diamond, (1994) posits that: “civil society does not automatically spring up where the state’s collapse is beyond the reach of the political elites rather, civil society is likely to expand to fill the gaps where the retreat of the state is intended, planned and guaranteed. However, state-civil society relations need not always be confronted and under certain circumstance may be complementary. Conflict is likely to occur when civil actors try to engage the state over political space that the state elite have already occupied. Congruence or cooperation is likely when voluntary bodies or social movements occupy space which the state has never penetrated or from which state elite have decided to retreat”.

On the other hand, counterterrorism is a highly state-centric activity. Realists would readily agree with this assertion because, after all, the state is the place of last resort, the ultimate guarantor of security and survival. This is another way of saying that to the realist par excellence, non-state actors have not much to offer in any recipe for national security. This “traditional” view continues to guide national security theory and practice in many contexts both in temporal and spatial terms. Nonetheless, liberal views on national security have gained popularity especially in

the post-Cold War period. The liberal thesis engendered a conception of national security that is more holistic in character. Subsequently, as far as national security is concerned, the ‘meeting point’ between these two potentially opposed schools of thought is what has emerged to be a more holistic argument for national and/or regional security- the Human Security Paradigm. It is within this holistic context that the discussion in this paper of “civil society and counterterrorism” with specific reference to the Eastern Africa experience is examined. From these lenses, it is possible to argue that in any modern democratic state, there is room for non-governmental actors in any recipe for national security albeit only to a certain level.

Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Eastern Africa in Retrospect

Terror attacks in the Africa region have been few and far between right from the early postindependence time in the 1960s through to the 1980s. Nonetheless, African governments and international security agencies in those old days began to be concerned about terrorism especially after the Munich Attack in September 1972 and the Entebbe hostage incident in June 1976 as well as the Norfolk Bombing in Nairobi on December 31st 1980-all of which were directed against Israeli nationals. This was the context of terrorism and counterterrorism in the immediate post-independence Africa. The vice seemed to have been localized to the Middle East in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict but was also in the context of the Northern Ireland conflict in which terror methods were employed by the Irish Republican Army against the United Kingdom especially in the 1980s. In the ‘strict sense of the word’, internally directed (domestic) forms of terrorism in Africa have been in existence for a long time, though perhaps not publicized due to their localized nature. National liberation movements in Africa such as the Mau Mau in Kenya, the Algerian liberation movement, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, South Western Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in Zimbabwe (then, Southern Rhodesia) were all classified at one time or another as terrorist organizations. The 1960s through to the 1990s were characterized by numerous civil wars on the African scene. Examples include Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Mali, Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi just to mention but a few. These conflicts were characterized by what would, in many respects, pass to be acts of terror against civilian populations. Nonetheless, the kind of terrorism that emerged in the immediate post-Cold War period was one which seemed to pit the Arab and/or Muslim world on one hand against the United States and the West on the other- it had assumed a global character. In fact, it was not until the August 7th 1998 attack on the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar-esSalaam that counterterrorism operations in the region were stepped up. Today’s context of

terrorism in Eastern Africa seems to be centered on the Al-Qaeda related extremist group, Al-Shabaab, in Somalia. This outfit has been quite active and increasingly working in cahoots with other militant groups' cells that are dotted all over the northern region especially in Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), Mali, Algeria, Morocco and Egypt (and by extension, Yemen, Oman, the Comoros and Afghanistan). Over this period, Eastern Africa has been a major focal point in as far as the activities of international terror groups are concerned.

According to the Global Terrorism Index Report for 2014, eight of the top-20 states (out of 162) most affected by terrorism are in Africa namely Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Egypt, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. A cursory glance at the statistics reveals that at least three of these fall within the Eastern Africa cluster. Hence, it is clear that the Eastern Africa region is at the core of the African counterterrorism agenda. But how did this come to be? During this period, governments in the region- either singly or collectively- have been keen to counter the threat posed by Al-Qaeda, Al Hijra, and Al-Shabaab (among others) and their sympathizers. By late 2006, it was clear to the international community that terrorism and terror networks had pitched camp in Somalia. Security agencies in the region were also aware that there was a growing number of active as well as terror sleeper cells in many parts of the region and more so in Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The unilateral undertaking by Ethiopian forces in Somalia in December 2006 marked the first move in the direction of routing-out these organizations, with Somalia as the main point of focus (Siefert 2008). This Operation somewhat set the pace for similar counterterrorism undertakings by other regional states (Derso, 2009).

The Ethiopian campaign was on several instances bolstered by concurrent stealth surgical strikes by the United States in early January 2007 targeting suspected extremists belonging to several fundamentalist off-shoots of the ICU (Nzau, 2010: 165). These groups included the AlItihad Islamiya, Hizbul Islam, Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, Ras Kamboni Brigades, Jama Islamiya and (the then emerging) Mujahideen Youth Movement, among others, believed to have been enjoying the support of international terror networks including Al-Qaeda (Sabala, 2011: 109-110). Halting their growth and influence was deemed urgent and necessary for the then Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to gain full control in the war-torn state. Since then, the regional counterterrorism strategy has since had Somalia as its focal point. With the blessing of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) commenced its mission in Somalia in March 2007, with a force consisting mainly of Ugandan troops who were later joined by Burundian troops (Sabala 2011, 99; Wakengela, 2011: 383-384). It seemed as though Al-Shabaab activity was confined to Somalia in a bid to

oust the then Transitional Federal Government (TFG) through conventional and/or unconventional warfare- whichever met their goals best. It was therefore no surprise when Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the Kampala 11th July 2010 terror attacks. A week later, on 23rd July 2010, on the eve of African Union's Summit in Kampala, AU Commission chairperson, Jean Ping, announced that he had asked countries, including South Africa, to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Although many African Heads of State strongly condemned the Kampala terror attacks, they seemed unable to provide a final and lasting solution to the 'Somalia Question'. Al Shabaab appeared untamable and it continued with its terror operations on land and at sea with sheer impunity. It was against this background that in midOctober 2011, The Kenya Defence Forces were ordered into action to stop Somalia's Al Shabaab militia from further threatening the country's security and economy. Kenya declared war on the terrorist organization operating from Somalia and said Kenyan security forces would henceforth pursue the aggressors across the border. Kenyan authorities argued that Kenya had a right to self defence, adding that the Constitution and the UN charter were clear on the defence of borders. They invoked Article 51 of the United Nations Charter which pronounces self defence as an inherent right- meaning that a country can do whatever is necessary to keep its borders secure (Nzau 2013). Kenya had little options but to go after Al Shabaab militants who abducted aid workers from the Dadaab refugee camp. In retaliation, Al Shabaab made several terror incursions into Kenya. Al Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage threatened to launch terror attacks in Kenyan cities if Kenya did not withdraw its troops. Since the onset of Operation Linda Nchi (OLN) (meaning Operation to Protect the Nation) in MidOctober 2011, Nairobi and various parts of the North Eastern Province came under terrorist attacks by Al Shabaab operatives and their local sympathizers. Today, Al Shabaab remains the greatest threat to Kenya's national security as well as that of the wider EasternAfrica region (Nzau and Mwanzia, 2014).

The Operation Linda Nchi lasted between October 2011 and June 2012, when Kenya officially joined AMISOM (KDF, 2014). OLN's main strategic objective was to crush the military capabilities of Al-Shabaab and diminish their direct influence especially along the border with Kenya (International Crisis Group, 2012). These direct preemptive actions seem to have only partially succeeded because armed opposition to the TFG has persisted ever since. On the whole, the situation in Somalia has remained relatively stable though volatile but the threat of terror inside Somalia has been significantly reduced. Be it as it may, Al-Shabaab managed to carry out several devastating attacks on soft targets especially in Kenya. The first major one of this kind was the Westgate Attack of September 2013, followed by the Mpeketoni, Lamu, attacks of June 2014 and the Garissa Attack of

April 2015. Other smaller but deadly attacks have also taken place mainly on Kenyan soil including the September 2014 slaying of 28 passengers and the December 2014 attack on a quarry in Mandera that left 36 dead among many others (of smaller magnitude mainly involving the use of grenades and improvised explosive devices) that numbered at least 80 by December 2014. Meanwhile, dozens of suicide bombings have taken place inside Somalia with the latest one involving a UN vehicle in April 2015, leaving six UNICEF personnel dead.

Mainstreaming the Role of Civil Society in Counterterrorism in the Region: Current Challenges and Future Prospects

One problematic issue about civil society agencies is that they are not one uniform outfit. Their goals are not all similar and their modes of operation are not uniform and/or standardized. For the most part therefore, civil society's areas of operation and general scope vary. In fact, there can be as many organizations and/or agencies as there are interest areas. Their goals also change according to societal needs both in spatial and temporal terms. The civil society of Eastern Africa in the 1980s was perhaps quite different from that today. The character of these organizations is such that their goals and/or missions differ over time depending on the realities and/or challenges facing their societies at any given time (Rothchild and Chazan, 1988). For instance, before the 1990s, the agendas informing civil society activity in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa were mainly around issues of fighting various forms of authoritarianism and enhancing various basic freedoms in the face of megalomaniac leaders and autocratic regimes (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). In the same vein, it is also true that the different countries in the region cannot be said to be at the same socio-political and/or economic wavelength. Some may be at different levels of political change and/or democratization. Eritrea is not Kenya and Kenya is not Rwanda and neither is Rwanda South Sudan. They all have their unique endowments, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses in as far as their democratic gains are concerned, and hence, the dynamics of state-civil society relations in these countries are bound to be different in many respects.

All the same, following the advent of multiparty politics in several countries in Eastern Africa, the role of some sections of civil society has since been redefined. Some members of the civil society who were said to be on the side of "pro-opposition politics" later abandoned their regular watchdog positions to join politics and become part of the very government that they earlier opposed once the parties they formed or joined attained power. Others stayed put and continued with the oversight role on various issue-areas such as human rights, environmental governance, community capacity building, community development, general education, gender equity advocacy, civic education, and conflict management and

peace-building. How best then would the role of these organizations in counterterrorism be mainstreamed, yet their goals and domains of focus keep mutating? In other words, in a bid to mainstream the role of civil society into the counterterrorism agenda in Eastern Africa, it is imperative first to realize that it is not a standard or uniform outfit and its areas of interest keep mutating depending on the issues at hand.

For a long time, civil society activity in Eastern Africa has been confined mainly to the struggle for democratization. Most of post-independence Africa was under some form of authoritarian rule ranging from personal dictatorships such as that in Uganda under General Idi Amin; military juntas such as that in Ethiopia under Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam; Burundi under Micombero, Jean Baptiste Bagaza and Pierre Buyoya; Somalia under General Siad Barre; and Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda under the one-party rule. During the decade of the 1980s and more so in the 1990s, civil society organizations became more and more active in agitating for the adoption of multiparty politics, wider political space and improvements in the protection of civil rights and liberties. In those years, the civil society existed but at times operated in moribund and/or covert contexts due to suppressive state policies. They could easily be branded dissidents, have their operations paralyzed and their premises closed. Nonetheless, the advent of the new era of democratization during the 1990s further legitimized their operations and made their presence more overt.

Since then, civil society in the region has continued to play its oversight, educative, supportive and/or informational role as far as the operations of government are concerned. Nonetheless, with the prevalence of terror activities in the region over the last decade, genuine fears have been expressed concerning the activities of several civil society organizations. State authorities have expressed concern that some civil society organizations have been used (either knowingly or unknowingly) to facilitate the murderous actions of several international terror organizations such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab (Howell and Lind, 2009). However, it is only a handful of such agencies that have been suspected and/or accused of such transgressions and/or crimes. These issues have arisen amid fears that the operations of some civil society organizations could be detrimental to state security and survival especially in the face of increased terror activities with Kenya and Somalia being the key focal points. It was against this background for instance that the Kenyan (as well as Ugandan) authorities have from time to time taken steps to freeze bank accounts of two local human rights groups, Haki Africa and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), following UN-corroborated classified information to the effect that the two agencies had in one way or another abated and/or acted as conduits for terrorism.

An interesting thing to mention in this debate is that over time, some civil society organizations emerge out of the needs and/or challenges facing their societies at any one given time. In the 2000s, it was argued that civil society organizations of yesteryears were now “jobless” since the job of delivering democratic change was ‘already done.’ Others seem to have taken it upon themselves to oversee the democratic transition and to ensure that the constitutional, legal and administrative reforms that brought the political pluralism of the 1990s were safeguarded. It has also been argued that some of these organizations are in fact suffering from hangovers of yesteryears and are only “making noise” to remain relevant and make money from donor agencies, and this has been the position of governments in the region (for the most part) in so far as the operations of certain “questionable” civil society agencies are concerned. Government agencies in the region have also tended to be stuck to the classical looking-glasses of the purely military strategic kind, such that more often, civil society actors tend to be treated with suspicion especially on the sensitive matter of counter-terrorism- governments are not sure whether to treat this “new actor” as friend or foe (Cortright et al, 2011).

Yet, in as far as the broader liberal ideas on national security are concerned, a holistic approach to national security of the “human security paradigm” is necessary in any formula for finding a rightful place for civil society. What then is the role of the civil society in counterterrorism? Is it an actor or a mere spectator in this process? How can its role be mainstreamed in as far as counterterrorism is concerned? In an attempt to answer these questions, it would be prudent to be cognizant of the fact that the state does not have a monopoly over counterterrorism. Nonetheless, it takes a crucial legal, constitutional and operational function when it comes to such matters. This is another way of saying that other actors also have a stake in ensuring their own security as individuals, villages, neighbourhoods and communities. In other words, there may be certain requisite conditions that if met, would enable civil society to play its rightful role in the regional counter-terrorism agenda. First, all non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and the various interest and/or pressure groups of different persuasions within the region should place patriotism, dedicated service delivery and integrity at the core of their priorities. It would not be wrong for one to contend that a good number of civil society organizations in the region are operated by unscrupulous individuals whose greatest interest is nothing more than personal financial gain.

The owners and/or managers of some of these organizations tend to enrich themselves in the name of “fighting human rights abuse, gender inequality and sociopolitical marginalization.” This trend ought to be reversed and the ideals for which such organizations advocate upheld and respected. Further, all civil society organizations ought to device and enforce certain self-regulating mechanisms to

ensure that those organizations in their midst that are proven to be involved in corruption, fraud and support of terrorism and/or gross crimes are shunned and deregistered and their officials punished (Hayes, 2012). It must not also be forgotten that from time to time, civil society organizations have been primary targets of international terrorism (Branscomb, 2004; Quigley and Pratten 2007). In fact, one of the reasons behind Kenya's unilateral move to pursue the Al Shabaab into Somalia was the persistent abduction of aid workers serving under various NGOs and/or INGOs based in northern Kenya who would be taken hostage and ransom paid (Lind and Howell, 2010). Second, it is noteworthy that counterterrorism is about the efforts that a states and other actors employ in order to prevent, forestall and contain terrorist activity. It is traditionally a militaristic affair which includes intense technical, political, economic and human intelligence in order to prevent acts of terror, disrupt the plans of terror networks and finally, effective counter-terror attacks if and when they occur. However, while these technical aspects of the counterterrorism effort are left to the relevant state security agencies, this is perhaps constitutes a third of the effort and/or action required (Michaelsen, 2008). Against this premise, civil society should never be treated as a mere spectator in this process. Rather, it is building upon the fundamental values upon which every Eastern African country bases its nationhood and upon the widely accepted ethos of human existence and human dignity. Civil society organizations at whatever level (local, national or sub-regional) should continue to nurture and engender a better sociopolitical, cultural and economic environment conducive to countering the structural factors that act as catalysts for radicalization, fundamentalism, religious extremism, poverty, youth unemployment, and general societal ignorance and/or apathy, factors which lay fertile grounds for infiltration by regional and international terror networks today (Christopher 2012). In other words, CSOs should educate, facilitate, inform, research and guide the wider society on matters of human security with a view to militating against extremism.

At this juncture, the idea of 'best practices' comes to mind. In order for CSOs in the region to forge and sustain their role in this process, they ought to borrow a leaf from similar experiences in other countries. For instance, citizens in many countries around the world today have come to realize that it is counterproductive to expose counterterrorism operations on "live mode" since this jeopardizes everyone's security. It was for these reasons that at the Boston bombing of April 2013, the December 2014 terror attack on a restaurant in Sydney, Australia, and the January 2015 terror attack on a media house in Paris, France, live transmission was delayed while media houses and other commentators had to consult with the authorities before commenting and/or reporting on the rescue operations as they actually took place. Perhaps, these newly acceptable ways of handling security situations have

followed the realization that fundamental issues such as national security especially in the context of terrorism are in fact extremely important to the very democratic gains that they (civil society groups) so fervently purport to fight for and/or protect (Howell, 2006). Third, civil society plays a crucial role in engendering and enhancing a favorable environment necessary for the thriving of democratic ideals and hence more stability the kind of political stability that is not forced on the people through authoritarian means but rather, one that is informed by the rule of law, efficiency, public transparency and accountability. Responsive and responsible leadership enables open competition, fair and equitable distribution of national resources as well as the practice of politics of purposive and informed compromise geared towards the collective end of building better and prosperous societies (The Change Institute, 2008). This is indeed the best way to mainstream the role of civil society in as far as the counterterrorism agenda in the Eastern Africa region is concerned. As such, informed by the very fact that civil society is to play the watchdog role for the wider society with respect to the relationship between the governors and the governed but when it comes to sensitive and delicate issues such as ‘terrorism and how to counter it’ there should be well thought-out procedural issues concerning when, where and how to undertake this role while keeping in mind that the terrorist is *hosti humani generis* (which means ‘enemy of all humanity’).

Fourth, to effectively meet these goals on the part of civil society, it should be borne in mind that civil society cannot operate well in an environment that is lawless and disorderly, hence the need for governments to fulfill their end of the bargain. It is important to note that civil organizations can never completely replace the state in all its manifest functions, nor should they attempt to do so. They should at times supplement the role of the state in the provision of certain goods and services. Furthermore, “civil society does not flourish amidst political disorder, lawlessness and inadequate physical infrastructure. Hence, civil society organizations depend upon the state for the creation of certain basic conditions of existence. For these reasons, it is imperative upon state authorities to realize that their engagement with civil society organizations on matters of national security and counterterrorism should be one that is informed by mutual trust and reinforcement in an atmosphere of enhanced governance, wide consultation and mutual respect for each other’s role (Van Ginkel et al, 2010); Van Ginkel, 2012). In other words, governments or state authorities in general must take the lead in creating the necessary enabling environment for the same.

Conclusion and Way Forward

This paper set out to make a critical account of the role of civil society in as far as the counterterrorism agenda in Eastern Africa today is concerned. It sought to

grapple with the theoretical and/or policy issues that have permeated the debate over the past few years, and more so, in the context of the real and imminent danger that terrorism poses to state survival and general societal wellbeing in the region. Having shed light on the background experiences, the discussion went further to explore ways in which civil society agencies can contribute to the counterterrorism processes in the region. Of critical importance are questions to do with the delicate balance between order and liberty in transitional democracies which make up most of the Eastern African region.

By and large, this paper has managed to bring out several important issues in as far as the role of civil society in the counterterrorism agenda in Eastern Africa is concerned. One key emergent issue is that in the same way civil society organizations can be conduits for terrorism, they too can be important actors in the counterterrorism agenda. Their role in changing mind-sets and fighting fundamentalist ideologies and youth radicalization cannot be underestimated. Subsequently, there are certain requisite conditions that if well addressed can better improve this noble role. First is the realization that not all civil society organizations can directly be involved in the process due to different and/or varied interest areas. Second, civil society cannot tread this difficult path on its own. It needs better enabling environments and these are best availed by governments. Third, this can only happen if both state and civil society realize that their relationship to the state in this agenda is complementary, not competitive and/or conflict-ridden.

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