Factors Facilitating the Rise of Radical Islamism and Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction
On February 12, 2007, a new article was circulated in the Jihadi forums, which sketched very clearly the new direction of the strategy of al-Qaeda or global Jihad, in Africa. The article in Arabic, titled "Al-Qaeda Organization and the African Continent: Past, Present and Future", provides us with an analysis of Africa's importance for global Jihad. This same article was published in June 2006 by a virtual magazine of supporters of global Jihad – Sada al-Jihad (Echo of Jihad) – and was circulated in the Jihadi forums. That article in Arabic, titled "Al-Qaeda is Moving to Africa", was written by Abu Azzam al-Ansari.

According to these articles, al-Qaeda has always been aware of Africa's importance and since its emergence attempted at "feeling its pulse". The Mujahidin have had a prominent role in North and East Africa. Al-Qaeda's operations also reflect the focus of al-Qaeda in East and North Africa: The US Embassies Bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; the expulsion of the Americans from Somalia; its involvement in Sudan; and the terrorist attacks in Mombassa, Jerba/Tunisia, Casablanca, Sharm al-Sheikh, and Sinai. Moreover,
some of the most famous operatives of al-Qaeda originated from North Africa: Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Mauritania.

Al-Qaeda further proclaims that it does not have a prominent role in the other parts of Africa. However, whoever looks at Africa can see that it does not enjoy the interest, efforts, and activity it deserves in the Jihadi war against the “Crusaders.” Thus, these articles further describe the most significant advantages of Africa over other regions for the Mujahidin.

According to these articles, the political and military conditions in most of the African continent as well as the broad weakness of its governments, and the internal fighting and corruption of these regimes, ease the ability of the Mujahidin to move, plan, and organize themselves, far from being seen. This general weakness brought about numerous situations of tribal conflicts in many African countries, and hot-fired civil wars that produced groups and individuals willing to heroically sacrifice themselves. If these people could be channeled into the line of the Jihad, they will have enormous effect in the defense of Islam and the Muslims. The wars and conflict in Africa provide a gold opportunity for the Mujahidin to easily move between different African countries, without any surveillance. The above mentioned conditions provide huge amount of weapons and military equipment easy to obtain and, in most cases, much cheaper than in other regions. Another prominent advantage of Africa for the Mujahidin is the general condition of poverty and the social needs prevalent in most countries. This situation will enable the Mujahidin to provide some finance and welfare, and, thus, posting there some of their influential operatives.

Structural Conditions Facilitating the Rise of Radical Islam and Terrorism in Africa

Most analysts agree that poverty, corruption and political alienation have contributed to the spread of radical Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some blame nineteenth-century European colonialism for re-mapping ethnic territories, marginalizing Muslims and, in some cases, leaving a legacy of inter-communal strife. They point out that Muslims in countries historically dominated by Christians, such as Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire, do not wield political power relative to their large numbers. Some experts blame Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Libya, for financing and exporting intolerant brands of Islam to Africa. Social inequality, alienation and isolation of certain groups on religious and ethnic grounds should warrant more attention in some Sub-Saharan countries. These are the feeding grounds or the parts of Africa where it is easier for more committed extremists from outside the region to move through to gain local support and assistance, even though the local people in those cases are not the ones who are providing most of the foot-soldiers for extremism and terrorism.

That raises the question of the spread and strength of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are a number of centers of Islam in the region including the West African Sahel Zone, the tropical zone along the Gulf of Guinea, the Sudanese Nile region, Ethiopia, the East African coastal strip, Somalia, and the Cape region. In all of these regions, the spread of
Islam took a different path in which the relative importance of specific elements of the religion depended on the historical and social context.

Nevertheless, the majority of these areas appear to share two common features. Islam did not develop into an exclusive state religion and the interpretation of the Islamic legal code appears to have been moderate across the board. This does not mean that Islam is not a political force in these regions. On the contrary, in West Africa, for example, spiritual leaders and traditional Islamic leaders have played, and continue to play, a central role in exercising political power and maintaining clientele systems.

However, the long-standing practice of a moderate interpretation of Islam is subject to change. A radicalization has taken place with the introduction of Shari'ah in twelve Nigerian states, rigid adherence to Shari'ah in the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia and extremist tendencies among Muslims in South Africa. The reasons for this are rather varied. In the case of Nigeria, it appears that aggressive missionary work in the North by Saudi Wahhabis has played a decisive role in escalating the conflict between Christians and Muslims.

These processes of radicalization have one thing in common. Where Muslims are in the minority, they generally belong to the losers of the social and political change that Africa has gone through over the past ten years. That is especially the case in the coastal states of West and East Africa. In West Africa, democratization has removed Muslim leaders and their followers from power, while in East Africa the social advancement of the Muslim minority has trailed that of the region's already low average.

The partial loss of power for Muslims in West Africa stands in fundamental conflict with claims to power based on tradition. The social conflicts in the coastal states of West Africa are increasingly developing along a north-south divide that is largely congruent with the geographic division between Christians and Muslims. This is particularly noticeable in Nigeria, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire.

In the short term, however, it is unlikely that extremist Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa will become an important and integral part of al-Qaeda's network. In contrast to North Africa, membership is likely to be limited to a few individuals. Al-Qaeda's call after the Mombassa attacks in 2002, on African Muslims to join their cause was met with decidedly more indignation than approval, with one important exception. The Algerian Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) joined al-Qaeda in September 2006. There are a few more new organizations that their appeal is questionable and that their establishment was only announced on Jihadi forums in the Internet, without any sign for activity. The establishment of al-Qaeda Organization in Sudan and Africa, under the leadership of Sheikh Abu Ya’li was circulated in Jihadi forums already on July 4, 2006. Later on, in November 2006, the announcement on the formation of the Mujahidin of the Land of the Two Hegiras (Ethiopia) Organization was circulated in Jihadi forums. It aligned itself with bin Laden and al-Qaeda and agreed to fight until Islamic law is enforced throughout Ethiopia. About 75 Muslims are said to have joined this Jihadi group. Moreover, there are some groups that are alleged to have a link with al-Qaeda,
such as the Nigerian Taliban and the Christian Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), both of them based in Nigeria.

Yet, the possibility of the development of a genuine African variant of terrorism cannot be entirely ruled out. The necessary ingredients—lack of economic perspectives, social deprivation, a loss of cultural identity, political repression and a dysfunctional state—are virtually omnipresent in Sub-Saharan Africa. These factors alone, however, do not lead inevitably to terrorism. If they did, Africa would qualify as the hot-post of international terrorism. Instead, rather than being directed outwards, it appears that the potential for violence arising from the interplay of these factors in Sub-Saharan Africa is, for the most part, directed inwards against one's own society in the form of increasing violent crime, civil wars, and plundering warlords. Thus, all that is needed is a mobilizing, unifying idea, such as the one offered by radical Islam; and appropriate agitators, who abuse this idea to direct the violence bred by these factors externally.

We can assume that the importance of Africa in terms of international terrorism will focus in the next couple of years on two factors. First, the weak and desolate states of Africa provide an excellent space to draw back to, and their informal economies offer superb conditions for money-laundering and parking capital. Second, ineffective state security apparatuses create a convenient environment for carrying out attacks.

Indeed, Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more failing states than any other region in the whole world. But even in more or less functioning states such as Kenya and Tanzania, the state is hardly capable of effectively maintaining a monopoly on violence and controlling the entire territory of the country. Border areas and the slums of the big cities are already de facto zones outside the state's control. The security forces' training and equipment are entirely insufficient and corruption and criminalization of the police is far advanced. The shadow economy of these crumbling states makes capital transactions and trafficking in weapons, raw materials, and consumer goods possible, without which terrorist networks would be unable to function. Thus, the incapacity of the majority of African security forces to protect targets threatened by terrorism is in stark contrast with the great variety of such potential targets including embassies, the numerous agencies and projects of international development organizations, subsidiaries of American and European companies, and international tourist hotels.

This situation prevailing in most African states is taken advantage of by local terrorist groups, some of them using methods emulated from al-Qaeda or from the Jihadists actions in the Middle East and North Africa, to achieve their local aims. Such is the case of the al-Qaeda Organization in Sudan and Africa, which on September 13, 2006 claimed responsibility for kidnapping and beheading the chief editor of al-Wifaq, a Sudanese independent daily, eight days earlier, on September 5. The murder of Muhammad Ahmad Taha Jankal was the fourth attempt on his life. It involved, for the first time in the history of terrorism in Sudan, the beheading of a person in the "Jihadi Iraqi" style. Muhammad Taha was regarded a pro-Iranian Islamist, who was influenced by the Islamic revolution in Iran. In May 2005 he offended the Islamists by republishing an article from the internet
that questioned the ancestry of the Prophet Muhammad. His murder also coincided with the anti-Shi’a policy of Sunni Al-Qaeda.

Another case is the suicide bombings directed against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia. On September 18, 2006, just minutes after a speech to the Transitional Parliament, based outside of the town of Baidoa, the headquarters of the TFG, a suicide car bomber attacked the presidential convoy, in what was the first suicide strike in Somalia's history. Six government officials were killed in this suicide strike, including President Yousef’s brother. On November 30, 2006, a second suicide bombing attack was carried out against the TFG. Nine were killed after a suicide car bomb detonated at a checkpoint outside of Baidoa.

The most extraordinary case, in this respect, is that of MEND in Nigeria. MEND is a Christian militant indigenous people's movement dedicated to armed struggle against what it claims to be the exploitation and oppression of the people of the Niger delta and the degradation of their natural environment by foreign multi-national corporations involved in the extraction of oil in their homeland. Thus, its stated goals are to localize control of Nigeria's oil and to secure reparations from the national government for pollution caused by the oil industry. On February 18, 2006, MEND's military leader, Major-General Godswill Tamuno, declared a total war on all foreign oil companies and their employees. It was the opening shot for a wave of kidnappings that has been haunting, with some short intervals, the Niger Delta until nowadays. 2006 has been a violent year across the Niger Delta. MEND's militants had killed 37 Nigerian soldiers, seized and later released 70 hostages, blew up a pipeline to an export terminal and detonated a car bomb near tanker trucks. Later, on December 23, 2006, a car bomb exploded outside a state government building in Port Harcourt, marking the first targeting of government installations by MEND.

MEND's actions against foreign oil companies seem to take on a radical Islamic dimension. Thus, hostage-taking and the use of car bombs have been implemented in Nigeria for the first time in its history and these methods have been lent from the Middle East. Furthermore, the first attack of MEND in February 2006 was perfectly timed with al-Qaeda's failed attack on Saudi Arabia's largest oil complex at Abqaiq on February 22, 2006. It is well known that one of the main strategies of al-Qaeda has long been to damage American economic power by attacking oil facilities and targets. Therefore, the most threatening effect posed by this increased violence in the Niger Delta against government facilities and foreign oil companies is the potential for a goal-oriented alignment Christian MEND and radical Muslims abroad. MEND may provide inspiration to radical Islamic groups, who are witnessing its "successful" actions, to carry out attacks against foreign oil installations across the globe.

The Terrorist Threat on the Republic of South Africa

In this context, it is very important to note that the threat of Islamist terrorism to the Republic of South Africa is very real. There are number of indigenous Islamists networks that have the potential to either engage in serious acts of terrorism on their own or in conjunction with international terrorists. The Muslim community makes up an estimated 2.3% of the South African population. Although well established Muslim communities
can be found throughout the country, the most established one is that in Cape Town, which represents 7% of the Western Cape's population. Primarily, poverty and related social problems affect the Muslim community in the Western Cape to a much greater extent than other Muslim communities in the country.

An Islamic revival in South Africa began in the 1950s. It derived its religious inspiration from modern Islamic movements in Pakistan and Egypt. The Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979 had a massive impact upon the consciousness of South African Muslims and led to the formation of the Qibla mass movement, based in Cape Town. It was created in the early 1980s to promote the aims and ideals of the Iranian Islamic revolution in the Republic of South Africa and, in due course, to transform it into an Islamic state, under the slogan "one solution, Islamic revolution". It was the ideological and spiritual environment created by Qibla that led to the emergence of PAGAD on December 9, 1995. Another major factor in its emergence was the extraordinarily high crime rate prevailing then in the Western Cape. Indeed, PAGAD's primary objective was to serve as a broad anti-crime front. But from July 1998 onwards, PAGAD began to target personnel and facilities of the state's security and intelligence community. PAGAD attacked businesses linked to the US, after the latter launched missile strikes against targets related to al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Sudan in August 1998. From then until 2000, PAGAD had targeted mainly restaurants and places of entertainment. PAGAD's covert activities came to a standstill with the arrest and prosecution of its prominent leaders.

However, since the underlying reasons for its existence were never properly addressed, if at all, the possible re-emergence of PAGAD or similar organizations cannot be discounted. Should the Republic of South Africa's government be able to effectively combat gang violence and drugs it is likely that Muslim extremists, particularly in the Western Cape, would find other issues to bolster public support. Indeed, after the establishment of PAGAD, similar structures with seemingly identical aims were formed: People against Prostitutes and Sodomites (PAPAS), Muslims against Global Oppression (MAGO), and Muslims against Illegitimate Leaders (MAIL).

It should be mentioned that early in October 2001, almost immediately following the September 11 attacks, MAIL launched a campaign to recruit Muslims to go and fight alongside the Taliban and within weeks claimed that some 2000 people had signed up. Those who were supposed to have gone there were sponsored with money collected at mosques in Pretoria and from wealthy businessmen. A few months later, a leading member of MAIL claimed that some 1000 South Africans had arrived in Pakistan and Afghanistan to help the Taliban against US-led attacks. He added that many of them have got a family in Pakistan or India.

It is also clear that community-based organizations modeled on PAGAD are heavily penetrated by the highly secretive Qibla organization. Qibla uses this penetration to marshal support for its Islamic revolutionary aims. Although in many respects Qibla is worlds apart from al-Qaeda and the broader Sunni Islamist militancy which it inspires, nonetheless its radical ideology can prepare vulnerable individuals for terrorist recruitment further down the line.
The key question, of course, revolves around the likelihood of an al-Qaeda attack against Western interests in the Republic of South Africa. For its part, the government of the Republic of South Africa hopes that its neutrality in the so-called war against terrorism and its pro-Palestinian stance will spare it from the attacks of the radical Muslims. The real threat, however, is directed against US and other Western interests in the country. In this respect, there are major causes for concern. High-value targets, including large embassies and headquarters of multi-national corporations, proliferate in the country. As a nascent democracy, the Republic of South Africa is obsessed with protecting basic rights, which could be exploited by international terrorists working in tandem with local militants. This "rights-based" environment is compounded by widespread official corruption that makes it very easy for skilled and experienced terrorists to operate and further their aims without any fear of detection. Moreover, one should keep in mind that the Republic of South Africa has porous borders and large immigrant communities that can easily, if needed, shelter terrorists.

**Ideological Conditions Facilitating the Growth of Radical Islam in Africa**

In the ideological field, the pragmatic approach taken by the Salafis towards the Sufis must be taken seriously and fully into account. The Sufis are perceived to be peaceful and not radical. However, in Africa it was not always the case. There was a strong linkage between Sufis and Jihad all over the continent, but particularly in West Africa. The first African Sufi who waged Jihad was the great Muslim scholar, Othman dan Fodio, a member of the Qadiriyyah Muslim sect. He declared Jihad against Muslim heretics at the beginning of the nineteenth century and established the Sultanate of Sokoto, which was governed by Shari'ah rule. His Jihadi movement was not linked to the Wahhabiyyah prevailing at the same period in Saudi Arabia. Yet, like the Wahhabiyyah, he sought to reform the society in which he lived, which was corrupt and not abiding by the Shari'ah or by the Sunnah of the Prophet. That was the main ideological motivation for his Hijrah (immigration) and jihad. Othman dan Fodio had a strong ideological influence not only on Nigerian Muslims but also on all African Muslims and even on the African-American Diaspora in the Caribbean.

Throughout the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, Sufis stood at the forefront of the Jihad against the Europeans in all parts of Africa. The Libyan Omar al-Mukhtar led the struggle against the Italian occupation; the Somali Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan led the struggle against the British, the Italians and the Ethiopians; and other less known Islamic Sufi scholars, such as those who took part in the Maji Maji rebellion against the Germans in Tanzania.

This radical attitude inherent in the Sufism in Africa as well as the strong connection prevalent between Sufis and Jihad were hailed by al-Qaeda supporters in Jihadi forums as a possible ideological basis for cooperation between radical Muslims and Sufis in Africa. Indeed, one could see it clearly in Somalia, where Sufis and radical Muslims united their forces in the Islamic Courts Union's framework in order to fight the Ethiopians and the Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government.
This phenomenon might be seen also in Nigeria, where the Nigerian Taliban is active. The Taliban, otherwise known as the Hijrah Movement, is composed of young graduates and post graduates, most of them are from highly placed and influential families. Its aim is to establish an Islamic country, based on the Shari'ah in north east Nigeria, along the border with Niger. They regard the society as so morally corrupt, that the best thing for a devout Muslim to do was to migrate out of the sins and corruption to a place or society where they can establish their model Islamic society, just like what Othman dan Fodio did 200 years ago. It can also remind us of the Egyptian Gama’at al-Muslimin, which was known in the 1970s by the popular name of Al-Takfir wal-Hijrah. Thus, approximately at the middle of 2003, the Nigerian Taliban's members "migrated" out of Maiduguri to the bush area around Kanamma in Yunusari local government area of Yobe state. While in the Kanamma bush area, the Hijrah group members, along with their wives and children, established "a base" (Qaeda in Arabic), where they engaged in religious studies.

At the end of December 2003, this group attacked some police stations in Yobe state, killed two policemen, taking loads of arms and ammunitions after setting the police stations and other public places on fire. Following its attacks on the police stations, the Hijrah group members distributed leaflets stating their principal goals: to establish an Islamic state in the areas around Kanamma, Yunusari and Toshiya; place these areas under the leadership of Mullah Umar, presumably the leader of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan; kill any "unbeliever in uniform"—presumably policemen and soldiers—and call Muslims in Nigeria to rise up in Jihad to defend Islam and spread its realm. Yet, the Nigerian security forces crushed this group, which still exists nowadays.

**The Role of Arab Influence and Islamic Charities in Facilitating Radical Islam in Africa**

Another factor, which helps facilitate radical Islam in Africa, is the Islamist influence of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states. As from the Middle Ages, many African Muslims went to study religious Islamic studies in al-Azhar University in Cairo, as well as to a pilgrimage to Mecca. On the twentieth century, some of those Muslims who went to Saudi Arabia and Egypt were influenced by the radical Islamists, whether Wahhabis or Muslim Brotherhood. When they returned to their places of origin, they preached the radical Islamist agenda. Moreover, many Gulf-based Islamic charities take part in this Da’wah campaign, while helping out the African peoples and converting some of them first to the cause of Islam and then, even to radical Islam.

This most worrying phenomenon must also be seen in the context of the continuation of the long struggle between Islam and Christianity over the souls of the Sub-Saharan African population. Whereas in the past, there was a roughly clear-cut division between a dominantly Muslim north and a dominantly Christian south, while the rain forests or the equator comprising the border between the religious influence zones, it is not so now. Many converts to Islam can be found every single year in what was once a country with fully Christian population. Thus, in the unlikely country of Angola, where in the 1990s there were no Muslims at all, Muslims comprise today 2% of the population.
A good example for this Da’wah is the activity of the African Muslim Agency. The African Muslim Agency is a primarily Kuwait-sponsored aid organization based in Luanda, Angola. The Agency has established itself in most of Africa, including Sierra Leone, Mali, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Angola, the Gambia, and particularly the Republic of South Africa. The Agency has its southern base in Malawi, where it translated the Qur’an into Chichewa, and thus, brought the number of Muslims to 20% nowadays from 12.5% in 1995. Thus, the Agency is involved in the spreading of Islam in the predominantly Christian Southern African countries.

Thus, the activity of the African Muslim Agency as well as the activity of other Islamic charitable organizations based in the Gulf States or Saudi Arabia should be treated as a real threat on the long run.

Financing of radical Islamic activities in East Africa and the Horn comes from a variety of sources, but high on the list one can find the charities sponsored by Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf States. The money for these charities comes from private individuals and governments. In the case of Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, Qatar, the charities are closely linked with efforts to promote the Wahhabiyyah. These Saudi and Gulf States charities have been active in East Africa and the Horn for years. In addition to encouraging Wahhabi beliefs, building mosques, and implementing useful social programs, some of their branches are suspected of funneling money to al-Qaeda and to other radical Islamist organizations active in Africa.

In particular, there seems to be a growing concern in the West that extremist outside influences from Sudan and Saudi Arabia have been imported into Tanzania and that these are serving to dangerously radicalize indigenous religious beliefs and moderation. Western officials stress the numerous Saudi, Sudanese, and Gulf charities and businesses that are active in Tanzania, pointing out that these organizations often play an important role in covertly channeling finances for explicit terrorist purposes.

Most attention has focused on Zanzibar, both on account of its overwhelmingly Islamic population and the fact that the semi-autonomous province has not yet enjoyed the same rate of economic growth and social development as has been evident on the mainland. In addition, at least two al-Qaeda operatives have been identified as originating from the island: Khalfan Khamis Muhammad, one of those convicted in connection with the 1998 Embassies Bombings and Oaed Sanyan al-Harithi, a suspected East African point man for bin Laden, who was killed in Yemen in 2004.

The preaching of Sheikh Ponda Isi Ponda has evoked particular interest. He represents one of the main theological instigators for contemporary militant activism in East Africa. The Sheikh has been frequently detained as a threat to Tanzanian national security and is currently on bail pending charges that he has sought to forge pan-regional radical Islamic ties with extremists in Kenya. Exacerbating Western concerns has been a spate of violent incidents over the last few years. The incidents include armed takeovers of moderate mosques in Dar es-Salaam as well as a 2002 firebombing of a tourist bar in Stone Town, Zanzibar, which left several people injured. One movement that has been specifically
singled out for fomenting much of this unrest is Simba wa Mungu (God's Lion), an alleged covert organization that supposedly takes its lead from Sheikh Ponda and that is accused of actively inciting attacks against foreigners and "morally corrupt" Muslims failing to adhere to purist Islamic line.

Another such group active in Zanzibar is the Islamist group Jumuia ya Uamsho na Mihadhara (The Association of Revival and Propagation of the Islamic Faith in Zanzibar – ARPIF), popularly known as Uamsho. Uamsho is a Saudi influenced and an umbrella organization for radical Muslim organizations active in Zanzibar. It has distributed Afghan Jihad-training videos and literature, and advocated the killing of secular politicians who refuse to impose Shari'ah law. They have also protested against the increasing Western influence on the island, coming primarily through tourism. They have attacked Catholic churches and other targets.

Moreover, during 2003, radical Islamic organizations were engaged in increasingly confrontational proselytizing in Zanzibar, Morogoro, Mwanza, and Dar es-Salaam. Anti-Christian slogans became more prevalent in newspapers and pamphlets, and on clothing. Radical Muslims threatened tourist establishments in Zanzibar, warning proprietors who catered to Western customers that they risked retribution for serving alcohol or engaging in other perceived vices.

Uamsho is headed by Sheikh Azzani Khalid Hamdan, whose aim is to turn Zanzibar into a land ruled by Shari'ah law. As part of his plan, he wants all the non-Muslims residents of the island, who comprise 1% of the population, to convert to Islam. One of his methods, in addition to these already mentioned above, is to abduct young Christian girls—though it is illegal under Zanzibari law to convert a Christian girl under the age of eighteen—force them to convert to Islam and, in some cases, ship them to parts of the Arab world. Thus, several Christian girls have disappeared in recent years. Uamsho and the other radical Islamists in Zanzibar won a great victory in their struggle for implementation of Shari'ah law when, on April 19, 2004, the Zanzibar government passed a law that outlaws gay and lesbian practices in the isles, and imposes severe penalties for same sex cohabitation.

Another example for an intensive Arab activity is Ghana, where Muslims comprise about 16% of the population. During the last three decades, there has been a significant increase in Arab activity in Ghana, resulting in a proliferation of Islamic organizations. In 1971, a Muslim missionary organization known as the Islamic Reformation and Research Center was started in Accra, Ghana's Capital. Activists of the center refer to it as a Wahhabi missionary order. The organization is financed by the Saudi Dar al-Ifta' and has since produced hundreds of students, who have been to Arab universities for further studies. This and numerous other Muslim Arab groups and organizations embark on missionary activities. They undertake to establish schools and other social services, and carry out public preaching within the urban centers to propagate Islam.

Most recently there have been a number of bloody confrontations between missionary minded Muslim groups, made up of graduates from Arab universities, and the majority
traditional Ghanaian Muslim groups. The most notorious of these groups is what is known locally as the Ahl al-Sunnah, a Saudi trained Wahhabi inspired group. Its members attack and publicly condemn traditional Muslim practices, such as the production of charms and the wearing of amulets, as un-Islamic. The brand of Islam they regard as "pure" or "orthodox" Islam is that which they were exposed to in Saudi Arabia or in other parts of the Arab world.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, on the long run, the radical Islam originating in the Arab world comprises a threat to moderate African Muslims as well as to the West. In this sense, this is a challenging hour for the Muslims in Africa. Globalization processes and a closer links with the Arab world might bring with them some adaptations and changes on the part of the majority Sufi Muslims in Africa. This process of adaptation has already begun in the form of the creation of reform movements within the Sufi orders and the common base of Jihad, which unites radical Muslims and moderate Sufis under one umbrella organization, as happened in Somalia. The understanding of this process, which seems to be at its initial phase, might show us on which direction Islam and Muslims in Africa might go: towards the radical end or towards the moderate end.

The news concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Western involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, which reach the African Muslims through the television, newspapers, radio and internet, must have a crucial role in creating a sense of strong alienation among moderate and radical African Muslims towards the United States and the West. Together with the strong sense common to the majority of Sub-Saharan Africans of being exploited by the West without getting any reward back, this strong sense of alienation and in some cases, even hatred, towards the West might turn into terror activities against Western targets using Middle Eastern methods conducted not only by Muslims, but also by Christians. This is the situation prevailing today in the Niger Delta in Nigeria, where the Christian MEND directs its attacks against Western targets, while emulating al-Qaeda methods.

Yet, it must be stressed that the balance of power between radical and moderate Muslims is still turning clearly towards the moderates. Overall, the radical Muslims comprise a small minority in Africa, compared to the overwhelming majority of the moderate Sufi Muslims.

There is much more to learn, that we do not know, about contemporary Islam in Africa. There are many processes prevailing in African Muslim societies that need further research in order to fully grasp their meaning and significance. For example, the less known trends and intensity of the Islamization processes which take place in the southern African countries; the intense and scope of activity of Islamic charity organizations in Africa and its radical Islamist propaganda among African Muslims; the cooperation trends and relationships between Sufis and radical Muslims and more issues.

A final point to be noted is that the same processes that Muslims in Africa are going through are common also among the African Diaspora in Europe, especially in France, in
the Arab world and in the Caribbean. Thus, the Sufi Tijaniyyah order in France shows signs of radicalization, the Saudi wanted list of radicals includes four Chadian nationals, and the Jamaat al-Muslimin organization, active in Trinidad and Tobago, is still influenced by Othman dan Fodio's Jihadist ideology.

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