


# A fragile nexus: Terrorism, The Rule of Law and Trade in The Horn of Africa

**Redatto da:**

Elisa Van Engelenhoven - Senior Researcher Politics Area
Jaohara Hatabi - Junior Researcher Politics Area
Davide Moschella - Junior Researcher Politics Area
Giulia Tessadri - Junior Researcher Politics Area

Mondo Internazionale
Associazione culturale
Gallarate, Via Marco Polo 31
21013 - VA, Italia
C.F. 91071700123
P.IVA 03727710125

Mail: segreteria@mondointernazionale.com

# INDEX

1 Relevance of the Horn of Africa

2 Threats to Security

3 Terrorism and Piracy in the Horn of Africa: A Country-Based Analysis

4 Currently Active Operations in the Horn of Africa

5 Conclusion

# G.E.O. - Politics

The Politics Area of G.E.O. is a space dedicated to research and innovation in the fields of Italian, European, and international politics. Due to the interlinked nature of many issues in international politics, the G.E.O.- Politics team covers a wide range of topics, from human rights and development, to international law and diplomacy; our main mission, however, is to gather and publish impartial information in order to generate a more correct public opinion on world affairs.

# ABSTRACT

Terrorism and piracy have represented a relevant threats for decades. Nonetheless, global attention and media coverage has particularly increased in recent years, since terrorist attacks have evolved to a transnational scale, and piracy has a significant impact on the development and stability of certain areas.Specifically, this report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of terrorism and piracy in the Horn of Africa, one of the most affected areas across the globe. Each country of the region is crucial for unique reasons, and the influence of the above-mentioned phenomena varies depending on its peculiarities.The goal of this report is to analyze the current situation in terms of stability and to assess the level of threat that piracy and terrorism pose to the security of the Horn of Africa, and lastly, to highlight the major commitment that the international community should put in place through military initiatives in order to better safeguard the region and its development.

# 1. Relevance of the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa, located between the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Indian Ocean, is a geographically crucial area for several continents, namely: Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Its international relevance grew after World War II, becoming a strategic point for the Cold War and for the East-West conflict. The importance of the area was strongly linked to maritime interests of the USSR and the USA, since the control of the Indian Ocean depends also on the Horn of Africa. Moreover, considering a wider geostrategic context, the relevance of the area was further due to the proximity to the Middle East, important for the trade of oil. Taking into account the above-mentioned factors, the increase of the USSR's presence in the area in the 1970s led to an increase of US interest. The USA's foreign policy was linked to the idea of a strong power to guarantee the economic security of the West and the stability of the area, therefore it was necessary to reduce the relevance of the USSR in the Horn of Africa[1]. In this context, the Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger stated, "the Soviet Union has become a strong naval power in the last decade (...) it must be remembered that much of the Soviet Union's strengthening in the Indian Ocean (...) took place after the closure of the Suez Canal in 1967 (...) In a period of historical transition towards a new arrangement of power relations, only the United States among Western nations, have the ability to ensure that a balance is maintained"[2]. Thus, the Horn of Africa was extremely relevant throughout the Cold War, catalyzing the interests of both the USSR and the US.

## 1.1 Economic analysis of the Horn of Africa

The relevance of the Horn of Africa did not decrease after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the West-East conflict. In fact, the Horn of Africa is strategic for the development of the African continent and for trade between Asia, Europe and the Middle East; in particular, the control of maritime trade is guaranteed by its geographical location. The importance of the maritime route has recently come to light with the episode of the Ever Given, a container ship which was stuck for several days in the Suez Canal (a waterway of the Nile River, which runs from Ethiopia and Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean Sea), consequently blocking trade routes. The following data can aid in understanding the importance of such a trade itinerary: it is used for 12% of global trade, 30% of global maritime trade, 7% of oil transportation, thus playing an important role in energy supply for

[1] Pallotti, A., Zamponi, M., "L'Africa sub-sahariana nella politica internazionale", Firenze: Le Monnier, 2010: 72-73.
[2] Ibidem, p. 73.

Europe. This trade route is also crucial for the Italian economy, since 40% (circa 83 billions of euros) of Italy's trade with Asia relies on the Suez Canal[3].

Moreover, it is possible to assert that the region is extremely relevant for the trade flows of Asia, Europe and Africa, as it plays an important role in the economic development of Africa as well. The sea and the ports represent a possibility for the trade of products from the Lakes region, Ethiopia and, above all, South Sudan[4]. Despite such importance, the numerous conflicts in the region have had a huge impact on trade, in certain cases changing or cancelling the routes. An example of such disruptions can be found on the products that used to be shipped from Southern Somalia's ports to Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the Gulf states, but which were later redirected to the Kenya markets due to regional conflict[5].

Considering the regional dimension, trans-border trade represents an important, informal mean of 'shadow'--or informal--trade, which has been favored by the many conflicts and by the weakness of governments. In fact, this pattern is particularly clear in relation to the crisis of the Somalian State[6]. In many cases, informal trade is the only type of trade in the area: official and formal trade almost impossible due to the lack of local infrastructure. For example, there are only few official trade routes for livestock herders, who rely mainly on informal trans-border trade[7]. The 'shadow' trade of livestock finds its principal external market in the Middle East, but also in Nairobi, Kenya, as a response to the growing demand for meat stock. As many local economies are based on livestock, trade of animals is essential for the inhabitants. Indeed, in times of shortage or of difficulties in the informal trade of livestock and other goods, the economic condition of the local populations, especially border populations, worsen due to the decrease of food supply and food security.

Another important aspect shaping the economies of the region is the presence of oil and gas, particularly in Addis Ababa, Juba and Kampala. For example, in South Sudan the oil sector accounts for 70% of GDP and more than 90% of public revenues[8]. These resources could potentially help the

[3] Tentori, D. "Commercio: dopo Suez, quale futuro per la globalizzazione?", *Ispi*, April 2021.
[4] Di Liddo, M., "Terrorismo, conflitti etnici, instabilità: le sfide del Corno d'Africa", *Osservatorio di Politica Internazionale, Centro Studi Internazionali*, n. 91, March 2014.
[5] Love, R., "Economic Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa A Regional Perspective and Overview", *Africa Programme*, *Chatham House*, n. 1, 2009.
[6] Little, P., "Unofficial trade when states are weak: the case of cross-border commerce in the Horn of Africa", *Research Paper, UNU-WIDER*, United Nations University (UNU), n. 2005/13, 2005.
[7] Ibidem
[8] "South Sudan Economic Outlook", *African Development Bank Group*, 2019.

economic development of the region and of the continent, but there needs to be an increase in the infrastructure, as the pipelines are mostly situated in Sudan. In addition to that, the vulnerability to conflicts of the area often make trade of oil and gas complicated: an example is the vigilant behavior that Ethiopia must adopt in buying oil from Sudan[9]. Another issue that Ethiopia has been facing is related to the lack of geographical access to the sea and ports. Such a situation puts Ethiopia in a vulnerable position, because it relies on other countries who have access to the sea, and is one of the reasons why Ethiopia has been promoting its own energy sovereignty through hydroelectric power. By increasing usage of hydroelectric energy, Ethiopia reduces the problems of lack of access to sea and the importance of oil imports. Moreover, greater energy sovereignty helps increase Ethiopia's bargaining power with the neighboring countries to gain easier access to the sea and to export hydroelectric power. This has also been part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) plan to improve infrastructure in order to increase the energy security of the region[10].

In addition to these factors, it is worth mentioning the role played by foreign states in the management of oil and gas. China, in particular, is investing in exploration for oil in many areas of the Horn of Africa, such as in the Mudug region (Somalia) and in Ogaden (Ethiopia)[11]. This aspect has to be considered when analyzing the economic development of the area and the presence of oil and gas reserves.

## 1.2 Security in the Gulf of Aden and navigability of the Indian Ocean

The Suez Canal, as previously mentioned, and the Gulf of Aden (the body of water separating Somalia from Yemen), represent two of the most important trade routes in the world. There are three main alternatives to this route: the circumnavigation of Africa through the Cape of Good Hope (around South Africa), which is a longer route that would increase the trade costs, the railway between China and Europe, and the Northern Sea Route. (A fourth, and final alternative trade route is located in the Russian Arctic, which has recently become navigable in summer due to the absence of ice because of climate change.) Thus, due to their accessibility, the role of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aden in trade is crucial. However, as previously mentioned, the instability of the the Horn of

[9] Love, R., "Economic Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa A Regional Perspective and Overview", *Africa Programme, Chatham House*, n. 1, 2009.
[10] Ibidem
[11] Ibidem

Africa and the conflicts in the area have had a deep impact on this route[12]. In addition to this, the threat posed by piracy has also negatively affected trade flows, thus forcing ships to expand their routes further into the Indian Ocean[13].

The need for additional security has led to an increase in private companies specialized in maritime and naval security. Thus, the insurance field for maritime trade in the area has developed accordingly: the risks of shipping have led to an increase in the price of insurance, ships can pay up to ten times more if traveling in the Gulf of Aden and up to 20 thousands dollars (generally less) for ships regularly traveling in the area[14].

# 2. Threats to Security

## 2.1 Terrorism: Background history

Terrorism, and in particular jihadist terrorism linked to al-Qaeda and its affiliates, constitutes one of the major threats to security in the Horn of Africa. One of the most unstable countries of the region is Somalia. In this regard, multiple attacks carried out mostly by al-Shabaab (the Somalia-based affiliate of Al Qaeda) are causing great concern among governors and citizens across the globe.

The origins of the long-lasting anarchy state in Somalia date back to 1991, when the military dictator Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown[15]. Since then, Somalia has seen warlords and clan conflicts aiming at taking control of the country, leading to extreme poverty rates, ethnic cleansing and perpetual armed conflict that has caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and created roughly one million refugees[16]. Many attempts at a peace process were carried out in the past decades, either through the United Nations or through local actors, but none of them have produced significant results[17].

[12] Di Liddo, M., "Terrorismo, conflitti etnici, instabilità: le sfide del Corno d'Africa", *Osservatorio di Politica Internazionale, Centro Studi Internazionali*, n. 91, 2014.
[13] Middleton, R., Quartapelle, L., "Le conseguenze della pirateria nel Corno d'Africa", *Osservatorio di Politica Internazionale*, n. 11, 2010.
[14] Ibidem
[15] James G., "Somalia's Overthrown Dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre, Is Dead", New York Times, January 3, 1995.
[16] Menkhaus K., "Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America," testimony before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 2009, p.10.
[17] Dagne T., "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," Congressional Research Service, 2010, 24.

In order to impose a certain degree of law and order, *shari'a* courts emerged in the late 1990s, and in mid-2004, one of the courts merged into the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), led by Sheikh Ahmed[18]. These courts were able to combat local warlords and reach a degree of order unheard of in the past. However, the power gained by the ICU allowed the most extremist groups to impose their strict Islamic law on the areas under their control; one of these groups was al-Shabaab, or "The Youth". The astoundingly rapid expansion of the ICU through Mogadishu and south-central Somalia deeply concerned Ethiopia, a majority-Christian country. When the ICU began plotting and preparing for an attack on Baidoa, the headquarters of the Transitional Federal Government backed by Ethiopia, Ethiopian troops responded through military means, quickly destroying the ICU and seizing control of Mogadishu. In this context, when Ethiopia invaded Somalia, ousting the Islamic Courts Union from Mogadishu and making al-Shabaab retreat to the southern part of the country, the armed group started organizing guerrilla assaults on Ethiopian forces, becoming one of the most powerful and radical armed factions in the country[19].

In recent years, al-Shabaab has gained global recognition after carrying out deadly attacks in the capital city of Mogadishu and in the neighboring states of Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. In order to combat the group, African Union peacekeepers known as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) have been deployed since 2007 with the help of the United States of America and the United Nations. In 2017, the first wave of US troops and airstrikes were carried out in Somalia. According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, in 2019, Al-Shabaab casualties declined steadily by eight percent from the previous year[20]. In particular, 87 percent occurred in Somalia and the remaining 13 percent in Kenya. The decreasing number of deaths is a result of a decline by 20 percent in terrorist activity in the capital Mogadishu, which is the main target of attacks performed by Al-Shabaab[21]. On the contrary, terrorism deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab between 2019 and 2020 increased by 83 percent in Kenya, although they still remain lower than 2014, when the militias killed 256 people[22].

[18] Harnisch C., Zimmerman K., "The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of Al-Shabaab", American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats, 2010.
[19] Gordon M., Mazzetti M., "U.S. Used Base in Ethiopia to Hunt Al Qaeda", New York Times, 2007.
[20] Institute for Economics & Peace, "Global Terrorism Index - Measuring the Impact of Terrorism", 2020.
[21] Ibidem
[22] Ibidem

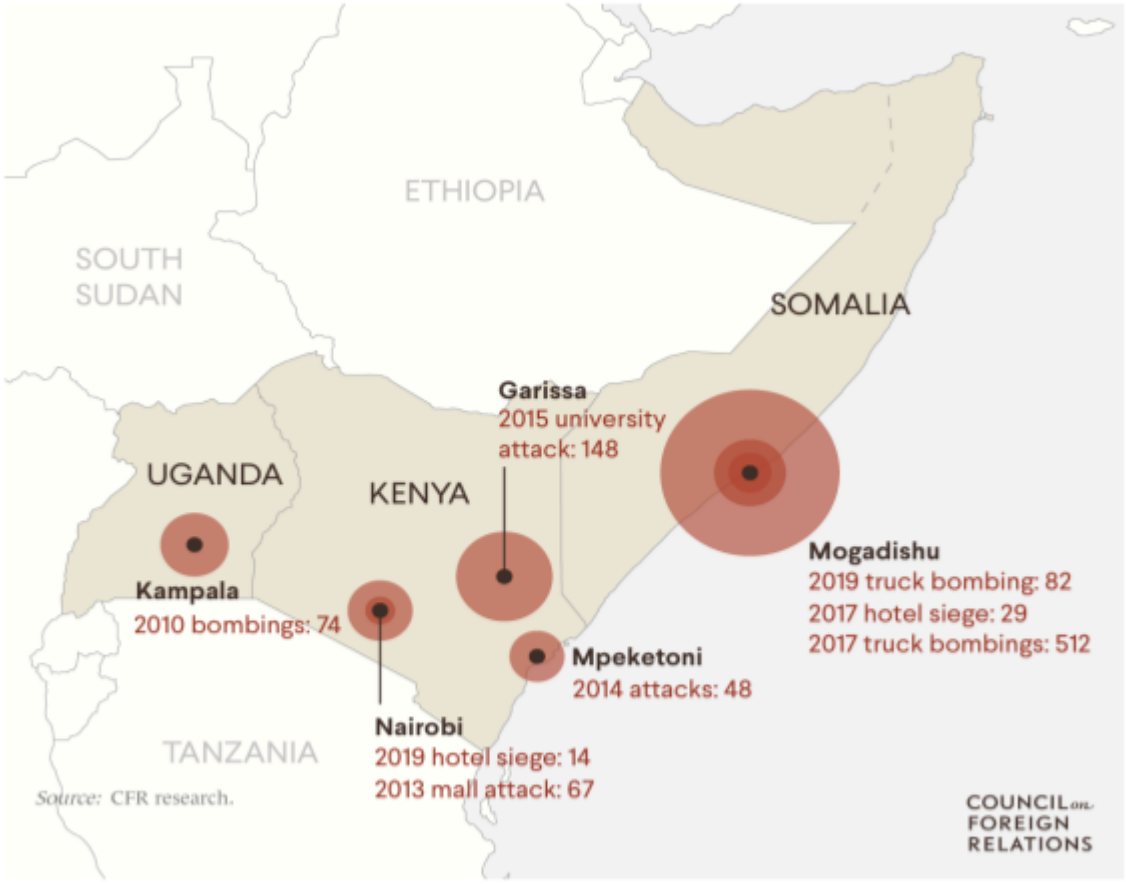



Figure No. 1 Major al-Shabaab Attacks Across East Africa

As shown in Figure No.1, al-Shabaab does not only attack within its own country, Somalia, but it also carries out attacks in neighboring countries such as Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. Its first attack outside of Somalia was in 2010, killing seventy-four people in coordinated bombings in Kampala, Uganda. Then, the group's spokesman stated that: "we are sending a message to every country who is willing to send troops to Somalia that they will face attacks on their territory"[23].

On a tactical level, al Shabaab's *modus operandi* appears to be similar in all the countries they operate in. Terrorists use local grievances to infiltrate local organizations and recruit frustrated youths[24]. In this specific regard, research conducted by the Institute for Security Studies showed that the main reasons why people join the Al-Shabaab militias include religious identity, socio-economic circumstances such as education and unemployment, political circumstances and the need for a collective identity and a sense of belonging[25].

[23] Felter C., Masters J., Sergie M.A., al-Shabaab Backgrounder, Council of Foreign Relations.

[24] African Union, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa", Peace and Security Council, 2014, p. 3.

[25] Abdile M., Botha A., "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia", Institute for Security Studies, 2014.

Furthermore, its main sources of funding come from piracy, kidnapping and extortion of local businesses, farmers and aid groups. Another important source of income comes from taxation imposed on illicitly traded charcoal that brings millions of dollars per year despite the 2012 UN ban on Somali charcoal exports. Lastly, the group is believed to be profiting from sugar smuggling across the Kenyan border, in which Kenyan forces are allegedly involved[26].

In conclusion, although many groups are involved in terrorist activity, the most dangerous one is al-Shabaab, making its home country, Somalia, the fifth most impacted country in the world according to the Global Terrorism Index 2020[27]. Concrete actions have been taken in order to curb the problem, and the initiatives put in place that aim at reshaping the future of the group will be delved into in the next chapters of this report.

## 2.2 Piracy

Piracy consists of criminal acts committed at sea by non-state actors, and it is primarily aimed at illicitly gaining property (or individuals) through robbery and other forms of violence. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1 of 1982 states that: "Piracy" consists of any of the following acts:

> "(a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
>
> i. on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;
>
> ii. against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
>
> (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;
>
> (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b)"[28].

[26] UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 November 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council.
[27] "Global Terrorism Index 2020", Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020: 12.
[28] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In particular, piracy around the Horn of Africa has been an ever-increasing issue in the area as it poses serious threats to the security and development of the countries involved.

In recent years, its danger has risen to a level that led the international community to take concrete action to secure the international sea lane. When the Islamic Courts Union came to power in 2006, piracy in Somalia dropped to zero, since the ICU claimed that they would prosecute those who took part in piracy activity according to *shari'a* law. For instance, when pirates struck the United Arab Emirates cargo ship MV Veesham I, the ICU was able to recapture the vessel and rescue the crew. However, after Ethiopian forces expelled the Islamist forces from Mogadishu and re-established the Transitional Federal Government, the transitional government's weakness made the situation uncontrollable, allowing piracy to spread across the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. In the past years, especially from 2000 to 2012, the area was the maritime zone most affected by piracy[29].

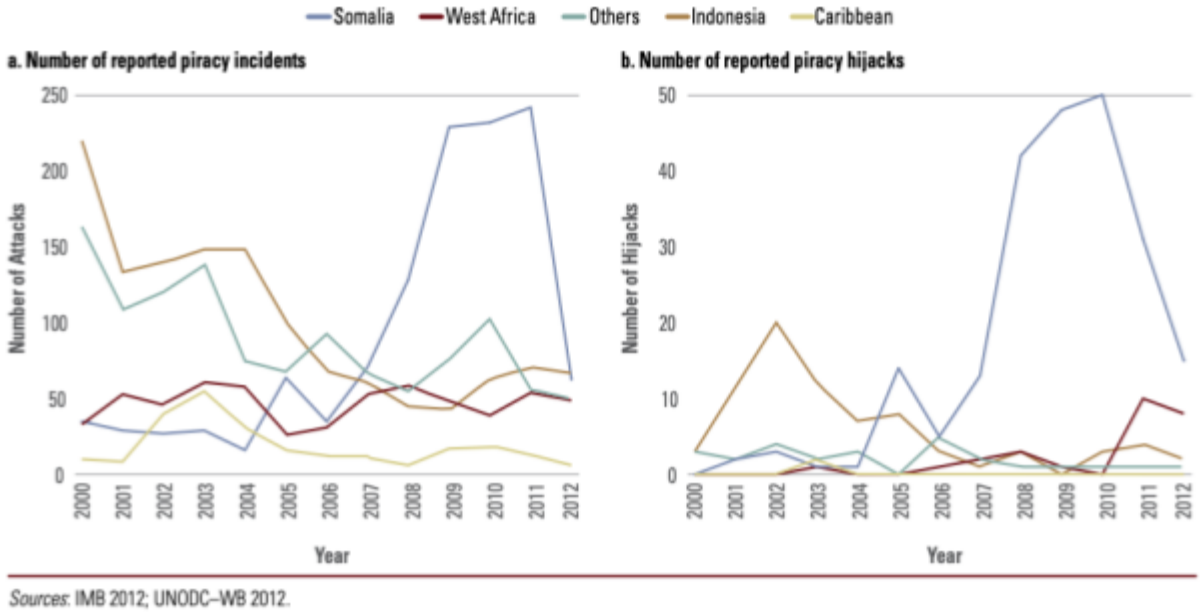



Figure No. 2 Piracy in numbers (2000-2012)

As depicted in Figure No. 2, between 2006 and 2009 the number of attacks off the Horn of Africa reached an average annual growth rate of 87 percent. Attacks in Somalia peaked in 2011 and dropped by 70.1 percent in 2012. Although the area has been the epicenter of most piracy-related incident for many years, according to the International Chamber of Commerce, during the first three months of 2021, there was only one incident of reported piracy around Somalia[30].

[29] ICC International Maritime Bureau, Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, 2020.

[30] International Chamber of Commerce, "Gulf of Guinea remains the world's piracy hotspot in 2021, according to IMB's latest figures", 2021.

As stated in the annual report published by the International Maritime Bureau, in 2020 there were no reported incidents in Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. However, the international maritime forces patrolling these waters continue to coordinate and liaise with local merchant and fishing fleets to identify possible pirate action groups[31]. The bureau still advises ship owners to be be cautious against complacency, since Somali pirates are still capable pf carrying out attacks[32].

As data shows, it is evident how the cooperation and information sharing enacted by the international community are bringing positive results in curbing the issue of piracy, although the risk remains present. The International Maritime Bureau is constantly monitoring the situation and the designated areas in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean are marked as Piracy and Armed Robbery Prone areas, leading to a constant monitoring action of such places in order to prevent further attacks.

# 3. Terrorism and Piracy in the Horn of Africa: A Country-Based Analysis

## 3.1 Somalia

To dedicate a section in this paper to the specific situations (in terms of terrorist threats) which characterize some of the countries of the Horn means trying to embrace the multifaceted plurality – but also the interconnections and the contradictions – implied in this particular area. The common thread through the entire focus is represented by al-Shabaab. Even with some setbacks in recent years due to an African Union–led military operation and US drone attacks, al-Shabaab – on the offensive since 2006 – is undoubtedly capable of carrying out massive attacks in Somalia and in neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, but also in America, Asia, and in Europe.

Going into the detail of this territorial reality, Somalia has, geographically, an extraordinarily strategic location: its northern coast borders the Gulf of Aden, which is located between Asia and Africa and which leads to Bab el-Mandeb, a narrow choke point where all maritime traffic from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean must pass. Additionally, Somalia is situated close to the Suez Canal, with all the advantages that stem from it, in terms of global trade. In spite of this strategic

[31] ICC International Maritime Bureau, Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, 2020.
[32] Ibidem

location – and in spite of its unbelievable wealth of gas reserves – over the last decades, experts have frequently described Somalia as the quintessential collapsed State, because of its State fragility and for being a reign of anarchy nurturing terrorism[33]. The main source of Somalia's political problems is rooted in the power vacuum which took place in the period after Mohammed Siad Barre's regime. That period coincided with the end of the Afghan war with the Soviet Union in 1989, which left al-Qaeda without a base to operate. In Somalia, several radical organizations including al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AlAl) have attempted to occupy that vacuum, but in the long run al-Shabaab has emerged as a hybrid organization that was "both a locally-focused Somali Islamist insurgent group, and a transnational terrorist affiliate of al-Qaeda"[34].

Al-Shabaab's driving motivation is the expulsion of foreign military forces from Somalia and replacing the apostate government(s) with an Islamic State guided by a rigid interpretation of Sharia law. Furthermore, al-Shabaab has the ability and the intent of attacking neighboring States as part of global Jihadism. Despite the ongoing concerted efforts to fight al-Shabaab, the African Union, the Somali National Army (SNA), the US forces and other actors have not undermined the terrorist group's ability to conduct almost-daily attacks in Somalia; more in general, it appears that externally assisted forms of counter-terrorism and peace-building are the most preferable and feasible solutions[35].

It goes without saying that the US presence in Somalia is the core of this discussion; US policy here has generally been consistent across different administrations while continuously changing and adapting to specific strategic aims. Specifically, following the 9/11 attacks, Somalia became a frontline in the US Global War on Terror due to the association between al-Qaeda and al-Itihaad al Islamiya; between 2001 and 2006, counter-terrorism was based on pre-emptive measures, mostly State-based stabilization and destabilization operations[36]. In 2007, however, following the Ethiopian invasion (2006) to help the interim government relocate from Baidoa to Mogadishu, counter-terrorism in Somalia changed dramatically, assuming the characteristics of an open irregular war[37].

[33] Malito, D., "The endless US War on Terror in Somalia", *ISPI*, May 2021.
[34] Blanchard, L., "From Al Shabaab to Al-Nusra: How Westerners Joining Terror Groups Overseas Affect the Homeland", Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, Serial No. 113-38, October 2013: 8.
[35] Wambui Kamau, J., "Is counter-terrorism counterproductive? A case study of Kenya's response to terrorism, 1998-2020", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 28 no. 2, May 2021: 207.
[36] Malito, D., 2021.
[37] Ibidem

The Ethiopian invasion was, essentially, a turning point: it disbanded the Courts, but also fomented new insurgencies both within and outside Somalia. Al-Shabaab emerged as one of the most combative forces, mobilizing insurgencies against the Ethiopian occupation, waging an insurgency that spiraled further changes in counterinsurgency.

The entire initial phase of US counter-terrorism effort produced an isolationist strategy encouraging political polarization and military radicalization, instead of "building the Infrastructure of Democracy"[38] as originally envisaged in the 2002's US National Security Strategy[39]. During the second phase of its counter-terrorism plan, the US and its regional allies won some battles against al-Shabaab, but not the entire war[40]. In 2011, the Obama administration established a framework around the use of drones in counter-terrorism operations, with the double aim of minimizing casualties and increasing accountability[41].

The evident limits of such a perpetual war made the US counterinsurgency position in Somalia evolve once again towards more State-centric initiatives, where combat operations became more systematically integrated with peace and State building initiatives. The establishment in 2011 of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) epitomizes this change. In 2011, the Obama administration established a dual-track policy towards Somalia, envisaging not only support for the central government but also a decentralized approach, that coexisted with actions and "population-centric" forms of counterinsurgency[42].

In December 2020, former US President Trump announced the withdrawal of American troops from Somali soil and, on April 1st of the following year, Biden renewed the state of national emergency – originally declared in 2010 – in response to the "unusual and extraordinary threats"[43] to the USA represented by the situation in Somalia. Thus, in general, the scientific literature seems to agree that

[38] "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", US Government, September 2002.
[39] Malito, D., "Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 36 no.10, September 2015: 1866-1886.
[40] Malito, D., 2021.
[41] "Procedures for approving direct action against terrorist targets located outside the United States and areas of active hostilities", US Government, May 2013.
[42] Moe, L., "The strange wars of liberal peace: hybridity, complexity and the governing rationalities of counterinsurgency in Somalia", Peacebuilding, Vol. 4 no. 1 , October 2015: 99-117.
[43] Malito, D., 2021.

the US presence – which has been historically justified as essential in assisting Somali forces to counter al-Shabaab – has failed to produce the desired stability, also contributing to the conflict.

On the sidelines, at this point, it can be stimulating to open a parenthesis also about piracy, in a country where – even if cooperation between pirates and terrorists is not extraordinarily emphasized at the time – these issues are not isolated. In regards to counter-piracy measures, the long-term success of the strategy depends on a stable, sustainable and unified Somali State; is this a potential scenario in perspective? Judging objectively, the situation does not appear to be encouraging[44] .

First, competition between political factions in Somalia has left poverty unaddressed. This undermines sustainable development and the creation of economic alternatives. As written by Reva: "People are drawn to piracy and other illegal activities with the promise of, if not wealth, a stable income"[45].

Second, according to the recent report by the Centre for Military Studies from the University of Copenhagen, some of the criminal networks responsible for piracy are still active, and, more in general, while many so-called pirate 'foot soldiers' languish in jail, the 'kingpins' are still on the loose[46].

Looking at the big picture, the conditions needed for long-term solutions to piracy remain absent, also considering that the absence of an effective regional and national maritime security strategy makes Somalia more vulnerable to these kinds of security threats[47]. Additionally, at the core of the problem of piracy is Somalia's dependency on the presence of foreign navies and international support for stability and security. Comprehensive counter-piracy efforts must keep the pressure on pirate groups while addressing the root causes that enable these networks to emerge[48].

## 3.2 Kenya

[44] Reva, D., "Ten years on, is Somali piracy still a threat?", Institute for Security Studies 7:1, November 2018.
[45] Ibidem
[46] "Navigating Changing Currents: a forward-looking evaluation of efforts to tackle maritime crime off the Horn of Africa", Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen, September 2018: 18.
[47] Hamad, B., "Maritime Terrorism: Why the East African Community is the Next Potential Target of Maritime Terrorism", *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, ISSN (Paper), Vol. 6, n.3, 2016: 126-133.
[48] Reva, D., 2018.

Shifting now to Kenya, it can be functional to start once again from a merely geographical point of view. More specifically, in this case, it is important to underline the fact that the borders between Kenya and its neighbors are porous while the homogeneity of the people on both sides of the border epitomizes the adage: "We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us"[49]. In particular, the issue of the Kenyan border makes it difficult to distinguish the organized criminals (and jihadists in particular) from the members of pastoral communities in search of pasture for their livestock, and consequently to police the borders effectively.

Overall, terrorism is a major concern for Kenya's national security; just to give an idea, over the past decade, the Somali al-Shabaab – pivotal also with reference to Kenyan situation – attacked the country at least 30 times, sending a clear message: that Nairobi should remove its troops from Somalia if it ever wants peace.

Al-Shabaab's focus on Kenya is due to several factors: first of all, perceived and real grievances and unaddressed historical injustices in Kenya have provided a fertile ground for radicalization into violent extremism and form part of al-Shabaab's recruitment propaganda. Furthermore, it has come to light that a number of converts to Islam have joined the terrorist group either for financial gain or in a quest for adventure. The presence of Kenyan adherents has made it easier for al-Shabaab to access "soft" targets within the country including churches, high-end shopping malls and hotels[50]. Another factor to underline – besides the fact that the high levels of national corruption have allowed for the illegal entry of aliens who fraudulently acquire Kenyan identification documents – is that the country's status as a regional economic and technological hub as well as a tourist destination is exploited by al-Shabaab, which takes advantage of a context in which there are more opportunities for terror attacks[51].

In addition, attacking Kenya also serves an important propaganda purpose for al-Shabaab. Daghar *et al.* affirm: "Kenya hosts a number of international organizations and al-Shabaab considers this as part of its overall mission to target these interests linked to Western countries"[52].

[49] Wambui Kamau, J., "Is counter-terrorism counterproductive? A case study of Kenya's response to terrorism, 1998-2020", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 28 n. 2, May 2021: 208.
[50] Ibidem
[51] Ibidem
[52] Daghar M. *et al.*, "Somalia, terrorism and Kenya's security dilemma," Institute for Security Studies, 1:1, January 2020.

Given the strategy and the danger that al-Shabaab presents, Kenya's continued military presence in Somalia may be a national security imperative, but what form should the intervention take? Kenya may opt to outlive al-Shabaab's existence with its own resources and brave questions over the legitimacy of its action; it may also combine resources for a possible regional alliance with Ethiopia and other regional powers, like Uganda, as a multilateral re-organization following the withdrawal of the African Union Mission in Somalia, but within this general framework, at the same time, it must also be remembered that Kenya's security system – corrupt by definition – leads to a security dilemma at the time when the country tries to strengthen its defenses, whereby al-Shabaab takes advantage of this situation. In this dilemma, and in a context in which the prognosis that African States may experience a rise in terrorist activities and violence is real, Kenya finds itself "between a rock and a hard place"[53].

Either way, focusing on the concrete measures in contrast to terrorism, the fact is that the local government has adopted several activities that form what some researchers calls a 'counter-terrorism strategy', amid objections by those who – also understandably – argue that the one at issue does not qualify as a real strategy.

Going step by step , first of all we need to mention the legal framework, under which Kenya's Courts are able to prosecute acts of terrorism. In particular, the framework consists of the 2010 Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA), the 2011 Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act (POCAMLA), the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), and the 2014 Security Laws (Amendment) Act (SLAA). The second factor of Kenya's 'strategy' is the establishment of several specialized security agencies, including the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU) and the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC). Additionally, Kenya has focused on a series of programmes for preventing and countering violent extremism under the aegis of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE 2016)[54].

Even more interestingly, the Government proposed a border wall to deal with the challenge posed by porous borders, as well as security agency and country resource gaps and corruption. However, walls are not an effective method to prevent radicalization in a Kenyan context in which

[53] Daghar, M. *et al*., 2020.
[54] Wambui Kamau, J.: 204.

radicalization already takes place in many ways, including in mosques, and through social media. Plus, for undocumented immigrants and weapon and contraband smugglers, walls are surmountable, also due to corruption afflicting government officials and security officers, from those immigration officials and staff who process fake identification documents to those policing entry points at the borders[55]. Another analogous element is the attempt to repeal the 2006 Refugee Act to allow for the disbandment of refugee camps that provide haven to terror elements. Finally, the adoption of a multi-agency security approach characterized by different arms of government and non-government actors collaborating to detect, deter and disrupt terrorists and violent extremists must be stressed[56].

Given all of these factors, paradoxically, it appears that – instead of the country becoming safer due to these counter-terrorism policies – the 'strategy' simply leads to a scenario in which terrorism remains a major threat to the country's national security, along the lines of a four-decade-long relationship with groups utilizing terror to actualize their goals. In short, the more the government engages in counter-terrorism, the more terrorists attack.

Therefore, the following lessons must be highlighted: first, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of Kenya's strategies beyond external observation, due to the fact that security is under the purview of the national government. Second, as long as the 'pull factors' – including the prevailing situation in Somalia and the emerging new theatres of terrorism in the region – are present, terrorism will remain a concern. Third, as long as government efforts in counter-terrorism remain disjointed and uncoordinated, incidents of terrorism will continue. Fourth, structural weaknesses in the security sector caused by differences in levels of training, equipment, as well as divergent doctrines and operational cultures, undermine effective multi-agency cooperation[57]. In particular, Kenya's security services have indeed a long history of questionable conduct, and despite a period of apparent reform, it seems old habits die hard[58].

Enlarging the discussion, it goes without saying that Kenya has a sacrosanct right to act in self-defense against violent extremists, but, given the context, at what cost? The opportunity cost is

[55] Wambui Kamau, J.: 217.
[56] Ibidem*:* 216-217.
[57] Ibidem 220-221.
[58] Allen, K., "How the Global War on Terror killed the prospect of Justice for Kenyan victims of violence", Defence Strategic Communications, The Official Journal of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 6:1, March 2019: 11-49.

not easy to calculate: on the one hand there are several operations that – like the deployment in 2011 of Kenyan security forces in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia – has made it increasingly vulnerable to retaliatory attacks by al-Shabaab, but on the other hand there is the American and British support. The US provides Kenya with over US$8 million in anti-terrorism law enforcement support annually, along with hardware and training. Britain continues to fund training of Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit which has been implicated in numerous cases of forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and the shooting of several high-profile Islamic clerics over recent years. If we look at the big picture[59], Kenya's position as a key partner and security ally of the US and Britain has arguably provided a degree of leverage to withstand international pressure to address security force abuses[60].

The final part of this Kenya-focused subsection is dedicated to some considerations on maritime terrorism. In this country, it is important to remember that the territory at issue borders the Indian Ocean to the east, and – first and foremost – shares both land and maritime borders with Somalia; consequently, it can be interesting to spend a few words on this theme, starting from the fact that Kenya is at war with al-Shabaab[61].

There are seven preconditions for maritime terrorism to take place: legal and jurisdiction weakness, geographical proximity, inadequate security, secure base areas, maritime skills, charismatic and effective leadership, and State support. Al-Shabaab has many of these elements already, so it could be just a matter of time before it can strike again, this time probably by sea. On the one hand, al-Shabaab operates in a lawless State with minimum security, which provides the perfect secure base to train militants and launch attacks with minimum interference and, on the other hand, the Kenyan maritime domain is less policed and within reach of al-Shabaab, potentially an easy target for terrorist attacks. It must be highlighted that, once again, most of the problems derive from structural weaknesses within the security agencies caused by differences in level of training and equipment as well as the divergent doctrines and operational cultures; nevertheless[62], Kenya is trying to promote multi-agency cooperation, and this forms a subject area for future research[63].

[59] Ibidem
[60] Ibidem
[61] Hamad, B., op. cit., 2016.
[62] Ibidem
[63] Ibidem

## 3.3 Ethiopia

Despite the fact that Ethiopia has no direct access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia not only plays a major role within the framework of the Horn of Africa, but it is also well connected to the Middle East and its markets, not to mention that the country is part of broader dynamics which include the Gulf and an enlarged Mediterranean context. Consequently, Africa's oldest independent nation presents itself – on par with other regional realities – as a strategic territory, whereby its importance has also been recognized by the US[64].

Overall, Ethiopia is undoubtedly a country full of internal contradictions; this element is epitomized by the fact that its resources, albeit interesting, are not fully encouraged by the government; equally, we could put in evidence the fact that – in the presence of large disparities – the development is not designed to reflect inclusive patterns. Nevertheless, from a political perspective, it appears that Ethiopia is the readiest country to guide the multilateral initiatives which will involve the Horn of Africa. It is no accident that, over the past two decades, Ethiopia has acquired a crucial leading role as part of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and of the African Union, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa; the high number of bilateral agreements with neighboring countries is another signal of increasing diplomatic activity[65].

In political terms, most importantly, Ethiopia plays a huge role in coordinating the fight against terrorism and, specifically, against al-Shabaab, even adopting counter-terrorism legislation in 2009[66]. Despite the withdrawal of part of its military forces from the AMISOM in 2016, the State has not changed its efforts in many of the African missions led by the Security Council, becoming an irreplaceable partner for several Western countries, including the US[67].

[64] "Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations On Reviewing Current Developments in Ethiopia" – "Ethiopia's Strategic Importance US National Security Interests at Risk in the Horn of Africa", American Enterprise Institute, September 2018.

[65] Giansantelli I., Ruffato E., "L'identità etiope nel Corno d'Africa tra passato e presente", Centro Studi Geopolitica.info.

[66] Workneh T., "Counter-terrorism in Ethiopia: manufacturing insecurity, monopolizing speech", *Internet Policy Review*, *Journal on Internet Regulation*, 8:1, March 2019.

[67] The American government provides financial and technical assistance to Addis Ababa, in exchange for the Ethiopian contribution to stability and peace in the entire Horn.

In spite of the convincing Ethiopian contribution in pursuing regional balance, there are some alarming situations. The most important one among them is the recent fighting in Ethiopia's northern Tigray State between the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a quarrel that may not only have drastic implications for the future of the country but could also seriously affect its neighbors.

However, despite the fact that a possible unleashing of a chain reaction could be very dangerous, what is more preoccupying at this time is the potential impact of the warfare in Tigray on Somalia's stability; as highlighted by Fatuma Ahmed Ali:

> "If the recent political tensions in Ethiopia persist, it will evidently have an effect on the internal security of Somalia, on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)'s mission, and might lead to some federal member States' disintegration and the loss of a credible regional peacemaker able to mediate its conflict with Somaliland and Kenya"[68].

The author, in other words, prefigures a domino effect of the Tigray war on internal security and the AMISOM, an element that – from a geopolitical point of view – could mark a (negative) turning point, given that Ethiopia's main goal is to assist the Somali government forces to contain and disband al-Shabaab.

The bottom line is that there is a danger that the Ethiopian federal government's focus on Tigray could weaken its involvement in backing the Somali government against al-Shabaab militants, in a context in which Ethiopia has actually already withdrawn about 600 soldiers from Somalia's western border. To once again cite Ali:

> "If the situation deteriorates further [...], that will create an opportunity for al-Shabaab to regrow and regroup again. Indeed, Ethiopia's decision to withdraw troops from AMISOM will impact the capacity and effectiveness of the mission as a stabilizing force since it is one of the most experienced, best-trained and best-equipped contingents"[69].

Ethiopia has provided crucial support to the federal government of Somalia in its rivalry with Somalia's federal member states of Southwest and Jubaland. This support was witnessed, in 2018, when Ethiopian forces assisted President Farmajo by arresting Mukhtar Robow and repressing his supporters in the contested regional presidential elections in Southwest State. Likewise, in 2019

[68] Ali Ahmed, F., "The Potential Impact of the Ethiopia's War in Tigray on Somali Stability", *ISPI*, January 2021.
[69] Ibidem

Ethiopia sided with President Mohamed Farmajo in his dispute with the Kenya-backed president of Jubaland, Ahmed Madobe. Hence, if Ethiopia withdraws its troops from Somalia, Farmajo's grip will be weakened. Somali leaders are keeping a watchful eye on the conflict between Addis Ababa and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as one that seems to mirror Somalia's centre-periphery tug-of-war[70].

We can only wait and see the development of this tense context, but one thing is for certain: intra-state conflicts in the Horn of Africa have always had a devastating domino effect, making the region one of Africa's most highly unpredictable and conflictive zones.

## 3.4 Djibouti

Geographically, Djibouti has a land area of only 23,000 square kilometers but a location that attracts foreign powers; countries around the world race to establish military bases in Djibouti because of its geostrategic location[71]. The reasons why the location can be considered strategic can be explained by two outstanding factors.

First of all, Djibouti lies on the western coast of Bab el-Mandeb Strait; second, its geographic position is close to potential crisis areas, not just in the Horn of Africa but also with reference to the rest of the African continent. In this regard, the country's nearest neighbors include, in particular, two hotspots: Yemen and Somalia, whereby Djibouti's relative peace and stability in an area of chaos provide foreign powers a suitable staging area for their military operations in the region[72].

In addition to these valid points, we must bear in mind that the Red Sea is one of the world's most important trading routes for global commerce between Europe and Asia, whereby if the passage through the Red Sea is interrupted or threatened, the alternatives are costly and with serious impact on the global economy. Consequently, protecting the Red Sea and the freedom of navigation are in the vital interests of all the Great Powers and they have to join forces to prevent terror attacks in Djibouti.

[70] Ibidem
[71] Shay, S., "Djibouti, the next target of al-Shabaab", International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, April 2021.
[72] Ho Wan Beng, B., "The Strategic Attractions of Djibouti", *The National Interest*, March 2016.

In light of these considerations, it is no accident that Djibouti is host to a contingent of AMISOM troops fighting al-Shabaab or, more importantly, the fact that the country houses military bases for China, Japan, Italy, Saudi Arabia and, in particular, the United States and France; renting military bases is considered one of the most important sources of revenues for Djibouti[73].

Going into detail, the United States established a base in Djibouti in 2002 after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. With reference to France, Djibouti is home to its largest overseas military base, established under a 1977 bilateral defense protocol. From 1999 to 2001, Djibouti fought an insurgency that was eventually put down with French assistance. Following the war, Djibouti became increasingly stable and France handed over gave over the abovementioned Camp Lemonnier to the government of Djibouti, which then leased it to the US in 2001.For the Americans, Camp Lemonnier is the hub for their Global War against terrorism. From its base in Djibouti, the US military regularly conducts secret operations and drone raids against al Qaeda of the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen and al-Shabaab in Somalia[74].

More in general, the international presence in Djibouti has returned to being crucial during these months, in which the tension is high. In a video released on March 26, 2021, the leader of al-Shabaab, Abu Ubaydah lashed out at Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh, in power since 1999. Abu Ubaydah accused Guelleh of turning the Horn of Africa country "...into a military base from where every war against the Muslims in East Africa is planned and executed. Make American and French interests in Djibouti the highest priority of your targets"[75]. It was not the first time that the leader of al-Shabaab called for attacks against American, French and Israeli targets. For example, on January 5, 2021, Abu Ubaydah urged his followers to step up attacks against American and Israeli targets and also called for attacks on France for its "crimes" against the honor of the prophet Muhammad[76].

The points raised above are all indications and signs of the strategic role that this tiny but mighty country, just like most of the countries of the Horn of Africa, assumes in today's geopolitics, receiving a lot of attention from major world powers, but – we might observe – the population receives little benefit from such might.

[73] Shay, S.
[74] Shay, S.
[75] Ibidem
[76] Ibidem

# 4. Currently Active Operations in the Horn of Africa

Overall, the Horn of Africa region is experiencing several changes in its external security environment. Following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the region has confronted a renewed geopolitical and strategic value, as demonstrated by the substantial increase in the number and size of foreign military deployments, aimed at enhancing the efforts to counter violent extremism. The presence of a wide range of regional and international actors - such as the European Union, the United States, the Middle Eastern countries, the Gulf States - is an expression of this growing relevance. The proliferation of military facilities in littoral areas represents the most evident effect of this presence, together with the buildup of naval forces around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden. At the same time, the region remains one of the most vulnerable and at-risk areas due to its socio-economic underdevelopment[77].

The United States' presence in the region has been increased by the implementation of several military operations through the years. One of the first operations implemented was the Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA), launched in October 2002 and aimed at countering militant Islamism and piracy. It involves eight African States, from the north-east region to the Guinea Gulf. Since 2003, the United States Government has operated several military installations as part of OEF-HOA, in Ethiopia, including short-term forward operating locations, sites for launching UAV and monitoring operations. At the end of 2015, these installations were closed, moving the aircraft to other hot spots[78].

The operations on land were committed to the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), whose responsibility was transferred to United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) in 2008. It is a dynamic headquarters, aimed at enhancing partner nation capacity, stabilizing the region by dissuading conflicts and countering violent extremist organizations in the region. Its area of responsibility includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia and Sudan, while conducting further operations outside these areas, as for instance in Liberia and Rwanda. It officially consisted of 2000 US military service members, cooperating with personnel from allied countries. The stability of the region was the major aspiration of the operation, implemented through the

[77] Melvin N., "The foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa Region", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019: 10.
[78] Ibidem

development and enhancement of influence, support to security cooperation, response to crisis and contingency operations[79]. In 2003, the CJTF-HOA moved to Camp Lemonnier The Government of the United States was willing to establish the Camp as a permanent facility and, in 2012, the Department of Defense initiated a US$14 billion plan aimed at developing it, also implemented by Obama's Administration in 2014. The task force is currently deployed in the region, assuring its stability and enhancing cooperation[80].

In late 2008, a further phenomenon caught the interest of the international security agenda. Somali piracy affected vessels transiting through the Gulf of Aden, passing by the Somali coast: over 100 merchant ships were attacked, enhancing maritime crime, and resulting in a severe threat to the global supply chain and energy security. The first international response to the threat of piracy was the cooperation of vessels from Canada, Denmark and France, answering a United Nations request to escort the vulnerable shipments of the World Food Programme around the Somali coast. Starting from October 2008, the Operation Allied Provider was established by NATO's forces, later replaced by a European Union Naval Force, EUNAVFOR, mission, known as Operation Atalanta[81].

NATO's mission returned to the area in 2009, renamed Operation Ocean Shield, to deter and disrupt piracy, coordinate the international efforts, improving the maritime capacity and implementing a regional capability to counter piracy effectively[82]. Despite the international efforts, pirate attacks on the Somali coast continued to rise throughout 2011, since the pirate gangs were able to adapt to the increasing military naval presence in the Gulf by shifting the operations to the Indian Ocean. By 2012, however, the attacks experienced a decline: hijackings were down by 50% and attacks by 70%[83]. The reasons behind this decline were several. On one hand, from a military point of view, the improvement in international coordination among naval forces represented a fundamental asset, together with the adoption of more vigorous rules of engagement. Furthermore, the establishment of anti-piracy courts by the UN in several coastal States was believed to have a deterring effect on young Somali men and their eventual engagement in piracy activities. The stabilization and development of Somali politics and security played an important role as well, as it

[79] "Fact sheet: Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa", Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, Nov. 2015.
[80] Melvin N., "The foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa Region", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019: 21.
[81] "EU Naval Force: Somalia. Operation ATALANTA", European External Action Service, 2021.
[82] Knops R., "The Challenge of Piracy: International Response and NATO's Role", NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities, November 2012: 8.
[83] Bridger J., "Safe Seas at What Price?: the Costs, Benefits and Future of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield", NATO Defense College, 2013: 3.

made the country less susceptible to piracy than in 2008. Finally, the shipping industry implemented serious proactive measures - such as the Best Management Practices which provides guidelines on transit speeds, passive defense measures and the use of anti-piracy citadels - and the use of private armed guards on board, the use of which has risen from 30% in 2011 to 50% in 2012, currently reaching between 60% and 80%[84].

The most significant player in counter-piracy operations is undoubtedly the European Union's EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission. Implemented in 2008, its importance relies on the size of the deployment and the EU's political ability to offer a more comprehensive approach. It consists of "five to ten surface vessels, one to two auxiliary ships and two to four patrol aircraft, a total of 1,500 military personnel including land-based staff"[85]. The mission's goals were aid protection, piracy prevention, shipping protection and monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia. Since 2009, the operation has been able to protect 1,598 World Food Programme vessels and 704 AMISMO vessels. Also, a total of 171 pirates were transferred to the competent authorities for their prosecution[86]. However, the engagement of the European Union in Somalia went far beyond the exclusive naval mission. In fact, the EU has provided support to the Transitional Federal Government, arranging training missions in Somalia and Uganda, and to the development of coastal police forces[87].

Currently commanded by the Brazilian Navy, the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) is also operating in the region. It is a multinational force - composed of forces from the US, Brazil, Japan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Turkey - established in 2009 and since 2019 endorsed under UNSCR 2500, and whose mission is to protect global maritime commerce and secure freedom of navigation from the piracy threat. In coordination with EUNAVFOR and independently deployed naval ships from other States, such as China and India, it assures the safety of transit patrolling the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC)[88].

These operations seem to have successfully implemented their goals, as proven by the fact that there have been no incidents of piracy off the Horn of Africa reported in the last year; the decision

[84] "The Economic Cost of Somali Piracy 2012", One Earth Future Foundation, 2012: 7.
[85] Knops R., "The Challenge of Piracy: International Response and NATO's Role", NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities, November 2012: 9.
[86] "Key Facts and Figures", EU Naval Force – Somalia, Operation Atalanta.
[87] Ibidem
[88] "Combined Task Force 151: Counter Piracy", Combined Maritime Forces.

to prorogate their mandates, however, has still been welcomed by the international community and, in particular, by the shipping cluster operating in the area. In fact, notwithstanding the decline of piracy attacks on the Somali coast and the suppression of potential for piracy, the phenomenon cannot be considered totally eradicated. Their missions remain as vital as ever to maintain a permanent and effective control over the sea in the region[89].

# CONCLUSION

As discussed in the previous chapters, the Horn of Africa represents an extremely important and strategic area, thanks to its geographical location that makes it fundamental for maritime traffic in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean. The strategic location of the Horn of Africa guarantees an opportunity for the development of the African continent and for trade between Asia, Europe and the Middle East, however, it also exposes the area to threats such as terrorism and piracy, which have been discussed in the second chapter.

Terrorism and piracy represent two of the most significant threats to the development and security of said region, endangering civilians, encouraging corruption, and disrupting the economy, especially considering that the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean are crucial transit points for maritime trade.The Horn of Africa is a multifaceted reality, presenting different characteristics and being exposed to varying levels of threat; for this reason, chapter three provides a comprehensive analysis of each country's profile, starting from a geographical point of view and then shifting to the strategic and geopolitical aspects.

The importance of the Horn of Africa and the issues that characterize it gathered global attention due to the transnational dimension that terrorism activity acquired. Numerous efforts have been made by the international community in order to curb terrorism and piracy-related incidents. In this regard, particular attention has been given to the currently active operations in the Horn of Africa. It is evident how the United States has a predominant role in the implementation of military operations, however, starting from 2008, the phenomenon entered the international security agenda, and major efforts have been put into place by the global community in order to secure the area. Among them, the EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission carried out by the European Union is the most significant one; thanks to it, 171 pirates were transferred to the competent authorities for prosecution, and 1,598 World Food Programme vessels and 704 AMISMO vessels were protected.

[89] Ibidem

Furthermore, the European Union did not only provide naval support, but also supported the Transitional Federal Government through the arrangement of training missions in both Somalia and Uganda, as well as the development of coastal police forces.

The on-going operations against piracy are showing successful results, since there have been no piracy-related incidents in the past year. However, the Horn of Africa is still extremely unstable due to the terrorist activity led by mostly Islamist groups such as Al-Shabaab. To sum up, the Horn of Africa remains a crucial area for the development of the African continent and holds great potential for commercial trade. The level of threat remains high, and for this reason, international, multilateral efforts are essential to keep its instability under control and curb the issues caused by terrorism and piracy.

# Works Cited

Abdile M., Botha A., "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia", Institute for Security Studies, 2014.

African Union, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa", Peace and Security Council, 2014.

Aklilu, Y., Little, P. D., Mahmoud, H., McPeak, J., "Market access and trade issues in the drylands in the Horn of Africa", *International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) Brief 2*, 2013. Retrieved from https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/27616/tc_brief2.pdf?sequence=2.

Ali Ahmed, F., "The Potential Impact of Ethiopia's War in Tigray on Somali Stability", *ISPI*, January 2021. Retrieved from https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/potential-impact-ethiopias-war-tigray-somali-stability-28933.

Allen, K., "How the Global War on Terror killed the prospect of Justice for Kenyan victims of violence", Defence Strategic Communications, *The Official Journal of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence*, 6:1, 11-49, March 2019.

American Enterprise Institute, "Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations On Reviewing Current Developments in Ethiopia" – "Ethiopia's Strategic Importance US National Security Interests at Risk in the Horn of Africa", September 2018. Retrieved from https://www.congress.gov/115/meeting/house/108670/witnesses/HHRG-115-FA16-Wstate-EstelleE-20180912.pdf.

Anderson, M. A., "The politics of oil in Eastern Africa", Journal of Eastern African Studies, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2011: 369-412.

Blanchard, L., "From Al Shabaab to Al-Nusra: How Westerners Joining Terror Groups Overseas Affect the Homeland", Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress, First Session, Serial No. 113-38, 8, October 2013. Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-113hhrg87183/html/CHRG-113hhrg87183.htm.

Bridger J., "Safe Seas at What Price?: the Costs, Benefits and Future of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield", *NATO Defense College*, 2013.

Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen, "Navigating Changing Currents: a forward-looking evaluation of efforts to tackle maritime crime off the Horn of Africa", September 2018.

Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, "Fact sheet: Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa", Nov. 2015. Retrieved from https://www.hoa.africom.mil/about-the-command.

Combined Task Forces, "Combined Task Force 151: Counter Piracy", *Combined Maritime Forces*. Retrieved from https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-151-counter-piracy/.

Corda, T., Dentice, G., Procopio, M., "Corsa al Corno d'Africa: interessi globali e competizione regionale", *Ispi*, October 2018. Retrieved from https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/corsa-al-corno-dafrica-interessi-globali-e-competizione-regionale-21371.

Daghar M. *et alii*, "Somalia, terrorism and Kenya's security dilemma," Institute for Security Studies, 1:1, January 2020.

Dagne T., "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," Congressional Research Service, 2010.

Di Liddo, M., "Terrorismo, conflitti etnici, instabilità: le sfide del Corno d'Africa", *Osservatorio di Politica Internazionale, Centro Studi Internazionali*, No. 91, March 2014. Retrieved from http://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/repository/affariinternazionali/osservatorio/approfondimenti/PI0091.pdf.

EUNAVFOR, "Key Facts and Figures", *EU Naval Force – Somalia, Operation Atalanta*. Retrieved from https://eunavfor.eu/key-facts-and-figures/.

"EU Naval Force: Somalia. Operation ATALANTA", European External Action Service, 2021. Retrieved from https://eunavfor.eu/mission/.

Felter C., Masters J., Sergie M.A., al-Shabaab, Backgrounder, Council of Foreign Relations.

Giansantelli I., Ruffato E., "L'identità etiope nel Corno d'Africa tra passato e presente", Centro Studi "Geopolitica.info", May 2021. Retrieved from https://www.geopolitica.info/lidentita-etiope-nel-corno-dafrica-tra-passato-e-presente/.

"Global Terrorism Index", Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf.

Gordon M., Mazzetti M., "U.S. Used Base in Ethiopia to Hunt Al Qaeda", *New York Times*, 2007.

Hamad, B., "Maritime Terrorism: Why the East African Community is the Next Potential Target of Maritime Terrorism", *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, no. 1, 2016.

Harnisch C., Zimmerman K., "The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of Al-Shabaab", American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats, 2010.

Ho Wan Beng, B., "The Strategic Attractions of Djibouti", *The National Interest*, March 2016.

ICC International Maritime Bureau, "Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships", 2020.

Institute for Economics & Peace, "Global Terrorism Index - Measuring the Impact of Terrorism", 2020.

International Chamber of Commerce, "Gulf of Guinea remains the world's piracy hotspot in 2021, according to IMB's latest figures ", 2021.

Kareem Z., "Cost-Effective Maritime Security Cooperation", *Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, 2015.

James G., "Somalia's Overthrown Dictator, Mohammed Siad Barre, Is Dead", New York Times, January 3, 1995.

Knops R., "The Challenge of Piracy: International Response and NATO's Role", *NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defense Capabilities*, November 2012.

Little, P.Int, "Unofficial trade when states are weak: the case of cross-border commerce in the Horn of Africa", Research Paper, UNU-WIDER, United Nations University (UNU), n. 2005/13, April 2005. Retrieved from https://www.econstor.eu/dspace/bitstream/10419/63620/1/488096189.pdf.

Love, R., "Economic Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa A Regional Perspective and Overview", *Africa Programme, Chatham House*, No. 1, December 2009. Retrieved from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/bp1209horn.pdf.

Malito D., "Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia", *Third World Quarterly*, 36:10, 1866-1886, September 2015.

Malito D., "The endless US War on Terror in Somalia", *ISPI*, May 2021.

Melvin N., "The foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa Region", *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2019.

Menkhaus K., "Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America," testimony before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 2009.

Middleton, R., Quartapelle, L., "Le conseguenze della pirateria nel Corno d'Africa", in *Osservatorio di Politica Internazionale*, No. 11, May 2010. Retrieved from https://www.parlamento.it/documenti/repository/affariinternazionali/osservatorio/note/Nota_11_ISPI_Pirateria.pdf.

Moe, L., "The strange wars of liberal peace: hybridity, complexity and the governing rationalities of counterinsurgency in Somalia", *Peacebuilding*, Vol. 4, no. 1, October 2015: 99-117.

Murphy, M., "Chapter Two: Maritime Terrorism", *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 74 no. 388, June 2007.

Oceans Beyond Piracy, "The Economic Cost of Somali Piracy 2012", *One Earth Future Foundation*, 2012.

Pallotti, A., Zamponi, M., *L'Africa sub-sahariana nella politica internazionale*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 2010.

Patey, L., "Learning in Africa: CHina's Overseas Oil Investments in Sudan and South Sudan", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 26, No. 107, 2017: 756-768.

Potgieter, T., "Poverty, poaching and pirates: geopolitical instability and maritime insecurity off the Horn of Africa", *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2010: 86-112.

Reva, D., "Ten years on, is Somali piracy still a threat?", *Institute for Security Studies* 7:1, November 2018.

Sergi, B. S., 'The Pirates' Curse: Economic Impacts of the Maritime Piracy", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 39, n. 10, 2016.

Shay, S., "Djibouti, the next target of al-Shabaab", *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, April 2021.

Solomon, H., *Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in Africa*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015.

"South Sudan Economic Outlook", African Development Bank Group, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/south-sudan/south-sudan-economic-outlook.

Tentori, D., "Commercio: dopo Suez, quale futuro per la globalizzazione?", ISPI, April 2021. Retrieved from https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/commercio-dopo-suez-quale-futuro-la-globalizzazione-29866.

UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 November 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982.

US Government, "Procedures for approving direct action against terrorist targets located outside the United States and areas of active hostilities", May 2013 Retrieved from https://www.justice.gov/oip/foia-library/procedures_for_approving_direct_action_against_terrorist_targets/download.

US Government, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", September 2002. Retrieved from https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf.

Wambui Kamau, J., "Is counter-terrorism counterproductive? A case study of Kenya's response to terrorism, 1998-2020", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 28:2, May 2021.

Workneh T., "Counter-terrorism in Ethiopia: manufacturing insecurity, monopolizing speech", *Internet Policy Review*, *Journal on Internet Regulation*, 8:1, March 2019.