



مركز السلم والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Center for Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Lens of terrorist attacks and Acts of violence in Africa

The Third quarter of 2023

**Prepared BY:
Combating Hate Speech and
Violent Extremism Unit**



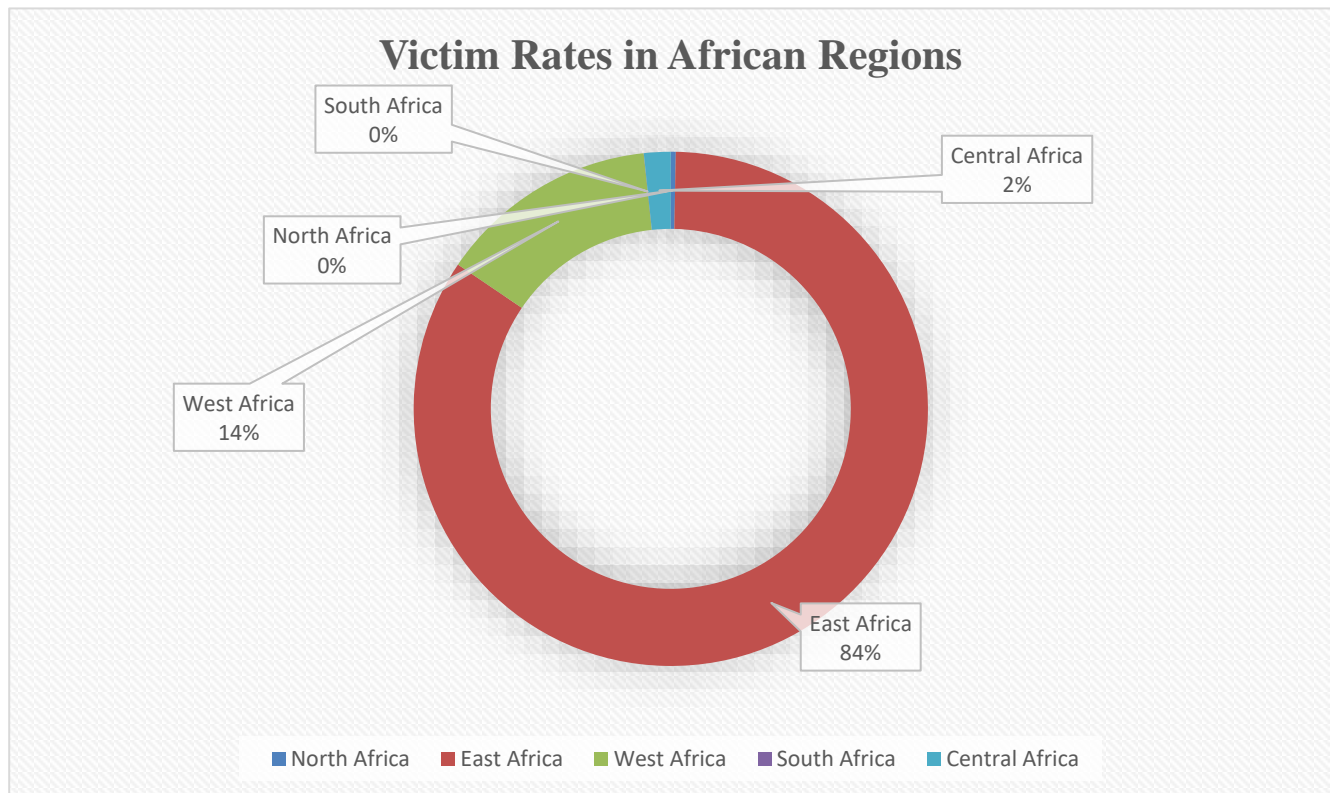
Report Summary

Lens of Terrorist Operations and Acts of Violence in Africa, 2023 Q3

Africa was caught in a vicious cycle of violence and terrorism. Despite the scale of military efforts of the continent, in participation with international allies, and international mechanisms to combat terrorism, terrorism proceeds and continues. At least 9,602 victims were recorded in the third quarter of 2023. Although some countries restored calm in the region and were stable, such as in North Africa, the Sahel region of Africa is currently witnessing a conflict between various terrorist groups of followers of the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, besides the violence practiced against national armies and civilian targets in countries of that region. After terrorist operations began to disappear in Sudan, the country quickly drifted into a state of civil war with armed conflict between the army forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). As for Somalia, whose forces, in cooperation with international partners and the African Union, succeeded in defeating part of the terrorism of the Islamic Al-Shabaab movement, which pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda, we find that terrorism is dropping out across the border into Kenya. Terrorist operations continue regularly in Nigeria, so violence spreads across Africa and manifests itself for a list of causes, topped by terrorism.

The crisis of military coups comes in the recent period, increasing cases of instability and violence, which forces the forces of those countries to devote themselves to political conflicts at the expense of the fight against terrorism. As the armed conflict crisis in Sudan worsened for 5 months, and Sudan topped the list of countries witnessing violence, East Africa continues to lead the five African regions, in the period from the beginning of July to September, covered by the report, with 8,082 deaths. West African region continues to occupy 2nd place in terms of terrorism and violent extremism, with 1,328 deaths, supported by cases of unrest and terrorism in Nigeria, which ranks 2nd among African countries in the period covered by the report, besides Burkina Faso and Mali. Central African region maintained its position in the 3rd place, with 161 deaths. As usual, North and South Africa have the lowest numbers among the five regions, so the continent maintains the same distribution in the third quarter as in the second quarter of 2023, but the period covered by the report witnesses a decline in numbers, except some countries such as Sudan, due to many reasons focused on combating terrorism, but the most prominent reason lies in political movements, especially the recent coups

movement on the continent, which puts all parties in a state of anticipation, hoping for new political gains.

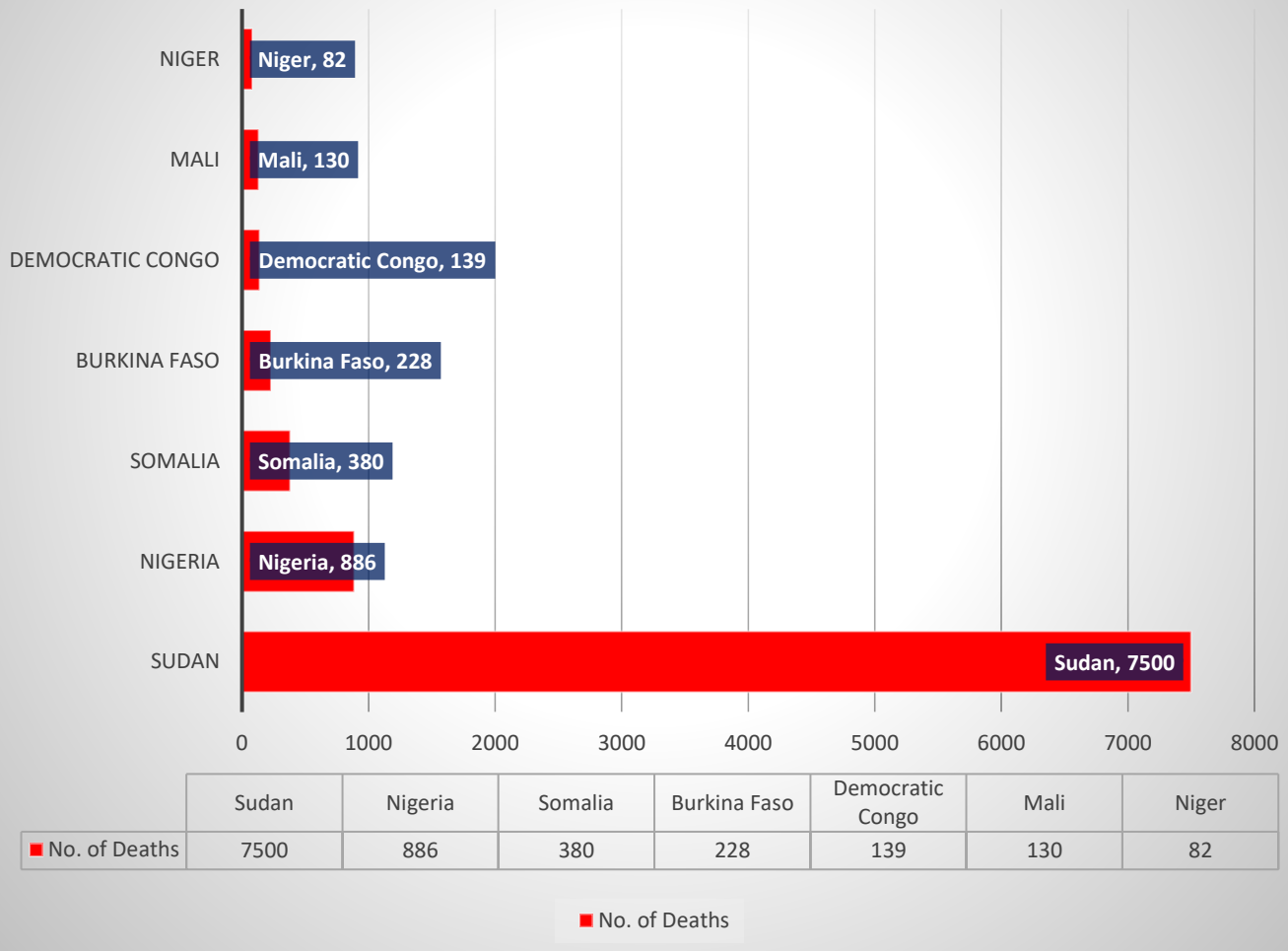


Africa is still groaning due to the continuous terrorism and violent extremism, which undermines any form of normal life for the people of the continent. Sudan ranked first, which it has maintained since last April, due to the escalation in the pace of terrorism as a result of the armed conflict between the army forces and the Rapid Support Forces. The number of victims in the Arab-African country reached 7,500 dead, in addition to a much larger number of injured. This number is considered much less than the actual reality, which witnesses the exchange of strikes between the forces every day, but only the victims whose burial is handled officially are counted. On the other hand, the Sudanese streets are filled with corpses that are not buried, which portends an environmental disaster that threatens life in East and North Africa, where ongoing migrations from Sudan to neighboring countries in those two regions. The war between the army and the Rapid Support forces fueled tribal conflicts in Darfur state between the “Bani Halba” (Arab) and “Masalit” (African) tribes. In addition to torture, desecration and mutilation of corpses, looting of markets and civilian property, and systematic rape, the Rapid Support Forces committed war crimes in West Darfur, including mass killings based

on ethnicity and the discovery of 13 mass graves in the state, and other war crimes in Central Darfur, Zalingei city, and the atrocities committed by the same group, led to a frighteningly similar scenario in Nyala, South Darfur, where intense bombing between the warring parties inside residential areas led to hundreds of deaths and injuries, and hundreds of thousands of city residents were displaced outside. Furthermore, the RSF and its allied Janjaweed militia carried out ethnic-based assassinations, also targeting lawyers, activists, teachers, and people who form the cornerstone of their communities and families. With the increasing cases of rape against Sudanese women and girls in the capital, Khartoum, and the Darfur region in the west of the country, there is an increasing fear that these crimes will spread to other states. This concern prompted women to volunteer in training camps to improve physical fitness and learn to use weapons, where some states in Sudan have witnessed the launch of initiatives called “Sudan Women to Support the Armed Forces.” These initiatives aim to activate the role of women in supporting the army, open camps to train women to defend themselves, care for the families of war victims, and support shelter centers for those affected. Nigeria ranks 2nd, with 886 deaths, and although the number of victims is less than was the case in the second quarter of the year, this did not move the African country from 2nd place in the index of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent. In 3rd place, Somalia returned to its normal position, with 380 casualties, after it had dropped to 4th place in the 2nd quarter of 2023 due to the escalation of violence in Burkina Faso.

Despite the continuous decline in the number of victims, supported by national military efforts and with the assistance of international partners, this did not help the Arab-African country to be one of the first countries in the index of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent. The Somali government faces a number of challenges, the most important of which is the African forces beginning to withdraw from Somalia, as their mission ends in December 2024, leaving the Somali National Forces to assume the responsibilities of protecting institutions and civilians from Al-Shabaab operations. The African Union Mission announced in June 2023 in a statement that it had begun reducing the number of its soldiers. In Somalia, according to the UN decision, which stipulates the withdrawal of “2000 soldiers by the end of June 2023.” Somali soldiers took over tasks from African forces at a base in Hirshabelle state in the center of the country. Thus, Burkina Faso returned to 4th place, as the rate of violence declined during the period covered by the report to record 228 deaths, which is a very small number compared to the period of the 2nd quarter of the year.

Numbers of Victims in the Most Prominent Countries Witnessing Violence and Terrorism in Africa



The report indicates that the pace of violence and terrorism in Africa continues to rise, threatening the security of peoples and the stability of countries, and the possibility of these crises, especially terrorism, crossing the Mediterranean to Europe, or heading east. African crises are supported by a number of causes that are diverse and branched, but the result is the same. During the period covered by the report, Africa witnessed an increase in military coups, which led to a general state of instability at the internal level, and tension in external relations against the backdrop of an influence struggle between the major powers over the African lands, as well as the distraction of the armed forces of those countries into political conflicts away from the goals of combating growing terrorism, especially in the Sahel region, which is witnessing a typical increase in terrorism and military coups. Likewise, African countries, despite the availability of

resources, stand idly by in the face of development issues due to the debts accumulated by those countries, not to mention the ill-considered international intervention, which exacerbates the extent of violence. Through the report, we monitored terrorist operations and acts of violence in Africa and also provided an analysis of the transformations of terrorism on the continent. The efforts of African countries in combating terrorism were also reviewed, whether individually or in cooperation with international and regional partners, in addition to monitoring movements through international mechanisms to combat terrorism and violence, based on the above monitoring, presentation and analysis.

Through the report, we have monitored the terrorist operations and acts of violence in the African continent, and provided an analysis of the transformations of terrorism in the Africa. The efforts of African countries in combating terrorism will also be reviewed, whether individually or in cooperation with international and regional partners, in addition to monitoring the movements through international mechanisms in order to combat terrorism and violence.

Based on the monitoring, review and analysis, Maat Foundation recommends the following:

1. Lifting the hand of the major powers from fueling political conflicts in the African countries, which undermines efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism.
2. Transforming the money spent by countries outside the continent on their operations in Africa, into financial aid and military equipment directed to countries to spend on national armies or through the African Union.
3. Establishing a partnership between the African Union and religious institutions in the African countries in order to produce a parallel thought to the terrorist thought in Africa, as we believe that the sustainable solution of terrorism lies in confronting thought with thought.
4. Expanding the legal cooperation between the countries of one region in Africa, which are common in size of threats, in order to confront violent extremism.
5. Non-interference in the internal affairs of the African countries, especially those witnessing recent rapid political transformations in western Africa.



6. Maat Foundation reiterates its call to lift debts of the African countries in order to free the hands of the governments to pursue the issues of development, combating extremism and terrorism.
7. Maat Foundation calls on the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to track the role of foreign forces in the African territories in order to ensure their objectiveness; to achieve the main purpose of confronting terrorist militias.
8. Maat Foundation believes that there is no way out of the Sudanese crisis except by an immediate return to the negotiations table to create a peaceful path, through a clear road map, that restores stability to Sudan, so that the African country does not turn into a haven for terrorist groups.