

Lens of Terrorist Operations

And Acts of Violence in Africa

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ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

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Introduction:

Africa continues to grapple with the persistent challenges of violence and terrorism, which have plagued the continent for decades. It has become a breeding ground and refuge for armed terrorist groups, exacerbated by internal political conflicts, racial tensions, and ethnic strife, which have unfortunately become defining features of the African continent.

In its commitment to promoting peace, development, and human rights in Africa, **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights** has closely monitored terrorist activities and acts of violence during the first quarter of 2024. Disturbingly, the first quarter of 2024 witnessed approximately **117** terrorist incidents across various parts of the continent. These attacks resulted in a devastating toll, with **1,795** victims, including 1,091 deaths and 704 injuries and kidnappings. The indiscriminate targeting of both military personnel and innocent civilians reflects the sheer brutality of these organizations and their relentless pursuit of disrupting security and stability in Africa.

Although the continent has been suffering for decades from this phenomenon that has permeated its parts, in parallel with the African countries commendable efforts, the rates of terrorist operations are high, urging us for unified regional efforts to address the chronic malaise that afflicts the African continent.

Report Methodology

"**Lens of Terrorist Operations and Acts of Violence in Africa**" report adopts a methodology centered on direct monitoring of terrorist incidents reported in Arab, Western, and African media outlets. It relies on open sources such as the Internet and reputable news platforms that cover events in African countries. It is important to acknowledge the potential "margin of error" in this approach, particularly given discrepancies between local and international sources regarding victim numbers and subsequent updating of data following incidents. Transparency regarding this factor is crucial to ensure the accuracy of report findings.

Concept of Terrorism in Report

While there is no universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism within academic and international circles, the phenomenon of terrorism is characterized by two key elements. Firstly, it possesses a moral dimension, driven by political objectives aimed at exerting pressure on internal or external political actors.

Secondly, it encompasses a material element, namely violence, employed to instill fear and terror in the hearts of individuals. Terrorism does not target victims based on their identities, but rather their collective identity, be it ethnic, religious, or even occupational. Drawing upon various legal interpretations, including UN General Assembly Resolution 69/40, Security Council Resolution 1566, and United Nations Strategy for Combating Terrorism, our conceptualization defines terrorism as: "any act committed for religious or political purposes, seeking to coerce parties into specific actions or decisions, through the intimidation and threat to the social and economic security of individuals, both locally and internationally."

Axis I: Index of Terrorist Operations and Acts of Violence in African Countries during Q1 2024

Terrorism spread across 14 African countries from January to March 2024, resulting in 1,795 victims, including 1,091 fatalities, 704 injuries, and kidnappings. A total of 117 terrorist operations were carried out during this period.

First: Countries Most Affected by Terrorism

1. Nigeria

Nigeria topped the index of terrorist operations in Africa during the first quarter of 2024, with 39 incidents that claimed 675 victims, accounting for 37.6% of the total victims during this period. These victims consisted of 204 fatalities and 471 injuries. Civilian targets bore the brunt of these attacks, with 29 civilian targets and 10 military targets recorded. Most of the operations were attributed to unknown perpetrators, except for one operation attributed to the disbanded Ebubeagu security group, which targeted the Omama community in the Oro West Local Government Area of Imo State. While Boko Haram group did not claim responsibility for the remaining operations, it is suspected to be involved in all of them.

2. Democratic Republic of Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo ranked second in the index of terrorist operations in Africa during the first quarter of the year, with 15 incidents resulting in 200 victims, accounting for 11.14% of the total victims during this period. Among these victims, 138 lost their lives, and 62 others sustained injuries. Civilian targets were predominantly affected, with 13 civilian targets and two military targets recorded. Four operations were attributed to both the M23 movement and the Allied

Democratic Forces, while the remaining operations were attributed to various armed groups, including the Red Tabara rebel group, the Codeco group, and the Mubondo militia.

3. Sudan - Mali

Sudan and Mali shared the third position, each experiencing 13 terrorist operations. In Sudan, these operations claimed 209 victims, accounting for 11% of the total victims. Among these victims, 175 perished, and 34 sustained injuries. All operations targeted civilians, with 11 civilian targets and two military targets recorded. Nine of these operations were attributed to the Rapid Support Forces, while three were carried out by unknown perpetrators. Remaining operations were linked to violence surrounding land disputes in the oil-rich Abyei region, which is contested between Sudan and South Sudan.

In Mali, terrorist operations resulted in the death of 55 individuals, with no available information on the number of casualties. These incidents accounted for 3% of the total victims. The operations exclusively targeted military personnel, with 11 military targets and two civilian targets recorded. Eight operations were attributed to Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, four were carried out by unknown perpetrators, and one operation was attributed to ISIS, which targeted an army convoy and "Wagner" in Ansago, Gao State, in the north.

4. Somalia

Somalia ranked fourth in the index of terrorist operations in Africa during the reviewed period, experiencing eight incidents that resulted in 102 victims. Among these victims, 75 lost their lives, and 27 sustained injuries, representing 5.6% of the total victims. The number of civilian and military targets was equal, with four operations targeting each. Operations were committed by the active Al-Shabaab movement in the country. Notably, one of the prominent terrorist operations targeted "General Gordon's Camp" in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, resulting in the deaths of three Emirati officers and one Bahraini national.

5. Niger - Burkina Faso

Niger and Burkina Faso shared the fifth position in the index of terrorist operations in Africa during the first quarter of the year, with five incidents in each country. In

Niger, there were 86 victims, comprising 52 fatalities and 34 injuries, accounting for 4.7% of the total victims. Burkina Faso, on the other hand, recorded 214 victims, including 212 fatalities and two injuries, representing 11.9% of the total victims.

In Niger, four operations targeted military personnel, while one operation targeted civilians in an attack on a village in the Tillabéri Region, located in western Niger near Mali border. One operation was carried out by ISIS, and the remaining four operations were attributed to unknown perpetrators.

In Burkina Faso, all operations targeted civilians, particularly places of worship, in a series of attacks on a group of villages, including Tissaoujen in the Kolbelogo district, Isakani village, and Korbelly city in the Kongossi region. All operations were attributed to unknown perpetrators.

6. South Africa - South Sudan

South Africa and South Sudan shared the sixth position, each experiencing four terrorist operations. South Africa recorded 17 victims, including seven fatalities and ten injuries, accounting for 0.94% of the total victims during the period. South Sudan, on the other hand, recorded 133 victims, consisting of 69 fatalities and 64 injuries, representing 7.4% of the total casualties during the period.

In both countries, all operations targeted civilians. Notably, in South Africa, one operation involved an ambush on a member of IFP Party Council, in addition to operations targeting priests and monks. In South Sudan, most of the operations were attributed to armed herdsmen.

7. Kenya - Chad

Kenya and Chad shared the seventh position with three terrorist operations each. In Kenya, ten deaths were recorded, but information about the number of casualties was unavailable, accounting for 0.5% of total victims. One operation targeted military personnel, while the other two targeted civilians. Two of these operations were attributed to Al-Shabaab, while the last operation was attributed to bandits.

In Chad, 49 deaths were recorded, without information on the number of casualties, representing 2.7% of the total victims during the reporting period. One operation targeted civilian, while the other two operations targeted military

personnel. Operations were attributed equally to both Boko Haram and the Socialist Party Without Borders, with the last operation attributed to an unknown perpetrator.

8. Libya - Mozambique

Libya and Mozambique shared the eighth position, each experiencing two terrorist operations. In Libya, there were ten deaths, representing 0.5% of the casualty rate during the period under review. The operations in Libya exclusively targeted military personnel and were attributed to unknown perpetrators. In Mozambique, there were 30 deaths, representing 1.6% of the casualty rate.

All operations in Mozambique targeted civilians and were attributed to the terrorist organization ISIS. The most notable incidents were a series of attacks on Christian villages in three areas in Cabo Delgado province.

9. Angola

Angola ranked last in the index of terrorist operations in Africa, with a single terrorist operation resulting in the deaths of five civilians. The incident occurred when an anti-tank mine exploded in Biei province in central Angola, representing 0.27% of the total victims in the first quarter of the year.

Figure No. 1: Number of Terrorist Operations in African Countries during Q1 2024

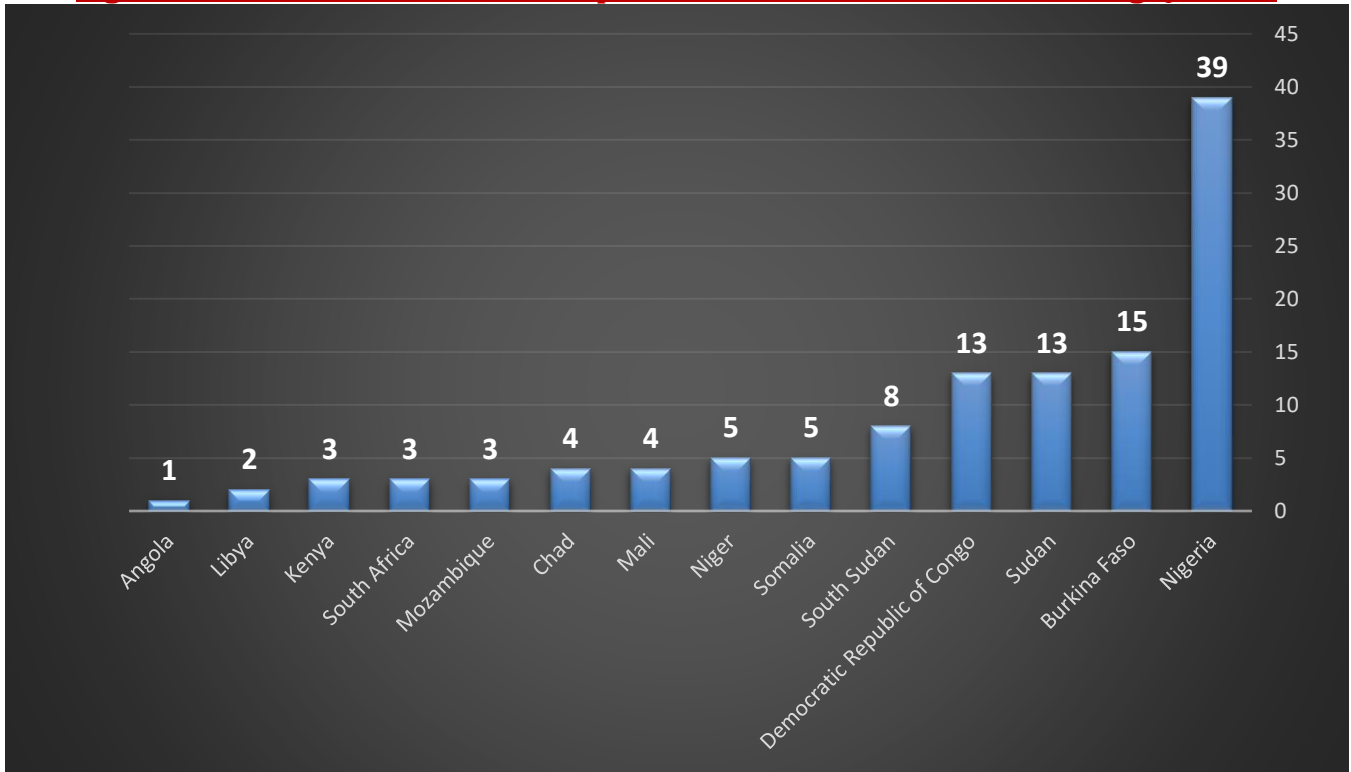
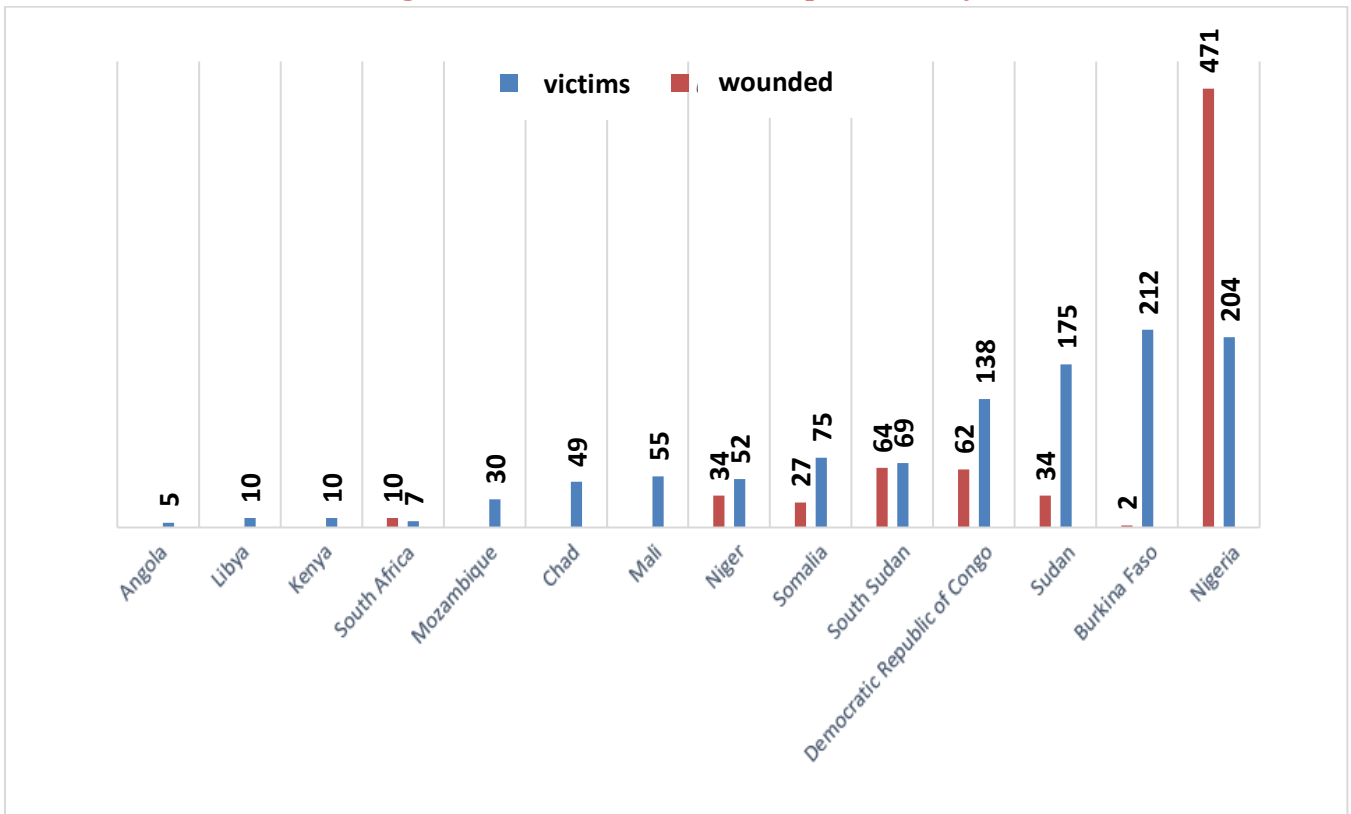


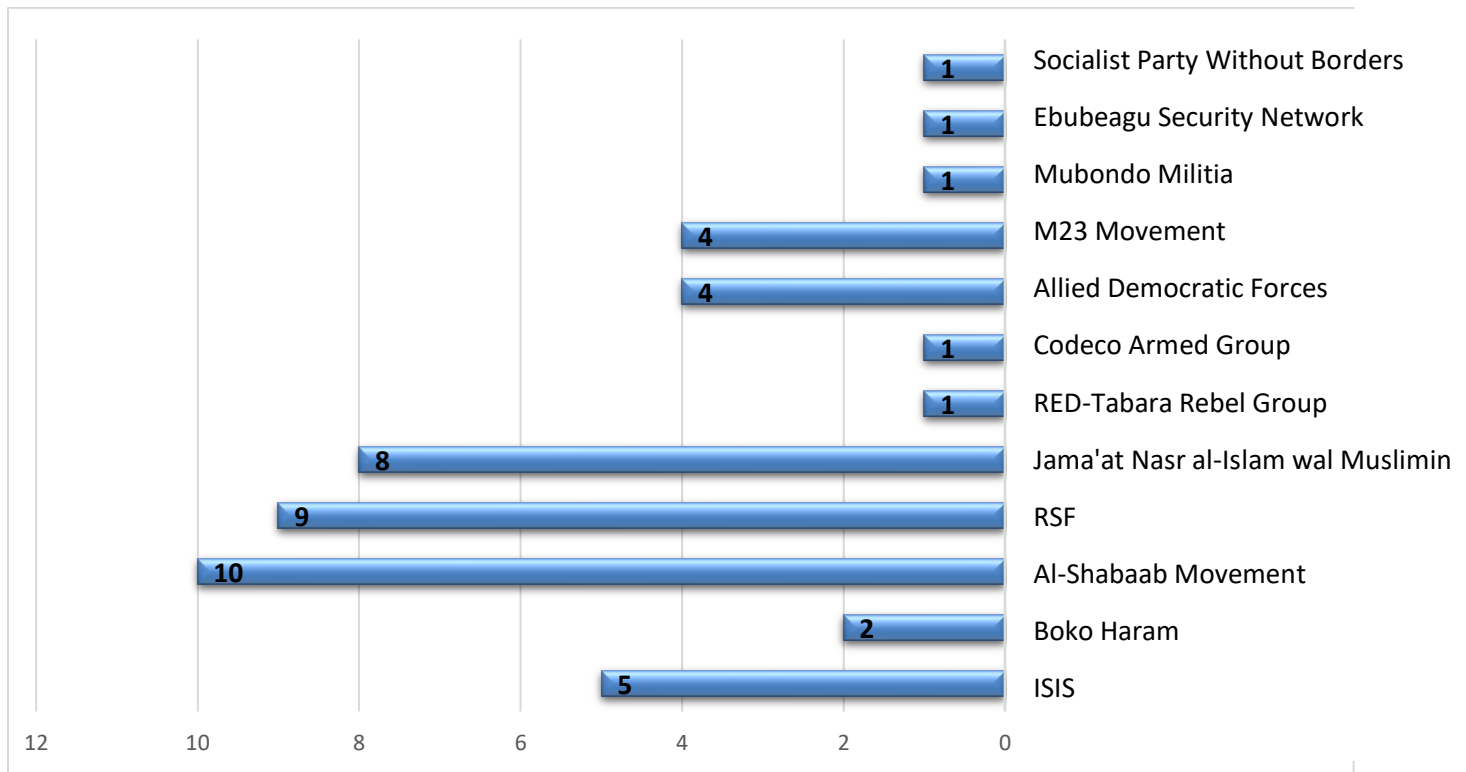
Figure 2: Numbers of Victims per Country



Axis II: Classification of Terrorist Operations and Acts of Violence According to Armed and Extremist Groups

Despite decline in terrorist operations in Somalia due to government's efforts to target extremist organizations' cells, Al-Shabaab remains the most active organization in committing terrorist operations on the African continent in the first quarter of 2024. They carried out a total of 10 terrorist operations, with 8 occurring in Somalia and 2 in Kenya. Al-Shabaab followed a strategy of targeting military strongholds. Despite the prevalence of terrorism in Nigeria during this quarter, Boko Haram did not officially claim any operations. However, they were suspected of carrying out two operations, one in Nigeria and the other in Chad. Group to Support Islam and Muslims in Mali increased its activity during this quarter by launching eight violent attacks targeting Malian army bases and headquarters. ISIS is also making efforts to regain its presence on the African continent, conducting 5 terrorist operations in several countries, including Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria. In Sudan, the Rapid Support Forces continued to carry out violent operations targeting civilians, with 9 recorded terrorist operations during this quarter, primarily concentrated in Al-Jazira State in central Sudan. In the Congo, armed rebel groups remain highly active, with the M23 movement conducting four terrorist operations that resulted in significant civilian casualties. Additionally, the activity of the Allied Democratic Forces escalated.

Figure 3: Terrorist Operations According to Extremist Organizations



Axis III: Efforts of African Countries to Combat Terrorism and Armed Activities on Their Territories

1. North Africa Region

On February 13, Egypt initiated joint counter-terrorism training with Britain. Training activities lasted several days and aimed to unify concepts, exchange and acquire experience, and enhance the skills of the participating special forces from both sides.¹ On January 5, the Deterrence Service for Combating Terrorism and Crime in Libya announced the arrest of the ISIS leader in Libya responsible for the massacre of Coptic Christians in Sirte in 2016.² On February 22, a delegation from the Libyan National Army held discussions with an American delegation led by Jeremy Brent, Chargé d'Affairs of the American Embassy in Libya. The discussions focused on ways to enhance military and security cooperation to combat terrorism and illegal migration.³ On February 21, Morocco conducted discussions between an American official and Inspector General of Royal Armed Forces, who is also Commander of Southern Region. The discussions addressed regional security situation, particularly collaboration between terrorist groups and separatist groups, as well as networks involved in irregular migration and human trafficking.⁴ In early March, Algeria pledged to support Mozambique in its fight against terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Algerian government also committed to providing immediate support, including individual equipment, to local militia members fighting terrorists alongside the armed forces.⁵

2. West Africa Region

In March 2024, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso jointly announced the formation of a military force to combat terrorism in the Sahel region.⁶ At the beginning of the year, Ghana commenced the "Eagle's Claws" field exercise, an annual training conducted by Ghanaian army to enhance soldiers' skills, tactics, techniques, and preparedness to address any threats.⁷ Nigerian Army has also prioritized the modernization of its educational units, a key objective discussed during its five-day annual conference

¹ الجيش المصري يعلن بدء تدريب مشترك مع بريطانيا في مجال "مكافحة الإرهاب، العربية، فبراير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/2dm57ubu>

² جهاز الردع الليبي يعلن القبض على منفذ مذبحه الأقباط بمدينة سرت، RT Online، يناير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/rzf5xhpx>

³ مباحثات ليبية - أميركية لتعزيز سبل التعاون لمكافحة الإرهاب، الاتحاد، فبراير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/49rwxvj>

⁴ التنسيق العسكري بين المغرب وأمريكا يحذر من تواطؤ الإرهاب والانفصال، هسبريس، فبراير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/y4jsvej3>

⁵ Mozambique to receive support from Algeria in anti-terror fight, africanews, Mar 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/bddu4sw5>

⁶ النيجر ومالي وبوركينا فاسو تعلن تشكيل قوة مشتركة لمحاربة الإرهاب، RT Online، مارس 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/5ydfnd7t>

⁷ غانا تركز على مكافحة الإرهاب بتمرين «مخالب النسر» ، adf-magazine، يناير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/yrbfhfna>

held at the command headquarters in Minna, Niger State, from January 8 to 12.⁸ Consequently, in March, the Nigerian army successfully neutralized at least 213 terrorists and apprehended 283 others in various operational theaters across the country.⁹ Furthermore, in collaboration with a mixed force and elements of the Civilian Joint Task Force, the Nigerian Army managed to seize control of Boko Haram/Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP) terrorists' stronghold in Lake Chad region.¹⁰

3. East Africa Region

In Kenya, National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) has conducted consultations throughout the country to update its strategy for countering extremist ideologies. The plan, to be implemented by May, aims to address the new methods and technologies employed by these groups for recruitment.¹¹ In Uganda, the government pledged military support to Somalia in the fight against terrorist militias.¹² In February, Somalia ratified a defense cooperation agreement with Turkey, signed in Ankara, which will lead to Turkey providing support for Somalia's maritime security development and enhancing its capabilities to combat illegal and irregular activities in its territorial waters.¹³ Somali army also achieved significant progress by dismantling numerous terrorist sites, securing villages liberated from terrorists in the southern and central regions of the country, and expelling terrorist elements from villages adjacent to the outskirts of the Bakool region.¹⁴

4. South Africa Region

With the assistance of Rwandan security forces and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces, Mozambique has successfully eliminated over 90% of terrorist activities in Cabo Delgado.¹⁵

⁸ الجيش النيجيري يحدّث عقيدة التدريب لتحسين مستوى التصدي لغياب الأمن، adf-magazine، يناير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/bv6jadsx>

⁹ Nigerian troops kill 213 terrorists, apprehend 283 others – Official, premiumtimes, Mar 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/2xhhsh2>

¹⁰ Troops overrun terrorists' stronghold in Lake Chad Region, vanguard, Mar 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/4jcb793k>

¹¹ كينيا تجدد إستراتيجية "مكافحة الإرهاب" بالتزامن مع انسحاب قوات حفظ السلام التابعة للاتحاد الإفريقي من الصومال، politicalkeys، مارس 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/4azzche4>

¹² تعاون صومالي أوغندي في مكافحة الإرهاب، الصومال الجديد، فبراير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/2syctzs6>

¹³ تركيا تؤكد اتفاق الأمن البحري الصومالي وسط توترات في أرض الصومال، al-monitor، فبراير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/bdenaapy>

¹⁴ الجيش الصومالي يُنفذ عمليات عسكرية ضد الإرهاب بجنوب غرب البلاد، اليوم السابع، يناير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/34zpevh7>

¹⁵ موزمبيق تلاحق الإرهابيين في معقلهم الأخير، adf-magazine، يناير 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/5yw7xpbp>

Recommendations

Despite the noticeable decline in the activity of certain organizations that were previously responsible for hundreds of operations within a month, it is observed that during the first three months of this year, their ability to organize attacks has been limited, with no more than 10 operations per group. However, the overall number of operations and victims still indicates an increase, necessitating deterrence and a resolute response. Therefore, Maat offers the following recommendations:

- African countries must remain committed to joint collective efforts and continue to explore strategies to strengthen peace and security in Africa, while benefiting from unified regional visions.
- Striking a balance between leveraging external military support, protecting civilians, and upholding state sovereignty is crucial to ensure that African countries benefit rather than suffer.
- Emphasis should be placed on civil society efforts in monitoring and documenting activities of organizations, and utilizing their insights and recommendations.
- African Union should organize regular sessions involving all member states to discuss the current situation, highlight ongoing efforts, identify obstacles and challenges, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each country.
- African Union cooperation with United Nations in the field of combating terrorism in Africa must be strengthened in a way that provides alternative support to African countries without relying on external support.