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Jihadism expansion in Kenya and its impact on Eastern Africa

Abstract: Despite the many sources of tension in the history of Kenya, until recently, interreligious relationships, especially the Christian-Muslim relations, were seen as mostly harmonious. This situation has changed, and religious tensions are now one of the main problems of Kenyan government. Concerns that Islam spreads in Kenya rise. In addition, the jihadist structures gain popularity.

Thinking about the main countries in which the jihadists create their structures, usually Kenya is not mentioned. However, the position of the African countries on the map of “international terrorism” may change in the near future. The strategy of Al-Qaeda this state remains from many years as a target of attacks on opponents and a place of operational activities. The potential of this country can also become a field of interest to the Islamic State, a rival of Al-Qaeda for hegemony over the global salafi-jihadist movement. Currently, the interest flows from the Kenyan jihadists, as evidenced by their attachment to the structures of the self-proclaimed caliphate in Libya.

The author analyzes the historical context of the Kenyan terrorism at the national level, points to numerous examples of terrorist attacks, explaining why the state is an attractive target, and at the same time a suitable environment for jihadi terrorists.

Keywords: Al-Shabaab, jihadism, Islam, Islamism, Kenya, Islamic State (IS), Somalia, terrorism

Introduction

East Africa and Horn of Africa states are struggling with the radicalization of the Muslim community, which over the next decade is likely to gain strength. A disturbing trend is noticeable in the region. Salafism displaces Sufism, which has traditionally characterized the majority of Islamic communities in the region. Despite

the growing interest in jihadism, African continent is experiencing manifestations of this threat for several decades.

Article aims to explore the connection between the expansion of jihadism in Kenya in relation to national and regional security. To determine this relationship, division of the population in terms of religion is examined, as well as the interaction between religion and politics. Also the role of Al-Shabaab and growing influence of the Islamic State needs to be analyzed. Therefore, the author presents the development of Muslim communities' radicalization in Kenya in recent decades, highlighting four main factors influencing the growing threat of Islamic radicalism: institutional weakness, domestic and foreign policy of Kenyan authorities, as well as situation of the Muslim minority.

In the past few years, in Kenya, the reform movement is gaining influence. It seeks to "purify" Islam from indigenous accretions, drawn from traditional African religious practices. This movement led to the creation of more radical form of Islam in Kenya. Structural and institutional weakness of the Kenyan state structures, historical factors, growth of radical ideology and military intervention in Somalia intensify the activities of extremists, increasing the possibility of terrorist acts on the territory of that State.

Ethnicity

Kenya is one of the most diverse (ethnically, culturally and linguistically) countries throughout Africa, where over forty tribal groups has its roots. The largest ethnic group is the Kikuyu. This mosaic causes numerous tensions. In 2010 Kenya's population numbered 40.51 million, of which 84.8 percent were Christians, while Muslims constituted 9.7 percent. The Pew Research Center estimates that in 2050 population of Kenya will increase by more than half, reaching a number of 97.15 million¹.

Ethnicity is important for understanding religious demographics due to other important relationships. The population of Kenya consists of more than 40 African ethnic groups and minorities: Arab, South Asian and European. The largest group is the Kikuyu (20%), Luhya (14%), Kalenjin (13%) and Luo (10%). In the traditional Kikuyu homeland is located in the former central province. In view of the fact that this group has lost significant areas for the British colonists at the beginning of the

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¹ *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*, Pew Research Center, 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/03/PF_15.04.02_ProjectionsFullReport.pdf, pp. 236-243.

20th century, many people moved to other regions, including the Rift Valley. Luhya inhabits mainly the western part of Kenya, Kalenjin mainly the Rift Valley, and Luo Nyanza. The other group is among others: Kamba (10%), Kenyan Somalis (6.2%) and the Kisii (5.7%), Mijikenda (5%), Turkana (3%)².

Historically, each of the ethnic groups in today's Kenya had its own language, cultural practices, beliefs and rituals. Indigenous religions of the four largest ethnic groups in northern Kenya, still clearly are based on these traditions. Ethnic communities such as Borana, Gabra, Rendille and Samburu have four common traits:

- nomadic lifestyle (or semi-nomadic),
- economy based on raising livestock,
- the culture strictly based on awareness of the passage of time,
- religion closely related natural phenomena³.

Despite the deep transformations caused by conversion to Islam and Christianity, the importance of traditional ethnic relationship and religion in shaping relationships and identity is still relevant. Even after conversion to Islam or Christianity, some people partially maintain customs of birth, marriage, social inclusion and position, traditional ways of calculating time. In Kenya, the relationship between culture and religion are very complex, because of the link between the African traditional religions and other religious traditions. For example, people seeking healing through prayer can go for different worship services in various places of worship, while searching for the healing methods of traditional religion. Statistics on referring to traditional religion in immediate needs are limited. Estimates can exclude all those, who are both close to the religious community, and from time to time return to traditional religion⁴.

Religion in Kenya

The Constitution of Kenya prohibits discrimination against people because of their religious beliefs, protecting their religious freedom. It gives the freedom of practicing and teaching of any religion, as well as freedom of debate and discussion in relation to religious affairs⁵. In Kenya, the dominant religion is Christianity, confessed by

² *Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya*, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs March 2017, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkley-center/170328BCWFDDFaithDevelopmentFocusKenya.pdf>, p. 29-30

³ See more: P. Tablino, *Christianity among the Nomads: The Catholic Church in Northern Kenya*, "African Studies Review", 2005, no. 1.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁵ *The Constitution of Kenya*, Revised Edition 2010 Published by the National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney General <https://www.kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/the%20constitution%20of%20kenya.pdf>.

more than 84% (34.34 million out of 40.51 million) of the population⁶. Other religions in Kenya are: Islam, tribal religions, Buddhism, Bahá'í faith or Hinduism.

The longest tradition in Kenya has tribal religions, based on natural phenomena and respect for ancestors. African religions are practiced by the indigenous peoples of Africa called African traditional religions (ATRs), which do not differentiate between the religious and the secular sphere, recognizing that culture and religion are linked together, affecting policy, economics or ethics⁷. For the most part, each tribe has its own set of beliefs, customs, which are related to the inhabited territory.

The main religion in Kenya, however, is Christianity. This religion was brought to Kenya in 1844 by Johann Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebmann, the first missionaries who visited the East African coast⁸. Then the region attracted many other missionaries, whose goal was the evangelization of the indigenous peoples. It is worth noting that they came not from one Christian group, some were followers of Protestantism, other Catholicism⁹. Out of Kenyan Christians, the largest group is now Protestants. In 2010, their number amounted over 24 million, while the number of Catholics was 8.97 million. The followers of Orthodoxy are about 650 thousand, which represents most of the followers of this branch of Christianity in Africa¹⁰. In Kenya there are also Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran and Pentecostal communities. In turn, non-Catholic and non-Protestant movements include the New Apostolic Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church or Jehovah's witnesses¹¹.

Islam is the second religion in Kenya, which has a longer history than Christianity. In 1990, the number of followers of this religion was about 1.4 million (6%), while in 2010, approximately 2.87 million, which represents 7% of the total number of the population¹². Followers include both Sunnis and Shiites. The majority of the

⁶ Table: *Christian Population in Numbers by Country*, Dec. 2011, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/table-christian-population-in-numbers-by-country/>.

⁷ O. Maurice, *The Challenges Facing Religion in the Contemporary World: The Kenyan Situation*, "International Journal of Humanities and Social Science", Vol. 4 No. 3; February 2014, p. 323; See: J.H. Smith, *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinventing of Development in Kenya*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2008.

⁸ Vide W. Raupp, *Johann Ludwig Krapf. Missionar, Forschungsreisender und Sprachforscher (1810-1881)*, "Lebensbilder aus Baden-Württemberg", 2007, vol. 22. Gerhard Taddey and Rainer Brüning, Stuttgart (ed.), p. 182-226.

⁹ O. Maurice, *The Challenges Facing Religion in the Contemporary World: The Kenyan Situation*, "International Journal of Humanities and Social Science", Vol. 4 No. 3; February 2014, p. 323-324.

¹⁰ Table..., op. cit.

¹¹ H. Ndlovu, *Religion and Political Culture of Kenya*, Alternation Special Edition No. 2005, s. 281; *Faith and...*, op. cit., p. 35-38.

¹² *Mapping Global Muslim Population. A report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*, Pew Research Center 2009, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2009/10/Muslimpopulation.pdf>.

Muslim population in Kenya belongs to the Sunni denomination. In the minority are Shiites and other non-Sunni factions of Islam, which represent less than 2% of the population. The largest number of Muslims in Kenya is located in Mombasa and neighboring regions, and also in the north-eastern part of Kenya. Therefore, the Muslim population is concentrated in urban communities, as well as near the border with Somalia. In addition, the Pew Research Center estimates indicate that the number of Muslim population in Kenya will grow, in 2030 reaching about 5.48 million (8.7%)¹³. The proliferation of Islam in Kenya has led to a concentration of religious communities in certain regions. Along the coast the most Muslim population consists of people of Swahili, with a large number of convert population of Mijikenda people. The Muslim community of Swahili is a community historically based on marriages with Arab traders. It is a heterogeneous group, which identifies itself as Muslim and uses as the first language Kiswahili (Swahili). Kenya's Muslim community includes many ethnic groups and is dispersed geographically¹⁴.

As in other countries, the rise in the number of Muslim population carries a risk of increasing role of Islamic fundamentalism, from which comes Islamism. Followers of this political ideology see Islam not just as a religion, but also as a political system, which should regulate all aspects of the functioning of the state based on a literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith.

Hinduism came to Kenya thanks to the development of trade between India and East Africa. The history of this religion dates back to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century when British colonists brought more than 30 thousand workers from India to build a railway from Uganda to Kenya. Many of the workers, rather than travel back to the Indian subcontinent, simply settled in Kenya¹⁵.

Other minority faiths in Kenya include the Baha'i Faith, Sikhism, Jainism and Judaism. All have played different roles in the development of Kenya's society.

Spirituality, rituals, places of worship, prayer one can see and hear about everywhere in Kenya. For most Africans spirituality is the foundation of the rhythm of life and interaction. A survey carried out in December 2008, among the 1,500 Christians and Muslims in Kenya showed that 95% of Muslims and 86% of Christians recognizes that religion is "very important" in their lives. In addition, 81 percent of the surveyed attended religious worship services at least once a week¹⁶.

The Pew Research Center estimates that in 2050 population of Kenya will increase by more than half, reaching a number of 97.15 million, while Islam followers will

¹³ *The Future Global Muslim Population. Projections for 2010-2030*, Pew Research Center, Jan. 2011, file:///C:/Users/Marta/Downloads/FutureGlobalMuslimPopulation-WebPDF-Feb10.pdf

¹⁴ *Faith and...*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

¹⁶ *Faith and Development...*, op. cit., p. 30.

then constitute 13.3 percent of population. According to estimates the number of Kenyan citizens who are Muslims will grow in the period of 2010-2050 from nearly 4 million to approx. 13 million. In 2010, among the neighboring countries of Kenya, only South Sudan has a smaller percentage of the Muslim population – 6.2 percent. In other countries it is on a higher level, Uganda – 11.5 percent, Ethiopia – 34.6 percent, Tanzania – 35.2 percent, Somalia – 99.8 percent¹⁷.

Jihadism

The preamble of Kenya's Constitution states that Kenyans are a nation proud of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, who wants to live in peace and unity. In recent years in Kenya, however, is visible tension between Christians and Muslims. This situation can arise with radicalization and terrorist attacks in that country. In the preamble of Kenya's Constitution that Kenyans are a nation proud of ethnic diversity, cultural and religious, who wants to live in peace and unity¹⁸. However, in recent years in Kenya tension between Christians and Muslims are visible. This situation can arise with radicalization and terrorist attacks in that country.

The above mentioned problem derives from jihadism, considered a social movement whose leading ideology is Islamism. The main method used by the jihadist structure is terrorism. In this sense, jihadism is associated with a way of thinking of extreme environment of Islamic radicals, according to which the authority, which has no religious legitimacy should be overthrown. Jihadism is a modern revolutionary ideology, ordering the use of violence to defend or promote a very narrow vision of Sunni Islam – Salafism. Jihadist groups often refer to selective interpretation of the content provided by the Quran to justify committed crimes, including genocide in the name of Islam.

Jihadism (*jahadiyyah*) is considered as "religiously inspired ideology that proclaims that the use of all available means in order to control the world by Islam is a moral obligation of every Muslim"¹⁹. Jihadism can be divided into: irredentist, revolutionary, classic and global. Each of its forms differs in the methods and means of combat. The first form, is characterized by the pursuit of the liberation of the lands inhabited by the specific group and attacking an exact enemy. Revolutionary jihadism aims to overthrow the authorities of the specific state. The classic form is characterized by referring to defend Muslim population from an external aggressor, while global

¹⁷ *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*, Pew Research Center, 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/03/PF_15.04.02_ProjectionsFullReport.pdf, pp. 236-243.

¹⁸ *The Constitution...*, op. cit.

¹⁹ R.J. Neuhaus, *The Regensburg Moment, "First Things"*, Nov. 2006, p. 68.

jihadism is characterized by activities unlimited geographically²⁰. The jihadist structures are the main actor that holds a significant role in the contemporary world. The militarization of global jihadist movement²¹, affecting all spheres of society, creates new threats to international security.

The concept of jihadism was created with the expansion of Islamic fundamentalist organizations, and although it initially raised controversy as a neologism, at the end of the 20th century permanently entered into for use, also in the scientific research²².

Just as religion cannot be completely separated from politics, jihadism cannot be disconnected from Islam. Religion can serve as a mean of political dominance. In a state like Nigeria, religion is used to influence the direction of the country's politics. For example, on Nigeria's eastern borders, the works and ideas of Sudanese Islamists were one of the motivations to create the Islamic Republic of Sudan that led to the division of Sudan. South Sudan became independent in 2011, now its predominant religion is Islam, while Islamism remains the official ideology. Also Tanzania, given the large number of Muslims, religion has been dragged into politics. Role and involvement of Muslims in country's politics due to the past peripheral position is expected by Muslims²³. Like in other regions, the militant and radical Islam is gaining ground. In the history of Islam, religion and politics were not separated. On this idea radical Muslims build their ideology, known as Islamism. From their point of view, Islam is not only religion; it is a way of life that guides cultural, social, economic and political behavior. Thus Islamic radicalism stands in opposition to the nation-state and the peculiar problems of XXI century. This approach has also been noticeable in Kenya and as in most countries in Africa; Islamism is emerging as a force of political opposition²⁴.

Political situation in Kenya

Main factor that favors the proliferation of jihadism in Kenya is geographical location, which makes the militants able to penetrate through the Horn of Africa to the territory of Middle East. In addition, Kenya has a seaport Kilindini Harbour

²⁰ G. Ramsay, *Jihadi Culture on the World Wide Web*, Bloomsbury Academic, New York 2013, p. 5.

²¹ Vide A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu motywowanego ideologią religijną na przykładzie salafickiego ruchu globalnego dżihadu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM, Poznań 2010.

²² T. Hegghammer, *Jihadi Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Theology and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism*, w: R. Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 244-266.

²³ H.M. Njozi, *The Islamic Threat and Public Policy in East Africa from 1900-2002: The Case of a Self-fulfilling Prophecy*, Paper presented in Zanzibar 2003.

²⁴ H. Ndzovu, op. cit., p. 271, 281-285.

in Mombasa, international airports and well-developed road and rail infrastructure throughout the country²⁵. The combination of relatively developed – as to the conditions in this part of the continent – infrastructure and porous borders makes Kenya an attractive operational target and a convenient place to settle for jihadists.

Kenyan coastal region is commonly inhabited by Arabs, who have strong historical and cultural ties with the Arabs from the Middle East²⁶. These communities are often the harbors for “foreign” jihadists. The global “war on terrorism” meant that terrorists’ shelters in the Middle East and South Asia became places threatened by the attacks of anti-terrorist coalition forces. This has led terrorists to seek safer environments, not only for operational activities and, above all, planning and strategic actions. It turned out that Kenya, which during the reign of President Daniel Moi, presented rather free attitude to security issues, had ideal conditions for jihadists.

This was influenced not only by ethnic conditions but also political circumstances. After Kenya gained independence in 1963, President Jomo Kenyatta, a representative of the Kenyan African National Union – KANU established a single-party government, which was taken over by Daniel Toroitich arap Moi after his death. Initially, successor also rejected requests to establish a multi-party system. However, as a result of Western allies warnings to suspend economic aid to Kenya, president finally decided to introduce the system desired by the West, although this did not stop the alienation of Kenyan Muslims. It should be noted, however, that despite single-party politics in Kenya never relied on religion. The change occurred with the first “free” elections in 1992. This year, Islamic Party of Kenya was established. It has gained popularity, although President Moi accused its members of promoting Islamic fundamentalism. It was one of the first signals that the issues related to Islam may pose a threat to security²⁷.

Despite this, until 2007, on international politics arena, Kenya was seen as a model for the development of the African regime towards democracy. Of course, referring to the then Kenya as a democratic model, was motivated by the comparison with its neighbors, especially Somalia and Sudan, as well as other African countries, ie. Rwanda. The situation changed in during the election, in which president Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner once again. According to observers and part of the international community the victory belonged to his rival Raila Odinga. Despite the long counting of votes, indicating the electoral fraud, as well as social protests president-elect was sworn in. As a result, riots broke out between the Kikuyu tribe, from which came M. Kibaki, and other groups, including Luhya people, Kalenjin

²⁵ W.R. Patterson, *Islamic Radicalization in Kenya*, “Joint Force Quarterly”, 78, Jul. 2015, p. 22.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 19.

²⁷ S.L. Aronson, *Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics in Approaches to Counterterrorism*, “African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies: AJCJS”, Nov. 2013 Vol. 7, pp. 25-26.

and Luo, marginalized due to the concentration of power in the hands of the Kikuyu tribe representatives. If the first president J. Kenyatta, would not centralized the system and implemented transparent democratic processes, in Kenya such conflicts would probably not occur. One-party governments have contributed to the spread of corruption and poverty, in consequence leading to the popularity of Islamic radicalism.

Since independence in 1963, attempts to build a common national identity, integrating society in Kenya had failed. Although colonialism is often blamed for this condition, the inability of post-colonial states to establish a national identity after half a century of independence is also reflected in the leadership model, an example of which is Kenya. Instead of building a new political culture, Kenyan leaders refer to their own ethnic or religious identity, building policies based on ethnic divisions, enhancing radicalization of marginalized communities²⁸. Although the arrival of Arab settlers dates back to the precolonial period, so distant date has not affected the perception of the Swahili people as a “real” Kenyans. The legacy of this division remains entrenched among contemporary representatives of this nation, still perceiving Muslims as more foreigners than true Kenyans²⁹. Marriage of Arabs with local tribes representatives, created a group that lacks identity in a wider spectrum of society. It inhabits mainly coastal areas, which are struggling with problems of marginalization³⁰.

Kenya faces a phenomenon that can be described as “creeping radicalization”. Like other parts of East Africa, the jihadists exploit the existing potential in the country, strengthening their own. In Kenya, the driving force of radicalization is poverty and widespread unemployment, which means that young people become vulnerable to indoctrination and recruitment for terrorist activities. Although a large part of the terrorist attacks in Kenya is carried out by foreigners, the phenomenon of local population radicalization is growing.

Thus, this is the combination of internal and international factors that makes Kenya an “attractive” place for jihadists.

Cross-border jihadism of Al-Shabaab

Kenyan authorities since many years are struggling with the problem of Islamic extremism, barely coping with the radicalization of citizens. Particular problems are associated with the recruitment of fighters for Al-Shabaab, a branch of Al-Qaeda,

²⁸ A. Botha, *Radicalisation to Terrorism in Kenya and Uganda: a Political Socialisation Perspective*, “Perspectives on Terrorism”, Oct. 2015 Vol. 9, Iss. 5, p. 8.

²⁹ The earliest Muslim settlers came mainly from Oman, Yemen and Iran, settling along the coast of present-day Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania; W.R. Patterson, *Islamic Radicalization in Kenya*, “Joint Force Quarterly”, 78, Jul. 2015, p. 15.

³⁰ S.L. Aronson, *Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics*, p. 25.

functioning in neighboring Somalia. The organization has grown from the structures of Wahhabi terrorist organization *Al-Itihaad Al-Islamiya* (AIAI), which emerged in Somalia in the 80s of 20th century, seeking to overthrow the regime of general Mohammed Siad Barre and establish an Islamic state. In 2000 AIAI remains have been transformed into Al-Shabaab and incorporated into the Islamic Courts Union (*Ittihad al-mahakim al-Islamiyya*) as the youth militia³¹.

The growth of the Somali jihadists' structures poses a particular threat to Kenya, which has a significant minority of Somali population. Moreover, the high level of corruption in Kenya and the policy of violence contribute to the creation of a secure beachhead for members of Al-Shabaab.

The history of terrorism in Kenya dates back to the 20th century and is associated with the activities of Al-Qaeda. In 1998, organization carried out the attack on the United States Embassy in Nairobi³². 212 people were killed and more than 4,000 were injured. Although the operation was carried out with the support of Kenyan people, it had an international character, because it was planned by Al-Qaeda structures.

Four years later, on 28 November 2002, Al-Qaeda militants carried out further attacks. Their goal became an Israeli hotel in Kikambala and the Israeli airlines plane in Mombasa. The Boeing 757 with more than 260 passengers, fired by ground-to-air missiles was not hit and landed safely in Tel-Aviv. However, jihadists managed to carry out a suicide attack on the hotel, using a car bomb. It killed 15 people and more than 30 were injured³³.

These two assassinations show that the main goal of terrorist attacks was American and Israeli interests in the Kenyan territory. The first case of domestic Islamic terrorism, not associated with Al-Qaeda, took place in May 2006, when three men attacked the Christian radio station Hope-FM, killing a private security guard. Fortifying the inner door, however, prevented from reaching the upper floor, where a few staff members worked. Little is known about the motives of the attack, although it seems that they were linked to attempts to convert Muslim community to Christianity. Though small in scale, the attack was a sign of increasing role of radicalism in Kenya³⁴.

In subsequent years, the initiative was taken over by Somali Al-Shabaab, which despite the sanctioning the Sharia law in 2009 by the Somali parliament, in 2010

³¹ R. Wise, *Al-Shabab*, Case Study Number 2, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, Jul. 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/110715_Wise_AlShabaab_AQAM%20Futures%20Case%20Study_WEB.pdf, p. 3.

³² Simultaneously terrorists carried out an attack on the US embassy in Dar es Salaam, administrative capital and seat of government of Tanzania.

³³ C. Watts, J. Shapiro, V. Brown, *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, West Point, New York: Combating Terrorism Center, Jul. 2007, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Al-Qaidas-MisAdventures-in-the-Horn-of-Africa.pdf>, p. 48.

³⁴ C. Watts, J. Shapiro, V. Brown, *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, p. 49.

announced the creation of the emirate in the territory of Somalia. In February 2012, organization has become a branch of Al-Qaeda, and on July 1st, 2012 attacked people gathered in two churches in Garissa, northern Kenya, killing at least 18 people and injuring dozens of others. However, Al-Shabaab has developed links with Kenyan jihadists before swearing the oath of fidelity to Al-Qaeda. In 2008 Somali organization formalized links with Al-Hijra group, derived from the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC). Initially, the main goal was to promote actions to change social and economic situation of the Muslim youth, discriminated in Kenya. With time, MYC has developed links with Al-Shabaab recruiting Kenyan youth to fight in jihadi structures³⁵.

With time, Christians and representatives of other faiths, staying at the place of assassination, became the target of jihadist attacks in Kenya. September 21, 2013, Somali jihadists of Al-Shabaab carried out an attack in Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi and took hostages. They were liberated by security forces on 24 September. In the attack, which was the retaliation for Kenya's military involvement in the fight against Al-Shabaab organization in the territory of Somalia, 71 people were killed and 175 injured. Surprising was not just the scale of the attack, but also the origin of the bombers. Among the nine, only one was from Kenya and two from Somalia. The other six were citizens of Western countries: the United States, Finland, Canada and the UK³⁶.

Other examples of Al-Shabaab attacks are those of 15 and 17 June 2014. In which jihadists killed 60 people around Mpeketoni. In December 2014, 36 non-Muslim miners were killed in a coal mine in Mandera. However, the most deadly terrorist attack in Kenya since 1998 was this from April 2, 2015. In Garissa University College 148 people were killed and 79 injured³⁷. July 7, 2015 jihadists killed 14 quarry workers in Mandera. The target was Christians, because jihadists allowed Muslims to escape³⁸.

Kenya is constantly exposed to terrorist attacks, and Kenyan authorities fighting with the Al-Shabaab lasts many years. At the end of 2011, due to the continuous attacks and kidnappings, armed forces crossed the Kenyan border with Somalia, starting Operation Linda Nchi³⁹. The entry of Kenyan troops, instead of displacing the jihadists from the border territories, increased the threat, and the attacks of Kenyan terrorist cell have grown in mortality.

³⁵ F. Nzes, *Al-Hijra: Al-Shabab's Affiliate in Kenya*, "CTS Sentinel", 2014, vol. 7, Iss. 5, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss5.pdf>, p. 24.

³⁶ J. Gettleman, N. Kulish, *Mall Becomes War Zone As Gunmen Kill Dozens In Nairobi Terror Attack*, "The New York Times", Sept. 22, 2013, p. A1.

³⁷ J. Gettleman, I. Kushkush, R. Callimachi, *Somali Militants Kill 147 at Kenyan University*, "The New York Times", Apr. 3, 2015, p. A1.

³⁸ J. Akwiri, *Al Shabaab gunmen kill 14 in night attack on Kenyan workers*, "Reuters", Jul. 7, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-attacks-idUSKCN0PH0BE20150707>, [10.10.2015].

³⁹ W.R. Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

The scale of the problem with jihadism, presents the fact that the president of Kenya – Uhuru Kenyatta⁴⁰ announced the construction of special prisons for violent extremists. Construction of this facility is intended to prevent the radicalization of prisoners at other objects⁴¹. Although, as shown by experience gained from the Middle East, construction of facilities of this type can be counterproductive. It may in fact contribute to the development of new contacts and networks, which in the future may result in the intensification of the jihadists' activities on Kenyan territory. To counter the growth of radicalism in Kenya in December 2014, the authorities have also introduced new restrictive law that allows police to stop suspected of terrorists for more than 24 hours⁴².

Islamic State (IS)

The Islamic State is a structure whose roots reach the beginning of the 21st century. IS the descendant of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a branch of al-Qaeda, one of the most violent organization, which under the leadership of Abu Musab az-Zarqawi ravaged Iraq from 2003 for 2006, founding its actions on the marginalization of Sunnis, after the US invasion on Iraq. In 2006 the Mujahideen Shura Council (Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen – MSM)⁴³ formed the AQI, which shortly after, on October 15, 2006, changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI)⁴⁴.

In April 2013, enmity between Al-Qaeda and its branch broke with the announcement of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a leader of the group, ISI's expansion on Syria. Al-Baghdadi stated that Front al-Nusra was a fraction of the ISI and should not be considered as separate group⁴⁵. Therefore, he change the name of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS; Al-Dawla Al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham –

⁴⁰ In 2010 Uhuru Kenyatta was accused by the International Criminal Court (ICC) located in Hague of crimes against humanity during the riots after the presidential election in 2007. In 2014 the ICC prosecutors withdrew the charges, stating that the Kenyan government refused to provide evidence relevant to the case.

⁴¹ C. Gaffey, *Kenyan President Promises New Prison For Extremists*, "Newsweek", Feb. 17, 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/uhuru-kenyatta-al-shabaab-427530>, [20.02.2016].

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ A.W. Terrill, op. cit., p. 14-15.

⁴⁴ Vide B. Szajkowski, *Islamic State (IS) or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyya fil'Araq wa-Sham (Daesh)*, „Przegląd Religioznawczy”, 2014, no. 2(252), p. 111-141.

⁴⁵ More about the conflict between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in: M. Stempień, *Global encounter. Rivalry between Islamic State and Al-Qaeda over the supremacy of the global jihadist movement*, „Myśl Ekonomiczna i Polityczna, 2015, no. 3(50), p. 198-218.

DAIISH⁴⁶), also called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Finally this led to the proclamation of a Caliphate, on June 29, 2014. By removing "in Iraq and al-Sham", ISIS became Islamic State (IS, Al-dawla al-Islamiyya). It indicated growing ambition of spreading of this jihadi structure in other parts of the region and the world⁴⁷.

The functioning in the so-called underground is not satisfactory for many jihadists. For this reason, the establishment of the self-proclaimed Islamic State caliphate in Iraq and Syria attracted fighters. The prospect of having their own state ("jihadi-state") is extremely tempting⁴⁸. Acquiring new territory by jihadists in the Middle East, however, is unsatisfactory. IS wants to create a network of the provinces, which will merge in the future to create a global caliphate. So far, this type of structures was created in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The most developed network of connections was established in Egypt and Libya, which have the greatest potential to replicate the model of the Islamic State from areas of Mesopotamia.

Activity of the Islamic State in Sub-Saharan Africa is most actively developing in Nigeria, where structures of the Salafi jihadist group Boko Haram are functioning. The organization, led by Abubakar Shekau, in March 2015 sworn fidelity to IS⁴⁹.

Nevertheless, the activities of the self-proclaimed caliphate are gaining interest in other countries. In October 2015, about two hundred members of the Somali branch of al-Qaeda – Al-Shabaab (*Harakat Al-Shabaab al-Mudžahidin* – HSM), made the oath of fidelity to your Islamic State⁵⁰. In 2010, jihadists from Al-Shabaab, operating at the border with Kenya, announced the creation of the emirate in the territory of Somalia. Attempts to attract the whole structure of Al-Shabaab in the ranks of the self-proclaimed caliphate remain largely ineffective. Although groups of Somali

⁴⁶ DAIISH is a transliteration of the acronym, made up of the same Arabic words, which make English acronym ISIS – *Al-Dawla Al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham*. It is therefore the Arabic abbreviation for the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham.

⁴⁷ *This Is the Promise Of God*, Retrieved from: <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/shaykh-abc5ab-mue1b8a5ammad-al-e28098adnc481nc4ab-al-shc481mc4ab-22this-is-the-promise-of-god22-en.pdf>.

⁴⁸ M. Stempień, *Dżihadizm a tworzenie quasi-państw. Funkcjonowanie "państw dżihadystycznych" w przestrzeni międzynarodowej - studium porównawcze*, „De Securitate et Defensione. O Bezpieczeństwie i Obronności”, 2017, no. 1(3), p. 134-144.

⁴⁹ *Boko Haram*, The American Foreign Policy Council, Aug. 21, 2013, http://almanac.afpc.org/sites/almanac.afpc.org/files/Boko%20Haram%20August%202014_0.pdf; *Spreading its tentacles; Islamic State*, "The Economist", July 4, 2015, vol. 416, no. 8945, pp. 37-38; M. Stempień, *Fenomen Boko Haram. Afrykański kalifat zagrożeniem dla bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego*, „Athenaeum. Polskie Studia Politologiczne”, 2016, no. 50, p. 123-133.

⁵⁰ Ch. Anzalone, *From al-Shabab to the Islamic State: The Bay'a of 'Abd al-Qadir Mu'min and Its Implications*, *Jihadology*, Oct. 29, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/10/29/guest-post-from-al-shabab-to-the-islamic-state-the-baya-of-abd-al-qadir-mumin-and-its-implications/> [05.11.2015]; *Islamic State seeks foothold in Somalia*, "The Washington Post", Dec. 25, 2015, p. A6.

militants swear oath of allegiance to the leader of the IS, the top leadership has kept its historical links with Al-Qaeda.

Kenyan police estimated that about twenty Kenyans joined the structures of the Islamic State in Libya, where the province of self-proclaimed caliphate can has approximately 6,500 members⁵¹. Islamic State, like the other jihadist structures recruits mainly young people. Among them, a significant percentage is converts originating from poor communities.

Conclusion

Kenya has the potential to become one of the leading countries in Africa, because of the growing and young population, rapidly growing private sector and the adoption of a new constitution. Nevertheless, next to the need to solve problems such as poverty, social inequality and low level of investment, since many years the threat of jihadist structures is still present. Their activity is also a threat to the stability and security of the entire region. If radicalization will exacerbate, the eastern part and coast of Kenya may begin to resemble northern Nigeria, which became a very unstable territory and was easily overrun by Boko Haram militants.

The influence of Islamism should not be underestimated. Islam in Kenya will continue to be a minority's religion, but its impact on politics and society cannot be ignored. From Mali by Nigeria to Kenya and Tanzania extremists penetrate Muslim communities on the peripheries, not necessarily territorial, which are fed up with decades of discrimination and marginalization by the central authorities. As in other regions jihadists use existing religious tensions and dissatisfaction of Muslim communities. Kenya – considered being the territory of relative stability in East Africa and one of the strongest emerging markets in Africa – is facing the challenge of Islamic radicalization. Although the reforms are undoubtedly necessary and in progress the process of their implementation at the local level remains slow and uneven.

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⁵¹ C. Gaffey, *Kenya Arrests Four Men Suspected of Trying to Join ISIS in Libya*, "Newsweek", Mar. 8, 2016, http://europe.newsweek.com/kenya-arrests-four-men-trying-join-isis-libya-434628?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=rss, (12.03.2016).

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