Security diplomacy as a response to Horn of Africa’s security complex: Ethio-US partnership against al-Shabaab

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Security diplomacy as a response to Horn of Africa’s security complex: Ethio-US partnership against al-Shabaab

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Abstract: Following the attack on the United States of America, counterterrorism against al-Shabaab attracted the attention of great powers and countries in the Horn of Africa. The threat of al-Shabaab in the region continued to be critical as counterterrorism is persistently commenced in cooperation with powerful states such as the United States of America and regional and international organizations. Despite counterterrorism operations in the region, the intensity of threat from al-Shabaab increased, and its tactics are changing over time. A qualitative research approach was employed to explore the Ethio-US counterterrorism partnership to fight al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa. Purposive sampling was used to select eight informants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the African Union, US Embassy in Ethiopia, the Kenyan Embassy in Ethiopia, and the Director of IGAD at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. The primary data were collected through an in-depth interview with these informants. The finding reveals that the Ethio-US partnership along with others maintained multilateral and bilateral cooperation against al-Shabaab. The collective counterterrorism has driven al-Shabaab from the center and many districts have been liberated in Somalia. However, the

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Terrorism became a global threat where none can escape. The threat of al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa is so precarious despite counterterrorism efforts in the region. The researcher believes in order to address problems arising from al-Shabaab terrorism in the region, the role of security diplomacy by states remains paramount. Accordingly, this research explored the Ethio-US partnership against al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa and suggested the importance of fighting al-Shabaab through cooperation both internally and externally. In addition, counterterrorism through military intervention and non-military approach of making the public aware of impact of terrorism especially in Somalia is significant. The international community should cooperate with states in the region. Furthermore, emphasizing the conditions, which are advantageous to al-Shabaab, could weaken its expensive ambition. Therefore, giving attention to factors hindering counterterrorism activities in the region is also equally important to make war on al-Shabaab complete.
counterterrorism intervention has not been able to destroy al-Shabaab, due to several factors contributing to it both internally and externally. Hence, counterterrorism could become effective when Somalia builds its political and security sectors to fight al-Shabaab on its own.

Subjects: Terrorism; International Politics; African & Third World Politics; Security Studies - Pol & Intl Relns

Keywords: Counterterrorism; terrorism; diplomacy; al-Shabaab; the horn of Africa; Ethiopia; United States of America

1. Introduction

Global security has become one of the issues seeking international communities’ attention. This is so as our globe has been challenged by security problems for one or another reason at different times. Terrorism, armed conflict, civil wars, inter-state wars, drug and human trafficking, and refugee catastrophes have become lingering problems. Above all, terrorism has grown into a precarious nuisance to the human race across the world (Murphy, 2009). It is not a new phenomenon; but the 9/11 attack on the USA globalized its threat (Adamson, 2007). In this dynamic international system, terrorism changed its face from its oldest form to what the world is going through in the present day. According to Newman (2007), regardless of its advantage globalization has caused several socio-economic challenges to international politics. This gave rise to challenges from multiple units; public or private, state or non-state actors. Similarly, Morgan (2004) argues globalization provided motivation for terrorism and has appropriated methods for it.

It triggered the clash of value systems often described as cultural interventionism. This sounds true for the discrepancy between western and non-western value interactions (Newman, 2006). The support of the United States of America to Ethiopia in order to maintain peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and fight terrorism is mentioned in the table 1 below.

Modern religious terrorism was born out of a collision between globalization and Islamic revivaisl (Lizardo & Bergesen, 2003). This contradiction was backed by large-scale social, economic and political problems (Newman, 2006). The change from the traditional way of life to modern style brought bizarre components to peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Colonialism, for instance, came with the mask of imperialism pretending to be selfless and bound with the duty to “civilize darker-skinned people who have yet to discover the benefits of western civilization” (Byrd, 2017). They expounded capitalism; they have sung imperialism and deceived many people in those countries. Besides, neoliberalist-dominated international system encouraged the appearance of a new type of religious terrorism (Lizardo & Bergesen, 2003). The growth of terrorism to this phase was equipped by elements of fundamentalism and extremism that were used to respond to supremacist ambition of the western culture in the Islamic countries (Byrd, 2017). This augmented the emergence of antagonistic forces in Islamic and non-western countries. Terrorist actors began to grow in number and influence to bring international security into their grip. Above all, Al-Qaida stretched out its networks of fundraising, ideology, and beliefs via social networks and established its cells in different regions and countries (Adamson, 2007). Especially, after the 9/11 attack, terrorists targeted US embassies in different countries. Every country in the world faced human, political, economic, and social costs of terrorism (The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), 2007).

The African continent in general and the Horn of Africa, in particular, have been suffering from terrorist threats (Memar & Gebru, 2014). Apart from this complex social, economic, political, and environmental problems are other factors to the Horn of the African security complex (Berouk, 2013). The threat of terrorism to peace and security of people in the region for more than two decades has concentrated its epicenter and safe-haven in Somalia, where al-Shabaab is located (Nzau, 2010). Al-Shabaab carried out several attacks in several countries like Uganda, Kenya,
Table 1. The United States of America’s assistance to Ethiopia

| No | Programs Areas | Program Element | Specific emphasis |
|----|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|    | Program area PS1: Counterterrorism | Program element PS 1:1 | Disrupt Terrorist Networks |
|    |                  | Program element PS 1:2 | Counter Violent Extremism |
|    |                  | Program element PS 1:3 | Build law enforcement and criminal justice counterterrorism capacity |
|    |                  | Program element PS 1:4 | Strengthen multilateral and regional counterterrorism mechanisms |
|    | Program area PS2: Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) | Program element PS2:1 | Counter WMD Proliferation and Combat WMD Terrorism |
|    | Program Area PS3: Counter-Narcotics | Program element PS3:1 | Eradication |
|    |                  | Program element PS3:2 | Alternative Development and Alternative Livelihoods |
|    |                  | Program element PS3:3 | Interdiction |
|    |                  | Program element PS3:4 | Drug Demand, Prevention, and Treatment |
|    |                  | Program element PS3:5 | Narcotics-Related Corruption |
|    | Program Area PS4: Transnational Threats and Crime | Program element PS4:1 | Financial Crimes and Money Laundering |
|    |                  | Program element PS4:2 | Deter Cybercrime, Intellectual Property Theft, and Corporate Espionage |
|    |                  | Program element PS4:3 | Organized and Gang-related Crime |
|    |                  | Program element PS4:4 | Cybersecurity |
|    | Program Area PS5: Trafficking in Persons | Program element PS5:1 | Protection |
|    |                  | Program element PS5:2 | Prosecution |
|    |                  | Program element PS5:3 | Prevention |
|    | Program Area PS6: Conflict Mitigation and Stabilization | Program element PS6:1 | Conflict Early Warning, Mitigation and Peace Building |
|    |                  | Program element PS6:2 | Peace and Reconciliation Processes |
|    |                  | Program element PS6:3 | Preventive Diplomacy |
|    |                  | Program element PS6:4 | Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) |
|    | Program Area PS7: Conventional Weapons Security and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) | Program element PS7:1 | Small Arms/Light Weapons (SA/LW) Destruction and Security |
|    |                  | Program element PS7:2 | Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) |

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| No | Programs Areas                                                                 | Program Element                                                                 | Specific emphasis                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Program Area PS8: Strengthening Military Partnerships and Capabilities         | Program element PS8:1                                                          | Defense and Security Operational Capacity-Building                                |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS8:2                                                          | Military Professionalization and Institutional Reform                              |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS8:3                                                          | Logistical and Operational Support                                                |
|    | Program Area PS9: Citizen Security and Law Enforcement                         | Program element PS9:1                                                          | Civilian Policing and Peacekeeping                                                |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS9:2                                                          | Civilian Police Reform/ Community-Oriented Policing                               |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS9:3                                                          | Community Security Initiatives                                                    |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS9:4                                                          | Corrections Assistance                                                            |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS9:5                                                          | Border Security                                                                   |
|    |                                                                                | Program element PS9:6                                                          | Specialized Law Enforcement and Intermediate Security Forces                     |

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2018

Somalia, and Ethiopia (Endalcachew, 2014). Just to mention some, al-Shabaab attacked the American Embassy in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 and the Israeli Hotel in Mombasa in 2002 (Kagwanja, 2003). The historical and contemporary web of complications makes the Horn of Africa suitable for al-Shabaab’s operative infiltration. The presence of several factors contributing to regional instability assisted al-Shabaab to sustain itself. The security complex that emerges from colonial legacy, sponsoring of subversive activities, formation of alliances, the region’s strategic importance to superpowers, and external interference all provided a suitable ground for al-Shabaab (Berouk, 2013). Besides, the weak, corrupt, and fragile states in the region maintained fertile ground for terrorists and radical Islamists (United states Institute of Peace, 2004).

On the other hand, the geopolitical and strategic significance of the Horn of Africa to outsiders and its proximity to the homeland of Osama bin Laden, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Arab world made it to be an object of terrorism from both Africa and the Middle East (Dagne, 2002). This emerges from cultural factors and proximity to the Middle East fueled the growth of terrorism in the region. The presence of terrorist cells linked to Al-Qaida in Yemen, Kenya, and Tanzania augmented the persistent operation of al-Shabaab (Rotberg, 2005). According to Woldeselase (2010), the countries of the Horn of Africa face domestic and international threat from terrorism as a critical challenge to the security and peace of the region. He attempted to point out that al-Shabaab and local extremists formed linkages with international terrorist organizations and ruined the peace and stability in the region. The intensity of al-Shabaab’s threat brought human security to its trap as the region is getting attention of terrorist organizations around the world.

The global war on terrorism was waged in the post 9/11 to wrestle its threat to global peace and stability (Adamson, 2007). The The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2007) suggests, “states should ensure human security and protect the rights of their nationals by taking positive measures to protect them from terrorist attacks and bring perpetrators to justice”. Conversely, counterterrorism requests by the United Nations faced reluctance from some Muslim countries in Africa. This is due to their affinity with terrorist groups in either giving shelter or supplying logistics to them (Shinn, 2004). The United States of America took the leadership to
wage anti-terrorism war in countries, such as, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan (Getachew, 2009). This heightened the complexity and tactics of terrorist organizations. They began to take revenge against the US and its allies.

Partnership against terrorism in the Horn of Africa has been undergoing for so long. Countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, and others in the region have shown their commitment to fight terrorism in cooperation with African Union peacekeeping force (AMISOM) and USA (Dagne, 2002). The counter-terrorism efforts by the combined forces of the states in the region and external powers have been vibrant since terrorism happens to be a threat in the region. Ethiopia and the United States of America have entered into a partnership to fight terrorism in the Horn of Africa. This partnership grew after the September 9/11 attack on the United States of America. Ethiopia has been pro-US and reliable partner to fight al-Shabaab in Somalia (Getachew, 2009). They have engaged in a partnership in the name of pacifying the region from al-Shabaab. Internally, efforts by Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, and other homegrown allied forces were attempting to contain continuing al-Shabaab's threats. Besides, the gravity of terrorist threats in the region forced the United States of America to seek the Ethiopian government as a reliable partner in the region in the name of the partnership to fight international terrorism. This has implied that the United States of America supported Ethiopia in the form of shared intelligence services, military and security training, financial and logistic support (United States Institute of Peace, 2004). While such a track of relation between Ethiopia and the USA along with the rest is a reality, the brutality of al-Shabaab persists to this day in Somalia and the Horn of Africa as a whole.

Given the counterterrorism effort in the region, al-Shabaab remains to be the chief threat to the peace and stability of the region and eradicating it is so arduous. These efforts by states in the region and their alliance with the United States of America, the European Union, the African Union, and others could not liberate the Horn of Africa from al-Shabaab's clutch. Hence, the study attempted to examine the nature of cooperation between Ethiopia and the United States of America in responding to terrorism in the Horn of Africa. It is intended as a contribution to the debate why the Ethio-US partnership to fight al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa is likely waning. It also tried to examine why al-Shabaab remains to be a major source of threat while counterterrorism is already at maneuver. In so doing, the study aimed further at finding major sources of threat that al-Shabaab poses to the region and the reason counterterrorism intervention against terrorism has not eliminated al-Shabaab. Thus, the study has investigated the achievements and factors that are suitable for al-Shabaab to carry attacks in the Horn of Africa along with major challenges to Ethio-US counterterrorism endeavors.

2. Materials and methods
To investigate the Ethio-US counterterrorism partnership against al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa the research employed qualitative research methodology. Primary data used in this research were collected in 2018 when I was at Addis Ababa for fieldwork. This research employed an in-depth interview to collect data from eight informants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the IGAD Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the African Union, the United States of American Embassy in Ethiopia, and the Kenyan Embassy in Ethiopia. These informants were selected purposively with a belief that informants have sufficient knowledge about the issue this study intended to address. In the finding section, the identity of the informants mentioned as informant 1, 2, 3 … 8 to maintain their anonymity. Besides, secondary sources both published and unpublished on terrorism and counter-terrorism were accessed to obtain secondary data. Data obtained by these methods were analyzed using narrative analysis by transcribing interview data and triangulated with secondary data.

3. Result
3.1. The Ethio-US Counterterrorism partnership in the Horn of Africa
Ethiopia and the United States of America have a long history of collaboration in different aspects from the time of Emperor Menelik (Feleke, 2011). The main areas of cooperation include economic,
diplomatic, and security interests. According to the interview data obtained from the Director–
General of Foreign Service Training Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, counter-
terrorism partnerships between these countries increased following the 9/11 attack on the United
States of America (Informant 2, March 2018). This attack gave terrorism international attention
and its influence has already appeared in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia. In post 9/11,
the focus of the US government shifted towards fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, the Middle East,
and the Horn of Africa (Getachew, 2009).

Another interview conducted with the Director of American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Ethiopia revealed that the Ethio-US partnership mainly emphasizes three areas. These
are peace and security, humanitarian and developmental activities, and counterterrorism
(Informant 1, March 2020). The spokesperson of the US Embassy in Ethiopia on the Amhara
Television described that the US government is working with Ethiopia on broad range of coopera-
tion that focuses on democratic reform, economic progress, social development, and regional
peace and security. Following September 9/11 attack, the threat of terrorism grew to a level
where no country could escape. The interview conducted with the director of Somalia Affairs at
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia revealed that before the 9/11 attack, terrorism was not as
critical as it is today to world peace and stability. It was occurring in a few places with a very
erratic incidence. The US partnership with Ethiopia and Kenya is based on their experiences
terrorist they had (Informant 3, March 2018). The US partnership with Ethiopia and other countries
played a leading role to combat al-Shabaab terrorism. Both Ethiopia and the United States of
America have their own experiences of terrorist attacks (Informant 1, March 2018). Fighting
terrorism in the Horn of Africa is critical because it is located in the strategic geography, where
it can affect the peace and security of the nations beyond the region. Furthermore, being an
international threat, terrorism affected the US interest in the Horn of Africa (Informant 3,
March 2018). Thus, the US government has been providing security and counterterrorism assis-
tance to countries in the Horn of Africa.

3.2. The Ethio-US Counterterrorism strategies in the Horn of Africa
The United States of America is a leading country in waging counterterrorism war. The data
obtained from the head of the Defense Division and Security at the African Union indicated that
the US foreign policy following the Cold War considered international security as a basis of its
national interest (Informant 4, March 2018). The United States of America established counter-
terrorism partnership with Ethiopia, Kenya, and other countries. Another informant describes the
turning point of the US partnership with Ethiopia as follows:

The US was more alerted after the 9/11 New York attack. It gave terrorism an international
character. This was the turning point for the US foreign policy, as the US understood that it
could not be safe because terrorism is posing threat across the world. The presence of
terrorism in countries in the world directly or indirectly affects the US and its allies’ interests.
To fight terrorism, the US provided financial and logistic support to augment the capacity of
states to fight al-Shabaab (Informant 3, March 2018).

The US reinforced its partnership with states in the region by extending finance, logistics, and
intelligence. Ethiopia too wants to make sure its security is maintained from terrorist threats
including al-Shabaab’s infiltration into its territory. The interview data indicate the United States
of America supported Ethiopia financially, logistically, and technically to halt al-Shabaab’s attack
on its interest in one way or another (Informant 2, March 2018). Even though the US counter-
terrorism strategy against al-Shabaab involves other states in the region, one informant describes
the reason Ethiopia was seen to be a reliable partner as follows:

Other states in the region are relatively unstable to fight al-Shabaab as powerful as Ethiopia.
Sudan was accused of hosting Osama bin Laden and other Al-Qaida members and was
among the list of states sponsoring terrorism. Somalia is failed and unstable state serving as
a safe-haven for al-Shabaab. Djibouti on the other hand, could not take the leadership of
counterterrorism because of economic constraints. On the other hand, Eritrea was blamed for sponsoring rebel groups and purchasing arms to disturb the peace of countries in the region. Although Kenya is one of the partners of the US, it has been attacked by al-Shabaab several times. The instability between Sudan and South Sudan was also another significant point (Informant 3, March 2018).

The presence of terrorism in stateless and fragile Somalia for the last 20 years has attracted global attention. Added to state fragility, the existence of al-Shabaab in Somalia is a ticking explosive to Ethiopia and other countries. Similarly, al-Shabaab is an obstacle to the United States’ economic, diplomatic, and security interest in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East (Informant, 2, March 2018). For that to happen, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the United States of America worked hard to make the Horn of Africa unsuitable for al-Shabaab and other linked terrorist groups. These nations are working to enable Somalia to build a strong military and institution that can take action against al-Shabaab. The interview data obtained by an expert at the Kenyan Embassy in Addis Ababa pointed out that the cooperation of the United States with countries in the Horn of Africa brought a significant impact on al-Shabaab (Informant 6, March 2018). The Director-General of Foreign Service Training Institute at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia said the commitment of these countries to the Horn of Africa hinged on their experience of terrorist attacks at home and abroad (Informant, 2, March 2018). The United States of America was attacked by Al-Qaeda in 2001 and so its embassies abroad. Similarly, al-Shabaab attacked Ethiopia’s troops in Somalia and Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa. In Kenya, the Westgate and Garissa University attacks among others are for which al-Shabaab claimed responsibilities (Informant 1, March 2018).

3.3. The accomplishments of Ethio-US counterterrorism partnership

The interview data obtained from informants indicate the achievements of counterterrorism efforts by Ethiopia and the USA along with others in the Horn of Africa can be viewed from two aspects. The first accomplishment is the diplomatic achievement made against al-Shabaab. The Director-General of Foreign Service Training Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia described that significant efforts have been made both at multilateral and bilateral levels (Informant 2, March 2018). The work of security diplomacy on al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa specified that fighting terrorism is important through sharing information, intelligence, and logistics (Informant 3, March 2018). This diplomatic achievement is an effort to fight terrorism through cooperation at international, regional, and local levels. Based on this, international and regional organizations and powerful states have been supporting counterterrorism efforts in this region. Thus, Ethiopia was able to become a partner of the US as well as international and regional organizations (Informant 2, March 2018).

Al-Shabaab was acting as a government before the counterterrorism intervention in Somalia. Through the combined efforts of Ethiopia, the United States, Kenya, and AMISOM; al-Shabaab was dismantled from its government status and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established in Somalia (Informant 1, March 2018). Another informant had to say about what has been achieved as follows:

It is difficult to say they have completely succeeded. They succeeded that al-Shabaab is destabilized through counterterrorism forces, even if it is still making terror attacks in Somalia and Kenya. The fact lies in the question that terrorists do not fight conventionally. Therefore, success should be viewed from diplomatic cooperation against al-Shabaab and intelligence sharing between American and Ethiopian defense officials (Informant 2, March 2018).

In line with this, the security diplomacy between the United States of America and Ethiopia to free the Horn of Africa from the clutch of al-Shabaab obtained an international concern. The counterterrorism cooperation between these countries affected the military muscle of al-Shabaab. According to the interview conducted with an expert from Kenyan Embassy in Ethiopia, al-Shabaab resorted to suicide attacks due to the hard-hit actions by counterterrorist forces of the
US troops, Ethiopian troops, AMISOM, and Kenyan National Defense Force (KNDF) (Informant 7, March 2018). The US government’s role in sharing intelligence, providing financial support to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia to fight al-Shabaab terrorism brought significant security dynamics. Similarly, the European Union has been one of the regional organizations supporting AMISOM in Somalia to fight al-Shabaab (Informant 4, March 2018).

4. Why the counterterrorism in the Horn of Africa could not eradicate al-Shabaab

Counterterrorism has been waged in the region since al-Shabaab appeared to be a threat in the Horn of Africa. There have been several military interventions, yet al-Shabaab remained to be a major threat in the region. Beyond that, it has been carrying out several attacks not only in Somalia but also in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. It is therefore proper to ask why al-Shabaab continued to be a threat while counterterrorism against it is in place. Regarding this, one of my key informants argued as follows:

To understand this, it is important to consider regional and international dynamics that are in advantage of al-Shabaab. These elements are the absence of a strong central government in Somalia, instability in the region, lack of trust among countries of the horn of Africa, a network of external forces with al-Shabaab, Islamic radicalism and extremism, and state sponsorship of terrorism. In the presence of these conditions in favor of al-Shabaab, it is very challenging to wipe it from the Horn of Africa (Informant 3, March 2018).

On the other hand, competing interests of powerful countries and the involvement of non-state actors such as Islamic charity organizations in Somalia and Sudan backed al-Shabaab (Informant 2, March 2018). These issues in each country and the region as a whole are in support of al-Shabaab and choked the counterterrorism activities in the Horn of Africa. To understand how these factors worked in favor of al-Shabaab and strangled the counterterrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa a detailed explanation is made below.

4.0.1. The state fragility in Somalia

An interview conducted with the spokesperson of the United States of American Embassy in Ethiopia indicates that fragile states are suitable home to the terrorist organization and is a challenging condition for counterterrorism. It is a suitable condition for terrorism to breed and carry out its missions (Informant 8, March 2018). In this way, the fragile circumstances in Somalia have been utilized by al-Shabaab terrorism (Informant 7, March 2018). Another interview with the Director for IGAD Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia states that the absence of a strong government, which is capable of maintaining the peace, and stability of its nation provides a suitable condition for terrorist groups. In the same vein, the absence of a strong government in Somalia and the fragile politics that lasted for more than two decades have provided good environments for al-Shabaab (Informant 5, March 2018). The Head of Defence and Security Division at African Union revealed that primarily ensuring the security of the people in Somalia and combating against al-Shabaab should have been the mandate of the Somalia government (Informant 4, March 2018). This situation provided good ground for radicalism to endure and offered al-Shabaab to take advantage of this defenseless circumstance. Another factor in addition to state fragility is the homogenous composition of people of Somalia and being a follower of Islamic religion, which is easy to radicalize (Informant 1, March 2018).

4.0.2. Complex social, economic, political, and security problems

The Horn of Africa is prone to social, economic, political, and security problems. The presence of these problems in the Horn of Africa provides fertile ground for terrorism (Informant 7, March 2018). In the social aspect, the absence of modern secular education lets parents send their children to Islamic schools funded by al-Shabaab and other Islamic institutions/groups from overseas. Likewise, lack of access to health facilities, lack of pure water and electricity as well as lack of infrastructures in Somalia are the suitable conditions for al-Shabaab to manipulate the people (Informant 6, March 2018). On the other hand, an expert from the Embassy of Kenya to
Ethiopia indicated that economic problems are responsible causes for terrorist groups to recruit members with a promise to afford good payment to them as fighters. Poverty is a suitable ground for al-Shabaab to lure youths (Informant 6, March 2018). As a result, it utilizes financial incentives to recruit fighters from society where social problems are prevalent. There are also complex issues facing the region in terms of governance and political participation. The political instability in each country in the region and security problems emerging from intra-state conflict augmented al-Shabaab terrorism in the Horn of Africa. In line with this argument, one of my informants mentioned, al-Shabaab by itself, is one of the manifestations of these problems, perhaps the most prominent one (Informant 4, March 2018).

4.0.3. The absence of permanent counterterrorism military forces
The military force drawn from different countries are stationed in Somalia. These troops are composed of different countries such as the Kenyan National Defense Forces, Ethiopian National Defense Force, and the United States of American troops and AMISOM (Informant 8, March 2018). The interview data obtained from the Head of Defence and Security Division at the African Union point out these troops liberated many territories and towns from al-Shabaab’s control. However, they would not stay permanently in those areas/provinces because their task could be of temporary due to their domestic factors, financial limitation, and security dynamics (Informant 4, March 2018). When they leave these places, al-Shabaab returns and re-establishes its control over these territories (Informant 2, March 2018). To maintain sustainable peace and improve the security condition in these places, a permanent force guaranteeing the security of people residing in these places should be maintained. This problem can be resolved by building the Somalia government’s security sector to bring a lasting impact (Informant 4, March 2018).

4.0.4. The financial constraint of the Horn of African states
Counterterrorism requires enormous financial resources. The interview conducted with the Director of American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and the head of Defence and Security Division at African Union points out that the countries in the Horn of Africa cannot afford counterterrorism finances by themselves due to their domestic economic problems (Informant 1 and 4, March 2018). Economic problems in these countries could not allow covering all counterterrorism expenses. Hence, the counterterrorism budget is mostly funded by donors such as the USA, EU, and other countries. The USA is the key source of counterterrorism funds to the African Union, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The spokesperson of the US embassy in Ethiopia indicated that sometimes changes in the United States of America affect the conditions of its partners, especially when elections are made and the new president ascends to power (Informant 8, March 2018).

The counterterrorism budget was comparatively high for states fighting al-Shabaab in the region during the Obama administration. The director of American affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia witnessed that the financial resource that the United States of America provides to Ethiopia for security and counterterrorism was encouraging. However, following the Trump administration, the financial support for Ethiopia was reduced by half (Informant 1, March 2018). On the other hand, the financial support that is provided by the European Union to AMISOM was declined (Informant 4, March 2018). The decline of financial resources and the comparative economic incapability of these nations have led them to withdraw their troops from Somalia (Informant 3, March 2018).

4.0.5. Al-Shabaab’s social base
The shelter of fundamentalists, extremists, and terrorist organizations are mainly the people. The interview conducted with an informant from the Kenyan Embassy in Ethiopia stated society gives shelter and supports al-Shabaab for two main reasons. The first is when society believes and accepts the cause and objective of these extremist groups. The second originates from the fear that their life is at risk unless they abide by their causes and provide all that they want (Informant 7, March 2018). In line with this, al-Shabaab cells hide in the society and it is difficult to
differentiate from the civilians and take measures against them. Other informants argued that those cells serving al-Shabaab keep on brainwashing the public on its agendas and objectives (Informants 2 and 5, March 2018). It makes undertaking military action against al-Shabaab more challenging and tiresome (Informant 3, March 2018).

4.0.6. Islamic radicalism and extremism
Radicalism lubricates the ground for terrorism. The interview conducted with the director of Somalia and Eritrea Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia indicated that radicalized individuals and groups are always vulnerable to terrorist groups’ manipulation. Besides, the people in which radical and extremist groups available can easily be driven to either provide support or be recruited by al-Shabaab (Informant 3, March 2018). In some cases, al-Shabaab uses radicalized and extremist individuals or groups to establish a strong network with clan leaders and their members (Informant 2, March 2018). An informant from the African Union indicated when counterterrorism measures are taken against these groups, they provoke the people to take sides with al-Shabaab and fight against counterterrorism forces. The data further demonstrate military measures taken by counterterrorist forces are used as a tool of provocation to revenge and defend their cause (Informant 4 and 2, March 2018).

4.0.7. The geostrategic location of the Horn of Africa
The Horn of Africa is an outlet to the Middle East as well as the inlet from this region. The geostrategic significance of the region to both state and non-state actors is another impeding factor to fully eradicate al-Shabaab. The interview data pointed out that terrorists, extremists, and fundamentalists from outside the region could cross to the Horn of Africa throughout Yemen by sea travel. They can easily travel and join al-Shabaab, as Al Qaida did in the 1990s (Informant 2, March 2018). Similarly, the defeat of ISIS in the Middle East has led its members to flee to the Horn of Africa where they can get shelter. Furthermore, the civil war in Yemen helped the movement of these terrorist groups to the Horn of Africa (Informant 4, March 2018). On the other hand, competing interest among state actors to assert their military presence in the Horn of Africa would lay a hand to al-Shabaab (Informant 3, March 2018). The location of the region and its internal security complex, all contribute to the absence of lasting and durable response to terrorism (Informant 4, March 2018).

5. Changes and continuities of Ethio-US counterterrorism partnership
Despite their historical relationship in several aspects, the counterterrorism partnership between Ethiopia and the United States of America entertained some changes and continuities. The interview conducted with the Director of American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia revealed that the decline of financial support by the US government to Ethiopia had been indicated following Trump’s ascendance to presidency (Informant 1, March 2018). In addition, the unpredictable policy change and level of emphasis by the US leaders towards fighting al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa with the relative decline of al-Shabaab as well as concurrent progress of the government of Somalia have been observed (Informant 2, March 2018). Another informant indicated that the financial support for AMISOM has declined following the regime change in 2016 (Informant 4 and 3, March 2018). The Trump administration reduced the financial assistance to the Ethiopian government since 2018. On the other hand, the partnership between Ethiopia and the United States of America is at a move despite these changes entertained (Informant 4, March 2018).

5.1. Challenges of Ethio-US Counterterrorism in the Horn of Africa
Given different problems facing the region, various challenges hindering counterterrorism efforts against al-Shabaab are evident. These factors include the shortage of financial resources, the weak government in Somalia, the pressure from the Middle East and Arab countries, and the regional security complex.

5.1.1. Shortage and decline of financial assistance
The financial resource for the counterterrorism operation against al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa mostly comes from economically powerful states and international and regional organizations. In
line with this, interview with the head of Defense and Security Division at African Union reveals that the shortage of counterterrorism budget is a chronic problem for the countries in the Horn of Africa and the African Union (Informant 4, March 2018). Another informant indicates that in fighting al-Shabaab, the United States of America has been a key source of finance, logistics, and intelligence. However, the recent decline of financial support brought significant impact (Informant 3, March 2018). Despite its committed engagement to fight al-Shabaab, the past four years (2014–2017) peace and security budget aid by the US government to Ethiopia had been declined (Informant 1, March 2018). Similarly, in the same year, the financial support to AMISOM by the EU was declined (informant 4, 2018).

5.1.2. The weak Somalian government
Somalia is the birthplace of terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The political crisis and state fragility in the country following the Ziad Barre regime have been a fertile ground for terrorism. The state fragility in Somalia for more than two decades has been another challenge to dismantle al-Shabaab (Informant 1, March 2018). Another interview data indicates state fragility in Somalia was augmented with the intervention of external actors (Informant 7, March 2018). The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as Egypt and others from the Middle East have been observed for the last two decades in Somalia politics (Informant 2, March 2018).

5.1.3. The influence of the Middle East and Arab countries
The geographic proximity of the Horn of Africa to the Middle East and Arabian Peninsula poses challenges to the counterterrorism efforts in the region. The situation in this geographic location directly or indirectly affect the counterterrorism efforts. The interview data reveal civil war in Yemen attracted the attention of terrorist organizations such as Al Qaida and ISIS (Informant 2, March 2018). These groups can easily travel to East Africa and join al-Shabaab (Informant 1 and 2, March 2018). On the other hand, the tension between Arab and Middle East countries hinders the counterterrorism efforts in Somalia and the region as a whole. The director of American affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia stated Saudi Arabia and Iran along with others in the region and have been critical and potential support for al-Shabaab (Informant 1, March 2018). These states used this element to destabilize Somalia especially to advance their Islamic objectives. In the same way, they use al-Shabaab as a pawn to destabilize the rival state to realize their interest. Accordingly, the extended hands of states and terrorist organizations from the Middle East, state fragility, and absence of strong government in Somalia all have reinforced al-Shabaab to buy time albeit the counterterrorism effort by the US, Ethiopia, and Kenya (informant 4, 2018).

5.1.4. The impact of regional security complex
The countries in the Horn of Africa are very much connected and borders are porous. Any national threat likely become a regional threat. An interview data show an expansive ambition of al-Shabaab, the regional security complex poses a great challenge to counterterrorism effort in the Horn of Africa (Informant 7, March 2018). Besides, political instability in the region, interstate and intrastate conflict, lack of trust between states and movements of armed forces affecting counterterrorism efforts (Informants 5 and 3, March 2018). On the other hand, the interconnection of people in the Horn of Africa in terms of culture, language, border, and livelihood can easily be manipulated by al-Shabaab. Concerning this, in the North Tigray people in Ethiopia and Eritreans speak the same language Tigrigna. In the East, Somali of Ethiopia and Somali of Somalia speak the same language and follow the same religion, Islam. From the Southern front, there are Afaan Oromo speakers in Kenya. Along the west, the Nuer and the Anywa live in Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan. However, this interrelation has a political, economic, and social significance; it too is suitable for terrorist infiltration to expand its network in the Horn of Africa (Informant 1, March 2018).

6. Discussion
The finding of this study shows that terrorism in the Horn of Africa has drawn the attention of international communities. The international community understood that terrorism poses a great
challenge to world peace and stability. So supporting any initiative to combat terrorism everywhere in the world through concerted effort was encouraged. After the 9/11 attack in New York City, the US government have expanded its intelligence, military, and logistic capacity to battle terrorism everywhere in the world. The United States of America articulated four areas of support flow to Africa to fight terrorism. These are military operation against terrorist groups, security assistance programs, extradition and partnership with host nations to bring suspects to justice, and a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of terrorism (Dempsey, 2006). The United States of America has been one of the key actors in the region since terrorism happens to be a threat. The US government understood that terrorism is a major obstacle to its presence in the Islamic countries of the region. Following the crash of its helicopter -the Black Hawk and the killing of its soldiers by terrorists in Somalia, the US government reformed its strategy of fighting terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Countries in this region have been making their effort to dismantle al-Shabaab terrorism. Ethiopia and Kenya mainly have shown a commitment to interrupting the expansive ambition of al-Shabaab. These countries have been combating al-Shabaab to maintain their domestic security and regional stability.

Ethiopia as one of the reliable partner of the United States of America in the Horn and East Africa have shown commitment to maintain regional security from terrorism. This attracted the attention of the US to work with Ethiopia to wage counterterrorism against al-Shabaab (Feleke, 2011). This was confirmed in the speech of Barak Obama during his visit to Ethiopia. He proved that Ethiopia is an outstanding partner in counterterrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa (Kessels et al., 2016). For that reason, the US decided to reinforce its partnership of fighting al-Shabaab with countries in the region by providing financial, logistic, intelligence, and military assistance. According to Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen (2007), the US counterterrorism policy in the Horn of Africa attempted to implement three basic strategies. These strategies are supporting the Ethiopian government, cooperating with Khartoum on counterterrorism, and hunting Al-Qaeda suspects in Somalia. To this end, it branded three options. The first strategy was safeguarding the border alongside Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The second was working with AMISOM and Somalis to dismantle al-Shabaab and rebuild Somali as state. Lastly, the US sought to put a large number of its troops in Somalia (Burgess, 2015). Similarly, Dagne (2002) states US policy of fighting al-Shabaab in Somalia incorporated three objectives: 1) working with neighboring countries such as Ethiopia to make Somalia inhospitable to terrorist groups, 2) making sure any counterterrorism activity in Somalia would not affect neighboring countries, and, 3) working towards lasting peace and economic development in Somalia.

The US wants to maintain the security of its embassies and citizens from the al-Shabaab attack in the region. Terror attacks on the embassies of the United States of America in Kenya and Tanzania have been indicators of terrorists’ hatred against its citizens and diplomats (Kagwanja, 2003). In that order, the US and its partners want Somalia not to be a shelter to al-Shabaab. Similarly, Ethiopia, Kenya, and other neighboring countries need to eliminate it from Somalia. The 2017 United States Department of States (USDS) states that the partnership of Ethiopia and the United States of America is maintaining regional security and capacity building, investigation of al-Shabaab’s suicide attack in Djibouti, establishing joint Task Force against terrorism, and enforcing the law. For that to happen, making Somalia inhospitable to terrorist groups and supporting the counterterrorism efforts by Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti was vital. These countries share border with Somalia and their security is interconnected. In other words, Ethiopia and Kenya share the largest border with Somalia. Therefore, the cooperation of the United States of America with these countries would be successful by limiting al-Shabaab’s expansive ambition and operation in Somalia.

The finding uncovered that knowing whether collective counterterrorism against al-Shabaab in the region was fully succeeded depends on factors prevailing in the region and outside the region. Yet, the security diplomacy maintained between Ethiopia, Kenya and the United States of America and cooperation with regional, international and other powerful states have been promising. On
the other hand, bringing the Somalia government to stand on its own feet is an achievement from the cooperation between the United States of America and Ethiopia along with the African Union, Kenya, and other countries and organizations. Besides, al-Shabaab has been driven to remote territories and many provinces were liberated by AMISOM, the US troops, Ethiopian troops, and Kenyan National Defense Force. In terms of security capacity building, Ethiopia and the United States of America supported the government of Somalia by training federal police and defense forces. Ethiopia has also worked closely with AMISOM to ensure lasting peace and stability in the region. As a result, many districts and towns in Somalia have been liberated from the stronghold of al-Shabaab and the Transitional government’s security forces stationed (Cordano, 2015). Moreover, al-Shabaab has been hard hit. The indicator for this is its relative decline and resort to suicide attacks and bombings.

Despite this, the counterterrorism effort, however, has not fully liberated Somalia and the Horn of Africa from al-Shabaab. The fact is that conditions in the region have been contributing factors to al-Shabaab’s persistence. Al-Shabaab uses these circumstances to pose a threat to peace and stability of peoples. The first reason could be statelessness in Somalia. This condition produced promising ground for al-Shabaab for many years. Likewise, the Somalia government’s incapability to protect its people and fight against al-Shabaab is potential obstruction. For the same reason, the fragmentation of Somalia into Punt Land, Somali Land, and Somalia has complicated the success of counterterrorism. The absence of a capable police force that can fight al-Shabaab and lack of essential facilities and intelligence expands the vulnerability of people to this group. The second issue to consider is that al-Shabaab change its strategies and tactics frequently. This is difficult to cope up with because terrorists do not fight conventionally. Thirdly, al-Shabaab uses a human shield. This makes detecting its members difficult and taking actions more intricate. Besides al-Shabaab, also obtain support from Somali Diasporas and the public. This helped al-Shabaab to obtain public attention (Amble & Meleagrou-hitchens, 2014). In this condition, taking military measures when its members are in the community causes collateral damage. In the same way, it is argued that “the only way to galvanize al-Shabaab and increase support in Somali are additional airstrikes by the US or the return of Ethiopian troops to Somalia” (Committee on Foreign Relations, 2010). Another factor is the expansion of extremism and radicalism that have drawn the attention of the people towards supporting al-Shabaab. Radicalized society can easily be a drive to fanaticism and be manipulated by terrorists. Radicalism is the precursor of terrorism (Cilliers, 2015; Ta, spinar, Ömer, 2009). In this way, al-Shabaab spurs its political objectives under the shadow of religious doctrine. This can be controlled by consolidating peaceful Islamic teaching and democratic principles such as the rule of law, human rights, justice, and expanding the political horizon. Military strike while these elements are in the community may amplify public anger and induce them to support al-Shabaab. Therefore, it should be done by creating awareness in the people for final peace and stability.

The presence of social, economic, and political problems in Somalia and other countries has exposed the people to a lack of choice. Political grievances against the government provoke individuals to join al-Shabaab, support, and being recruited (Cordano, 2015). Besides, Islamic organizations linked to al-Shabaab have been providing social services to the public to uncover the weakness of the governments (Cilliers, 2015). Besides, corrupt and incompetent Somali authorities’ actions exacerbate public grievances and induce them to support jihadists (Ali, n.d.). Ali further goes to say sheds of evidence show that sometimes government forces also join al-Shabaab when they are abused by the government and its authorities. The government and other agents supporting the government of Somalia should address these problems in line with counterterrorism efforts. For that reason, maintaining the rule of law and providing basic social services to the people would increase their trust in the government. People may know they are well protected when they live in a democracy and rule of law as well as their basic needs fulfilled. As far as these problems are conspicuous in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, defeating al-Shabaab is quite challenging. Hence, prioritizing these issues and making effort to address them will have a great impact on al-Shabaab.
The finding reveals al-Shabaab is linked to foreign terrorist groups. The slow weakening of ISIS and Al-Qaeda in the Middle East forced their members to flee to other countries and join their parallels. This is important to al-Shabaab because it could enhance its human, technical, and strategic capability. Yet, the situation in Somalia is favorable to the movement of extremist groups from the Middle East and Arab countries through Yemen. The flow of transnational terrorist organizations to the region and their linkage to al-Shabaab worsens the security landscape of the region. Bryden (2015) noted that al-Shabaab decentralized its activities through recompensing growing challenges to command and control through empowering regional governors and commanders, augmenting Amniyaad- al-Shabaab’s intelligence, counter-intelligence, and special operation agent. The connection it has with these groups help al-Shabaab fill the gap between human and technical resources.

The finding further demonstrates that the region is highly affected because of its strategic location. Cilliers (2015) indicates that the Horn of Africa is extremely affected by the events occurring in the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen), the Middle East, and the Gulf region. States from these regions have a close cultural, economic, and religious link and interest in the Horn of Africa. In addition, countries such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran had a great influence in the region. Moreover, Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Yemen have political interest in the Horn of Africa (Amare, 1996). The alignment of these nations according to their interest has added to fueling tensions in the region.

On the other hand, weak security and porous borders have heightened the security tension in the East Africa. This can be understood from ongoing situations in Somalia and its neighbors (Olsen, 2014). To tackle these security problems countries must work together and understand how their individual decision might have a reverberating impact on the region as a whole. They should not only focus on their national security and how to define it from their interest but also to expand the range of their concern to realize collective stability. Each country’s effort should be beyond its domestic concern. These nations in advance should gear towards building Somalia to maintain collective security in the Horn of Africa. This could allow them to control al-Shabaab’s movement and limit its sphere of influence to specified geography where taking measures is possible. Besides, more weight should be given to Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Intelligence Authority to halt illegal money transfers to this group (Debela, 2016). Therefore, it is important to discern that defeating al-Shabaab requires strong cooperation in the region and at international level.

The decline of counterterrorism finance in Ethiopia and AMISOM has been a critical challenge to counterterrorism efforts. Territories and towns liberated by counterterrorism have eventually been recaptured by al-Shabaab when they withdraw from these areas. Alexander (2017) noted that Ethiopia claimed it withdrew its troops in 2016 from more than ten towns in the south and central regions of Somalia because of a lack of budget. This gave a chance for al-Shabaab to re-establish control over them. The decline of terrorism finance provides al-Shabaab recommence its strength to attack every country.

7. Potential prospect to defeat al-Shabaab

The security problem in the Horn of Africa has always been headache not only in the region but also beyond the region. Many countries in Europe, America, and Asia suffer because of their citizens joining al-Shabaab. Fighters come from different continents and countries’. This makes countering al-Shabaab quite tiresome. Eradicating al-Shabaab is dreadful and fighting it is not only the responsibility of few countries. Regarding the counterterrorism effort against al-Shabaab by Ethiopia, the US, and other partners, the following prospects are important.

First, AU has proposed the need to establish an AU-Somalia-UN task force platform to ensure security support in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Somalia. This platform requires unified objective and commitment among states of the region and external powers. This becomes the responsibility
of all countries from the region and beyond to work with this umbrella. Of course, political interest may vary, but there is a need to put this platform under the ownership of Somalia and the leadership of AU and IGAD.

Second, alternative potential prospect is the willingness of both Ethiopia and the USA along with others to fight terrorism. Although there are certain cracks as to the unpredictability of US foreign policy, they both understood that terrorism is their common enemy. This is not only destined for the US alone but also the EU and other countries whose economic and diplomatic interest is threatened in the region.

Third, Ethiopia could play leadership role in fighting al-Shabaab on peacekeeping programs in this region. There is a need to build trust in Ethiopia's leadership by neighboring countries to fight al-Shabaab. Ethiopia is also an emerging economic and military power in the Horn of Africa. Its strategic location concerning neighboring countries allows it to reinforce diplomatic relations, which could be an important move. Besides, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic connection of the peoples in the region with Ethiopia is substantial to build people-to-people relations. Furthermore, Ethiopia is the chair of IGAD and hosts many regional and sub-regional organizations. This would enhance the belief in Ethiopia's leadership to fight al-Shabaab.

Fourth, the crumbling of ISIS and Al-Qaida in the Middle East and Arab countries affect the capacity of al-Shabaab. This indicates that al-Shabaab is on the brink to lose support that comes from ISIS and Al-Qaida in the Middle East. This defeat will lead to an important result that will contribute to al-Shabaab's disintegration. In line with this creating faction in al-Shabaab's leadership has to be emphasized.

Fifth, Somalia is getting strong and it will win al-Shabaab on its own. This can be realized by the support from international community towards building political and security capabilities in Somalia. Once, Somalia become stronger, fighting al-Shabaab will be on its own. The cooperation of other neighboring countries and international partners can end the fate of al-Shabaab.

Sixth, the diplomatic advancement both at regional and international stages on counterterrorism provide robust stance to fight terrorism. The UN, AU, EU, and people around the world knew the severity of terrorism and its economic, human, social, and psychological costs. This is another important motivation for the counterterrorism efforts in the region.

8. Conclusion
Fighting al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa requires reframing strategies and patterns pertaining to its changing tactics and strategies. The effort so far lacks robust coordination both from internal and external aspects. It becomes difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate al-Shabaab from the region whose existence was entrenched in the conditions of the region since the Ethio-US partnership was in its strong position. Areas and towns, which were taken away from al-Shabaab, were being recaptured and al-Shabaab has intensified its sporadic and sudden attacks. The state fragility in Somalia and the lack of security force that can respond to al-Shabaab’s attack widen insecurity space open. Besides, the unconventional nature of al-Shabaab's strategy would make responding to it very challenging. This makes detecting the time, place, and how al-Shabaab is going to carry attack inconvenient. The presence of historical, social, economic, political and security problems in the region are advantageous to al-Shabaab. As far as these conditions are persistent in the region, the destiny of al-Shabaab cannot be easily brought to an end. On the other hand, foreign terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS have been al-Shabaab’s strong supporters by providing military training, weapons, and intelligence services. Again, the geostrategic location of the Horn of Africa provides fertile ground for al-Shabaab because foreign fighters can easily cross to the region from the Middle East and Arab countries.

Even though al-Shabaab is believed to be declining, it somehow lies in the heart and minds of many Somalis. The logic is that it has already circulated its ideology to establish an Islamic State in
Somalia and convinced them this is their religious duty to do so. The difficulty is that eradicating what is established in the social and psychological makeup of society is not easy. Besides military actions, counterterrorism effort should also emphasize non-military methods such as consolidating Islamic teaching that focus on peace. Moreover, focusing on promoting and sharing good culture and democratic values that change the perception of Somali people to condemn al-Shabaab is dynamic.

The counterterrorism operation in the Horn of Africa breathes by the financial assistance from donor countries such as the US and other counterparts. The declining foreign policy emphasis and reduction of counterterrorism support highly affect the fight against al-Shabaab. It is important to fill the finance gap to intensify countering al-Shabaab in the region. Working beyond mere military interference of counterterrorism perspective would bring a better outcome. International partners and organizations should boost counterterrorism of all sorts emphasizing on soft diplomacy and strong military muscle against al-Shabaab. Ethiopia and the United States of America should work together in advance by strengthening intelligence sharing and economic cooperation. For the same reason, states in the region should build trust and discuss their common problems. Again, using regional and sub-regional organizations such as AU and IGAD to solve suspicious relations can assist counteracting al-Shabaab effectively.

9. Implications for further research and policy recommendation

The understanding and studying of the root causes of terrorism as well as working on those factors remains vital. Resolving social, political, and economic problems, which trigger grievances and push individuals to join terrorist organizations must be prioritized. If the government fails to fulfill public needs, people would use violence to compel the government. Similarly, they are easily vulnerable to recruitment by the terrorist. Addressing these problems requires political response. Equally, political unresponsiveness and unaccountable leadership exacerbate the circumstances and lead to heightened level of instability. Hence, addressing social, political, and economic situations of the people to build their future to educate their children, secure economic needs, enjoy their rights and political participation could restrain them from supporting al-Shabaab.

As terrorism in the Horn of Africa is a threat to all states in the region and beyond, making cooperation against al-Shabaab should be a prime concern of every state. Countries should cooperate towards adopting non-military alternatives such as public diplomacy and awareness creation. Yet crucial is, building trust and infrastructure, which bridge mistrust between countries and peoples of the region. Cross-border infrastructural development allows movements of goods and people easily. This encourage people to develop a sense of collective identity. When they are connected, they exchange not only goods and services, but also values. Based on this, states should strengthen people-to-people relations and expand infrastructural linkage in the Horn of Africa. Collective work must be done in politics, economics, and social dimensions to fulfill basic needs of people in the region.

It is noteworthy to implement proactive measures, which are cheapest and effective tools. Working on conditions suitable to al-Shabaab and other rebel groups is compulsory. Curative actions are very expensive because they take place after damage.

Resolving mistrust between states of the region through IGAD and AU is significant. Under the auspices of IGAD and AU, countries should discuss how to develop concerted efforts and strengthen the existing frameworks against terrorism. On the other hand, preparing swift forces that can easily reach on time in the place where the threat is perceived has to be formulated. Finally, supporting regional counterterrorism in finance and contributing troops should be emphasized to bring lasting security, peace, development, and eradicate terrorism from the Horn of Africa.
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