

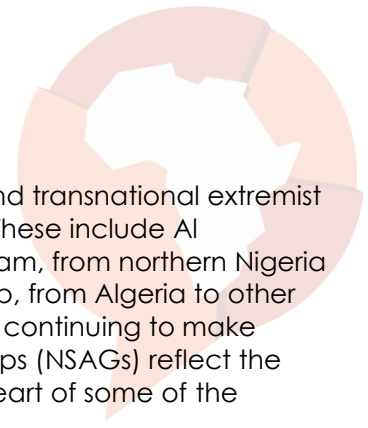


Violent extremism in Africa

Popular assessments from the 'Eastern Corridor'

By Sibusiso Nkomo and Stephen Buchanan-Clarke

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, the emergence and spread of local and transnational extremist organizations have become primary sources of insecurity in Africa. These include Al Shabaab, spreading from Somalia throughout East Africa; Boko Haram, from northern Nigeria into the greater Lake Chad region; Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, from Algeria to other states across the Sahel; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), continuing to make inroads into the continent (Mets, 2019). These non-state armed groups (NSAGs) reflect the fluid and variable nature of conflict systems today and are at the heart of some of the continent's most enduring peace and security challenges.

Africa's porous borders, coupled with current trends such as rapid urbanization and the youth bulge, global warming, resource scarcity, Internet connectivity, and high levels of migration, have helped regionalize conflict systems, and will likely continue to do so in the future (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

The spread of NSAGs across national borders, creating "regional hotspots," and growing connections between local and international extremist organizations pose a unique set of security challenges for governments in Africa that call for collaborative security responses. Examples of such responses can be seen in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The former comprises a 10,500-person regional force of soldiers from Chad, Niger, Benin, Cameroon, and Nigeria to combat Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the Lake Chad region. The latter was formed in 2014 in Mauritania to fight NSAGs and criminal gangs in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

In recent years, there has been a marked spread of Islamist extremist activity along the "East Africa Corridor," a geopolitical space that extends from Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda through Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018).


Since 2005, Al Shabaab has led an insurgency against the Somali federal government and forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and has carried out terrorist attacks in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In each country, the group has managed to link or merge with local Islamist actors and expand its operational footprint.

While Mozambique and South Africa have traditionally been regarded as insulated against the threat of terrorism, recent extremist activity in each has heightened security concerns. Since 2017, Mozambique has seen a nascent Islamist insurgency in its northern provinces of Cado Delgado, Niassa, and Nampula (Fabricius, 2020; Israel, 2020), while South Africa has experienced incidents of both Islamist (Swart, 2018) and far-right extremism (News24, 2020).

The failure of traditional counter-terrorism responses, often accompanied by heavy-handed security measures that trample civil rights and aggravate grievances, has encouraged a movement toward designing strategies, policies, and programs that interrupt "radicalization pathways" and address underlying socio-economic issues that give rise to violent extremism (United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

Policymakers working on these challenges need a strong evidence base in order to improve the efficacy of their initiatives. Here, public opinion research can be useful by providing insights into a given society's vulnerabilities to violent extremism, such as low levels of social cohesion, strong feelings of fear and insecurity, and lack of trust in police and security forces (Zeiger & Aly, 2015).

Afrobarometer's Round 7 surveys, conducted between late 2016 and late 2018, asked security-related questions in 34 African countries, including five countries along the East Africa Corridor that have experienced terrorist activity in recent years: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa. (While Somalia has been heavily impacted by terrorism, and has been a source of terrorist activity in the region, no Afrobarometer survey has taken place in the country due to security challenges.)



In these five countries, citizens show a generally mixed response to their respective governments' handling of violent extremism. Public trust in the security sector, particularly the police, is low throughout the region, which may hamper efforts to develop sustainable approaches to addressing violent extremism and insecurity. Many citizens in the region report fearing violence from extremist groups, even where actual incidents have been infrequent, and indicate a willingness to accept government restrictions on certain civil liberties, such as rights to privacy, freedom of movement, and freedom of religion. These findings highlight the need for counter-terrorism policies whose national security objectives do not come at the expense of democratic ideals and good governance.

Afrobarometer survey

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' evaluations and experiences of democratic governance and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018, and Round 8 surveys are currently underway.

Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200-2,400, which yield country-level results with a margin of sampling error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

This policy paper draws mainly on Round 7 data from 34 countries (see Appendix Table A.1 for a list of countries and survey dates), with over-time comparisons for five countries.

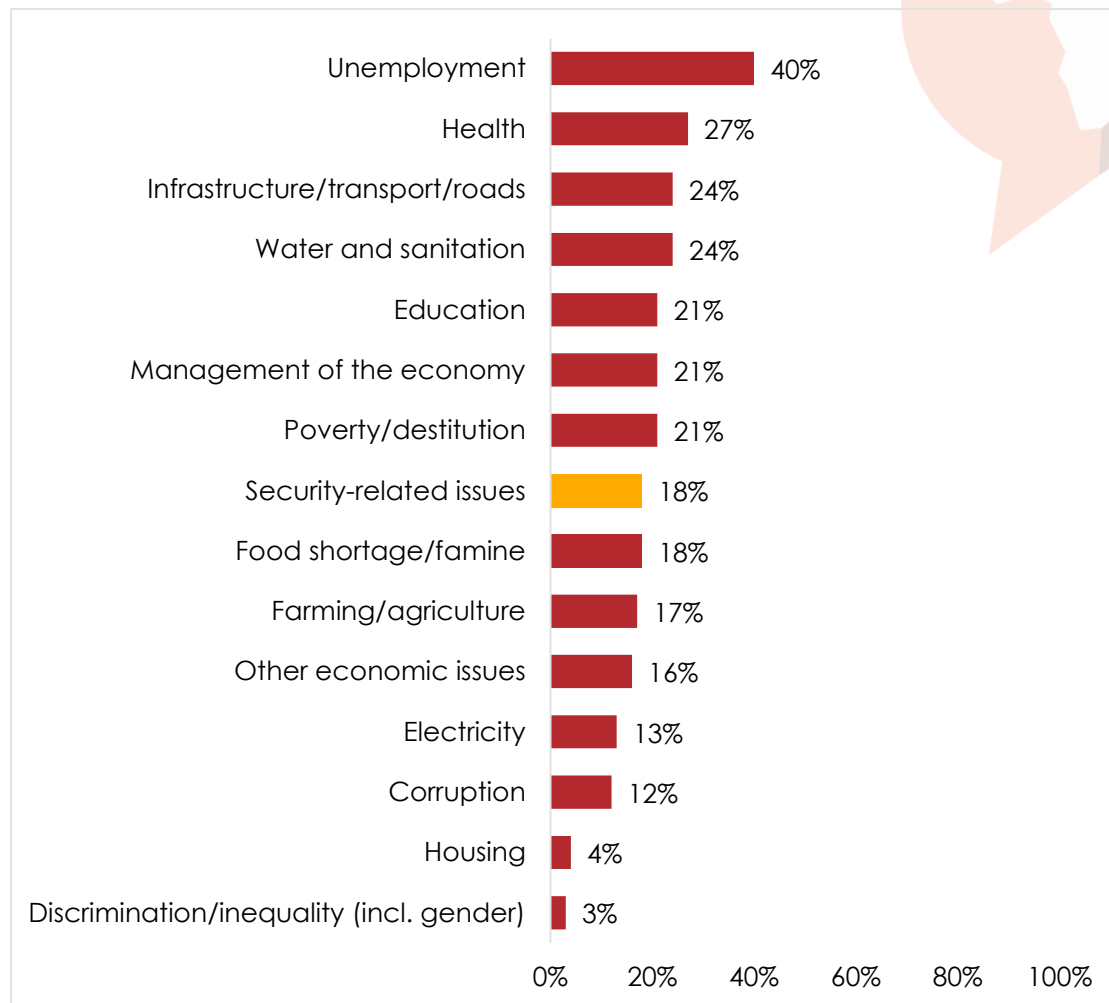
Key findings

- On average across 34 countries, security-related issues are the eighth-most-important problem that citizens want their governments to address. Kenyans and South Africans are more than twice as likely as Mozambicans, Ugandans, and Tanzanians to rank security as one of their three priority problems.
- While good police-community relations are an important part of effective counter-terrorism measures, only half (51%) of citizens surveyed across 34 countries said they trust the police even "somewhat." Among the five countries that are the focus of this analysis, public confidence in the police was lowest in Kenya (34%) and South Africa (35%) but above the continental average in Uganda (56%), Tanzania (62%), and Mozambique (63%).
- Fear of extremist violence does not always align with citizens' reported experience of an armed attack. For example, among 14 African countries where the question was asked in the Round 7 survey, Tunisia registered the smallest proportion of citizens who said they had experienced an armed attack by extremists (2%) but also one of the largest proportions who said they feared such an attack (29%).
- Levels of social tolerance between citizens differed across countries in the East Africa Corridor. South Africans were most likely, and Ugandans least likely, to express intolerance of people of a different religion, ethnic group, or nationality.
- In each of the five countries that form the focus of this study, at least one-third of citizens endorsed the government's right to monitor personal communications, curtail freedom of movement, and regulate religious speech if faced with threats to public security.

Prioritizing security in Africa

Across 34 countries surveyed in 2016/2018, about one in five citizens (18%) cited security-related issues as one of the three most important problems facing their country. This places security-related issues in eighth place, tied with food shortage/famine, well behind unemployment, health, infrastructure, and water/sanitation (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Most important national problems | 34 countries | 2016/2018

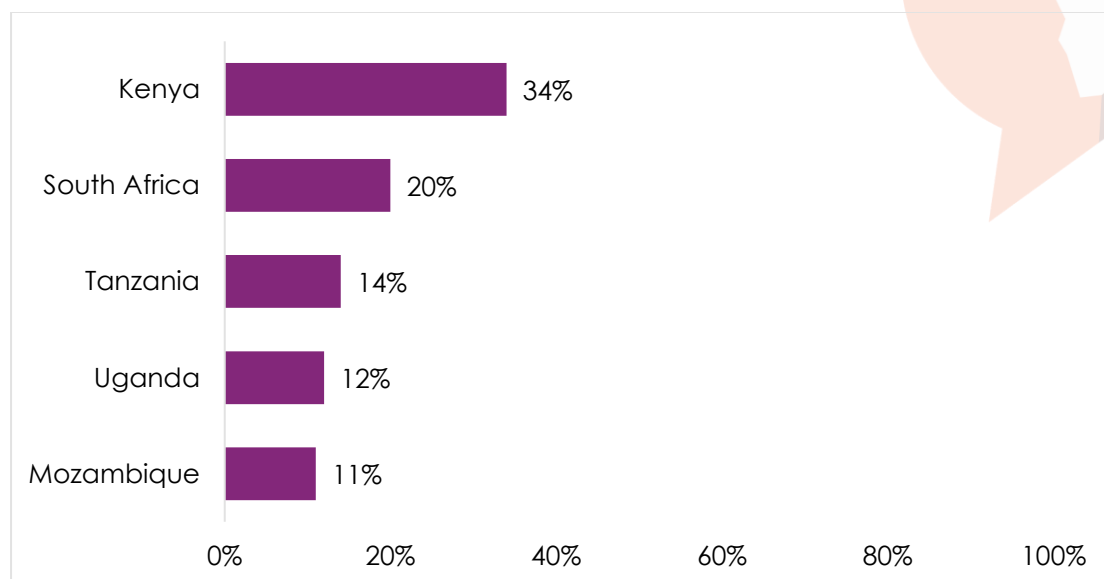


Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Note: Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows % of respondents who cited each issue among their top three problems.)*

On average across the five countries featured in this publication, the same proportion (18%) of citizens ranked security issues among their three priority problems, but perceptions varied widely by country. Almost one in three Kenyans and South Africans (31% each) cited security-related concerns as a top national problem, compared to just 13% of Mozambicans, 9% of Ugandans, and 6% of Tanzanians (Table 1).

This aligns with a survey finding from Round 6 (2014/2015), when Afrobarometer asked respondents which of six key sectors should be prioritized if their governments could increase their expenditures. Here, too, Kenya (34%) and South Africa (20%) were more likely to prioritize additional government spending on security than were Tanzania (14%), Uganda (12%), and Mozambique (11%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Security as a priority for additional government spending | 5 countries
| 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: *If the government of this country could increase its spending, which of the following areas do you think should be the top priority for additional investment? And which would be your second priority? (% who cited security as one of their two priorities)*

“Security-related issues” combines the categories of crime and security, political violence, political instability/ethnic tensions, interstate war, and civil war. Across all five countries, citizens who cited security-related concerns as a top national problem were likely more worried about everyday types of crime, given their relatively widespread and commonplace occurrence, than about more isolated extremist violence (Table 1).

Table 1: Breakdown of security-related issues among the most important problems facing their countries | 5 countries in the East Africa Corridor | 2016/2018

| | Kenya | Mozambique | South Africa | Tanzania | Uganda |
|---|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Crime and security | 25% | 6% | 29% | 5% | 5% |
| Political violence | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 1% |
| Political instability/ ethnic tensions | 4% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| International war | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Civil war | 1% | 4% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Total | 31% | 13% | 31% | 6% | 9% |

Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Note: Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows % of respondents who cited each issue among their top three problems.)*

However, extremist violence is also a concern, as suggested by Table 2. In Kenya, for example, a relatively high level of public concern about security-related issues (31%) aligns not only with the country's high crime rates but also with its experience of extremist violence. Kenyans suffered 61 terrorist attacks during the 12-month period preceding fieldwork for the



Afrobarometer Round 7 survey, including the shocking Al Shabaab attack on Garissa University College, which killed 148 people (BBC News, 2015).

South Africa recorded the same level of popular prioritization of security-related concerns (31%) but saw roughly half as many terrorist incidents (34) during the 12 months before the survey. In addition to crime, this may reflect concerns about the country's many public protests, which frequently turn violent, as well as the increasing number of political killings in recent years (Alexander et al., 2018).

Mozambique experienced about the same number of terrorist incidents as South Africa (30), but far fewer citizens cited security as one of their top priorities (13%), perhaps in part because to date, terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists have mostly been limited to the country's far-North Cabo Delgado province. However, the country has also seen sporadic incidents of political violence as a result of tensions between the Mozambican National Resistance Party (RENAMO) and the ruling Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) party. Many citizens may also be preoccupied with a host of serious social and economic challenges (Kripphal, 2019).

In Tanzania and Uganda, the smaller numbers of terrorist incidents (seven and four, respectively) correspond to the smaller proportions of survey respondents who ranked security issues as a top-tier national problem.

Table 2: Terrorist incidents and prioritization of security | 5 countries | 2016/2018

| Country | Survey dates | Security a priority problem | No. of terrorist incidents in 12-month period preceding Round 7 survey fieldwork ¹ |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Kenya | September-October 2016 | 31% | 61 |
| Mozambique | June-August 2018 | 13% | 30 |
| South Africa | August-September 2018 | 31% | 34 ² |
| Tanzania | April-June 2017 | 6% | 7 |
| Uganda | December 2016-January 2017 | 9% | 4 |

¹ Numbers are based on at least two of the three criteria used to define a terrorism incident in the Global Terrorism Database: An act must (1) “be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal”; (2) “be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims”; and (3) “be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law” (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2019). Ambiguous cases were included.

² There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism or violent extremism, and measuring the frequency of terrorist incidents relies in part on how the term is defined. The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” This is a fairly broad definition; in the case of South Africa, for example, it includes political killings, which have increased sharply in recent years and are politically opportunistic rather than ideologically motivated (Olifant, 2017).

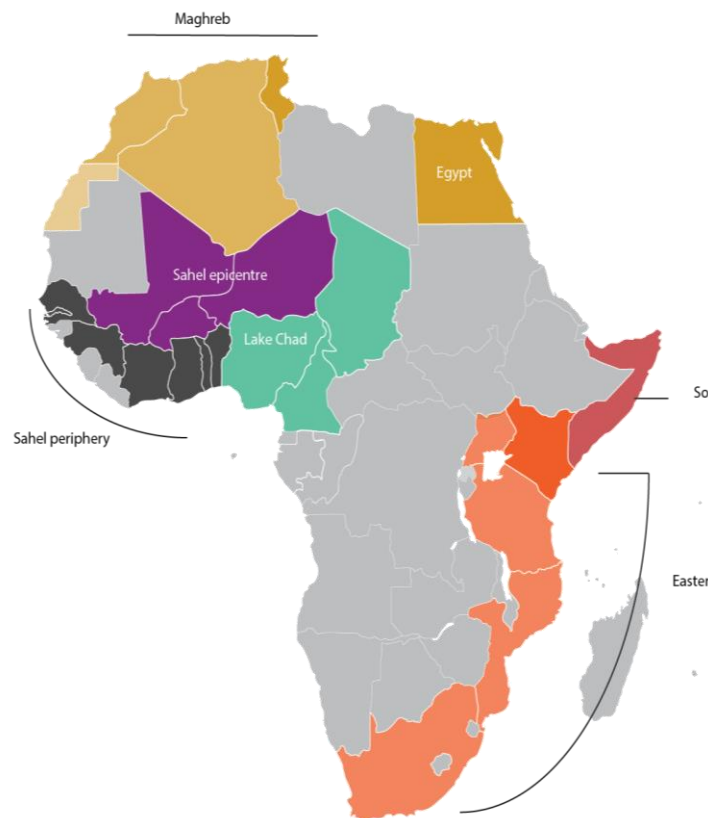
The difference between violent extremism and crime is often difficult to discern. In East Africa, for example, groups such as Al Shabaab pursue ideological agendas but also engage in organized crime to sustain their operations. Further complication is added when we try to differentiate between political or ethnic violence and “extremist” or religiously motivated violence, all of which can overlap. It is therefore important that discussion of violent extremism and insecurity be properly contextualized, which will be discussed below.

Violent extremism along the East Africa Corridor


Over the past two decades, states along the eastern coast of Africa have been particularly impacted by the emergence and spread of Islamist extremism. As Solomon (2018) argues, Islamism – “a 20th-century totalitarian ideology that seeks to mold Islamic religious tradition to serve narrow political ends of domination” – has increasingly come to replace Sufi Islam and challenged long-established norms of tolerance and interfaith cooperation in the region.

This trend is the result of a combination of external and internal factors. As Ali (2016) writes, these include “a decades-long effort by religious foundations in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to promulgate ultraconservative interpretations of Islam throughout East Africa’s mosques, madrassas, and Muslim youth and cultural centers.” Based in a particular Arab cultural identity, this ideology has polarized religious relations among communities and fomented inter-religious violence. Some governments have contributed to polarization by implementing repressive counter-terrorism responses that scapegoat entire Muslim communities.

Figure 3: East Africa Corridor states and other regional extremist hotspots in Africa



Chief among Islamist extremist organizations operating in the region, Al Shabaab emerged in Somalia in 2005, after two decades of state collapse, and has established itself as a formidable insurgency. After more than a decade, Al Shabaab continues to wage effective asymmetric warfare against Somali government forces and the 22,000-strong AMISOM and keeps up a high cadence of terrorist attacks that have claimed the lives of thousands of security personnel and citizens (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).



Since 2007, Al Shabaab has been expanding its geographical footprint across East Africa, often tapping into – and in some cases subsuming – existing militant networks.³

At first this expansion was an effort to mobilize funds and recruit new fighters to funnel back to Somalia, but in 2010 the organization began to launch attacks in response to Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) and AMISOM deployments in Somalia.⁴ As the International Crisis Group (2018) reports, “the movement also uses attacks outside Somalia for fundraising. It portrays them as evidence of its commitment to advancing the cause of the *umma* (Muslim community) in a struggle against regional authorities it describes as *kuffar* (non-believers). It distributes videos of attacks online, narrated in Arabic and often concluding with requests for funding. Some of the videos feature testimony from several people of different nationalities, intended as evidence of Al Shabaab's wide appeal.”

In Uganda, Al Shabaab has recruited locals, as seen in the involvement of several Ugandans in the 2010 Kampala bombings (Bryden, 2014). Similarly, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have recruited Ugandan citizens in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012) while adopting increasingly militant jihadist rhetoric and publicly aligning themselves with the Islamic State and other international Islamist organizations (Stearns, 2018).

In Tanzania, domestic militants from the Ansar Muslim Youth Center (Ansar Sunni) and other local organizations began in 2011 to carry out attacks against ruling-party officials, local bureaucrats, and police. In 2013, churches, entertainment centers, priests, and tourists were targeted (LeSage, 2014). Since 2015, the coastal regions of Tanga, Mtwara, and Pwani have been hit hardest, with militants staging more sophisticated attacks on local security forces, government officials, and Muslim clerics (U.S. State Department, 2017).

For Al Shabaab, ties with groups in Tanzania traditionally offered safe havens in which Kenyan fighters could escape local security crackdowns, as well as a new pool of disaffected youth from which to recruit. Recruitment has been most concentrated in the Pwani region, where anti-state sentiment runs high, and Tanzanians are now estimated to make up the second-largest cohort of foreigners in Al Shabaab, after Kenyans (Harper, 2019).

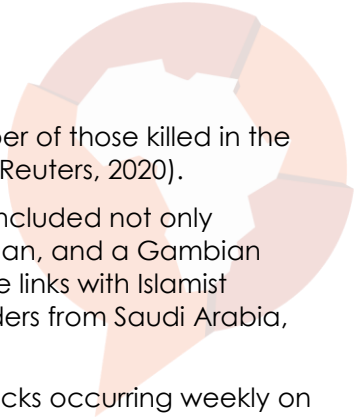
Just as Kenyan militants fled to Tanzania between 2013 and 2015 in response to a crackdown by Kenyan security forces, so, too, have Tanzanian fighters escaped local security efforts by retreating to remote areas, such as the densely forested Rufiji region and, since 2016, across the southern border into northern Mozambique (International Crisis Group, 2018). This has helped spark a nascent Islamist insurgency and growing violence in Mozambique's northern provinces.

In October 2017, 30 militants attacked three police stations in Mocimboa da Praia, a district in the Cabo Delgado region. Since then, an organization calling itself Ansar al-Sunnah or Ahlu Sunnah Wal-Jamā'a (ASWJ)⁵ has launched increasingly violent attacks on villagers, security installations, and liquid natural gas companies, ostensibly with the goal of overthrowing the old order of the National Islamic Council, which it views as co-opted by the

³ In Kenya, for example, this has included Al-Hijra, also known as the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC), and a network of Kenyan clerics such as Sheikh Shariff Abubakar “Makaburi” and Aboud Rogo Mohammed (International Crisis Group, 2018).

⁴ The deadliest attacks include the July 2010 Kampala bombings, which killed 74 people; the September 2013 siege at Nairobi's Westgate Mall, in which at least 67 people died; the June 2014 attack on a village in the Kenyan coastal area of Lamu, which killed 48 people; and the April 2015 gun and grenade assault on Garissa University College, which killed 148. Al-Shabaab also struck a nightclub in Djibouti in March 2014, killing two foreign nationals, and attempted (but failed to carry out) a suicide bombing in a football stadium in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

⁵ Locally the group is often referred to as Al Shabaab, likely because of the similarity of its actions to those of the Somalia-based organization (Habibe, Forquilha, & Pereira, 2019). However, it is still unknown to what degree the two groups are linked.



government, and building an Islamic State (Bonate, 2018). The number of those killed in the insurgency is difficult to determine; estimates range from 350 to 900 (Reuters, 2020).

Those arrested in relation to militant activity in Cabo Delgado have included not only Mozambicans, but also Tanzanians, Somalis, Ugandans, a South African, and a Gambian (Pirio, Pitelli, & Adam, 2018). The group's leadership is thought to have links with Islamist organizations in Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania and with spiritual leaders from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan, and Algeria (Habibe, Forquilha, & Pereira, 2019).

Since March 2020, the insurgency has escalated, with dozens of attacks occurring weekly on both citizen and government targets. This has included the temporary seizure of an army barracks on 23 March and a police station on 25 March; ASWJ fighters released footage waving the black IS flag and calling for the imposition of sharia law across the country (Al Jazeera, 2020; SAPO, 2020).

The nature and extent of the relationship between Al Sunnah and IS is still largely unknown. By raising the IS flag, ASWJ could simply be trying to gain more global recognition (thereby strengthening its fundraising and recruitment prospects), as opposed to being formally allied with IS and receiving logistical support. Similarly, IS routinely claims responsibility for attacks around the world to boost its image as a global jihadist network (Fabricius, 2020).

The emergence of ASWJ in northern Mozambique and its potential to destabilize the region have raised concerns among South African security analysts. While South Africa has not seen a similar level of direct terrorist attacks by IS or other Islamist extremist groups, the country has been used by Islamist extremist groups in the past for logistical purposes, taking advantage of the country's role as a transport, business, and communications hub and the relative ease of traveling on a South African passport (Reuters, 2016). Over the past three years, three individuals or groups have been charged with terrorist activities, and in all three cases, the South Africans charged are alleged to have been affiliated or in contact with IS operatives in East African states (Swart, 2019).

The response: Public trust in security forces

Effective interventions to combat violent extremism depend to a considerable extent on public trust in security forces. The success of both counter-terrorism operations and "softer" developmental programs to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) is often determined by a community's willingness to engage with police, military, or other authorities. Local communities are often best placed, for example, to provide intelligence on how recruitment is occurring in their towns and villages or to identify individuals showing signs of radicalization. They can also decide to provide or deny support to terrorist organizations operating in their regions (Stohl, 2006).

Security forces that profile specific race or religious groups, engage in corruption, or fail to uphold human rights or abide by the law risk losing community trust, with negative impacts on initiatives to combat extremism (Wambua, 2015).

Trust in the police

Across the 34 African countries that Afrobarometer surveyed in 2016/2018, on average only half (51%) of citizens said they trust the police "somewhat" or "a lot." Among the East Africa Corridor countries that are the focus of this analysis, public trust in the police was lowest in Kenya (34%) and South Africa (35%) but above the continental average in Uganda (56%), Tanzania (62%), and Mozambique (63%) (Figure 4). (See Table A.2 in the Appendix for detailed results by country.)

Trust in the armed forces

Africans express greater trust in the armed forces than in the police. Across 34 countries, two-thirds (65%) of respondents said they trust the army "somewhat" or "a lot." Among our five countries in the East Africa Corridor, trust in the army was highest in Tanzania (84%) and

Uganda (76%), and lower than the continental average in Mozambique (61%), Kenya (60%), and South Africa (54%). (See Table A.3 in the Appendix for detailed results by country.) Mozambique is one of the few surveyed countries where public trust in the police matched or exceeded trust in the army.

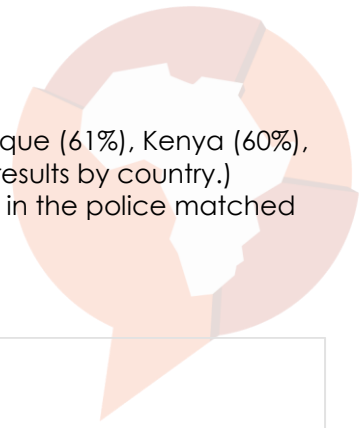
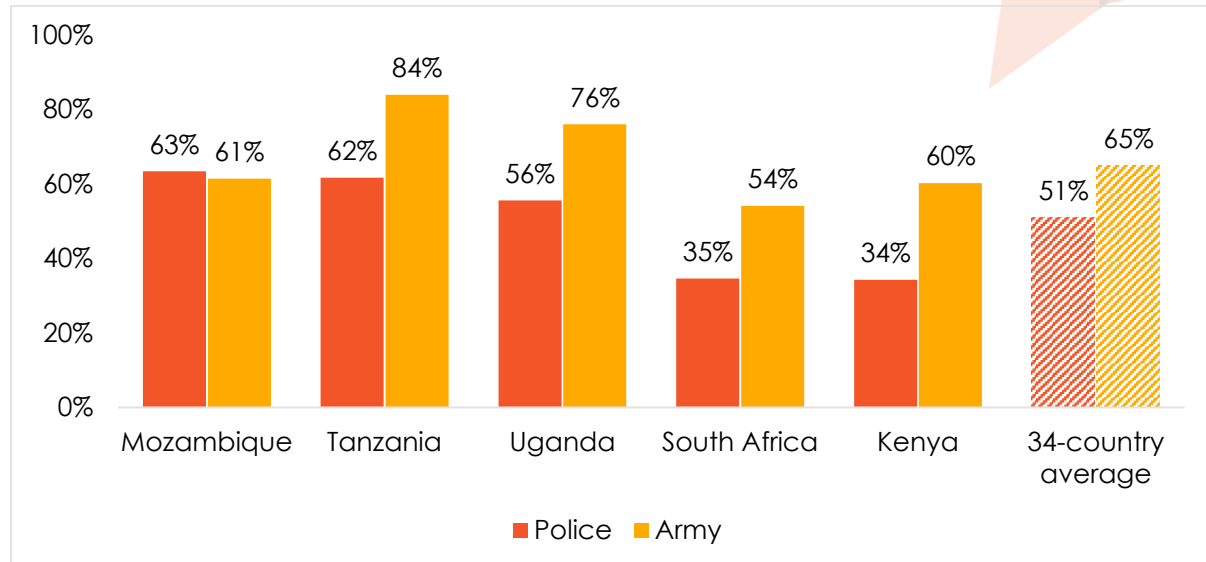


Figure 4: Trust in security forces | 5 countries | 2016/2018

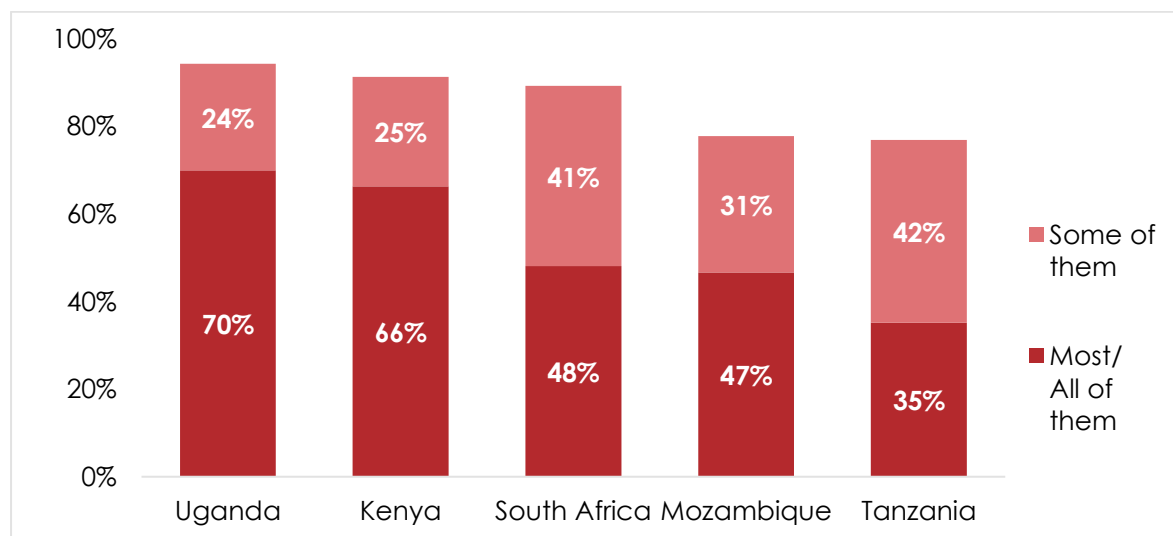


Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The police? The army? (% "a lot" or "somewhat")

Perceived corruption among the police

Round 7 surveys also found that among key public institutions, the police were most widely perceived as corrupt. On average across 34 countries, 83% of respondents said at least "some" police officials are corrupt, including 46% who saw "most" or "all" police officials as corrupt (see Appendix Table A.4 for responses by country). Among states in the East Africa Corridor, perceived corruption in the police was highest in Uganda (70% said "most" or "all"), followed by Kenya (66%), South Africa (48%), Mozambique (47%), and Tanzania (35%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Perceived corruption among police | 5 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The police?

Trust between communities and security forces is critical, especially in regions where terrorist activity occurs within civilian spaces (Alemika, Ruteere, & Howell, 2018). Corruption, human-rights abuses, and other types of misconduct are likely to diminish citizen trust in these institutions. The conduct of the security forces may also impact citizens' perceptions of a government's overall handling of extremist activity.

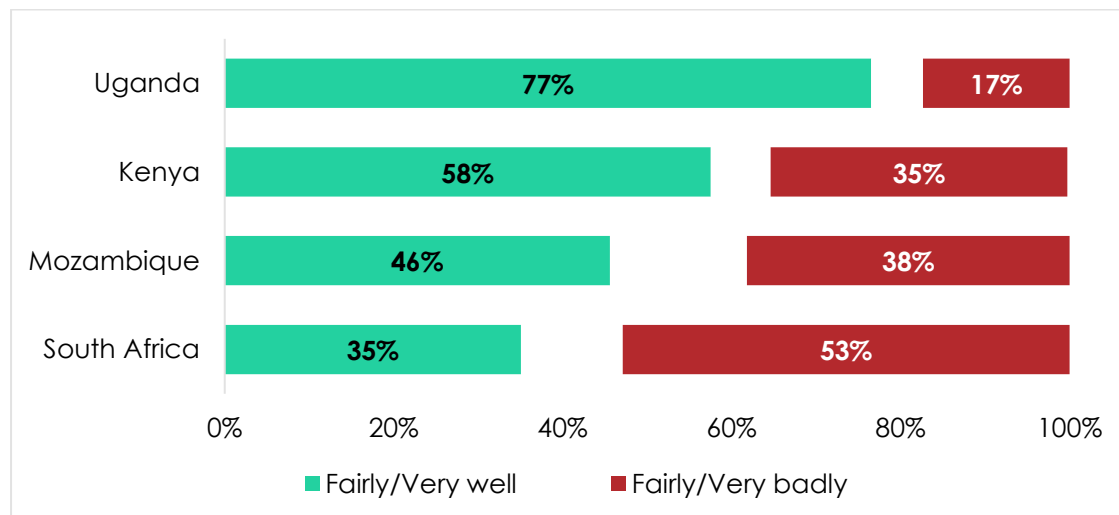


Governments' handling of extremist violence

In Africa and elsewhere, governments have largely failed to contain the spread of extremist organizations across borders and, in many cases, to prevent an annual rise in extremist activity within their own territories. In some countries, government responses to the threat of extremist violence have led to gross human-rights violations and increases in xenophobic violence.⁶

Even so, citizens in East Africa Corridor countries were more positive than negative in their assessments of their government's handling of extremist violence. Satisfaction was high in Uganda, where more than three-fourths (77%) described the government's performance as "fairly good" or "very good." A majority (58%) of Kenyans also approved of the government's performance, while appraisals were more mixed in Mozambique (46% positive, 38% negative). Only in South Africa did a majority (53%) of citizens say the government was handling extremist violence "fairly badly" or "very badly" (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Government handling of extremist violence | Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Countering political violence from armed extremist groups? (This question was not asked in Tanzania.)

Kenyan support for the intervention in Somalia

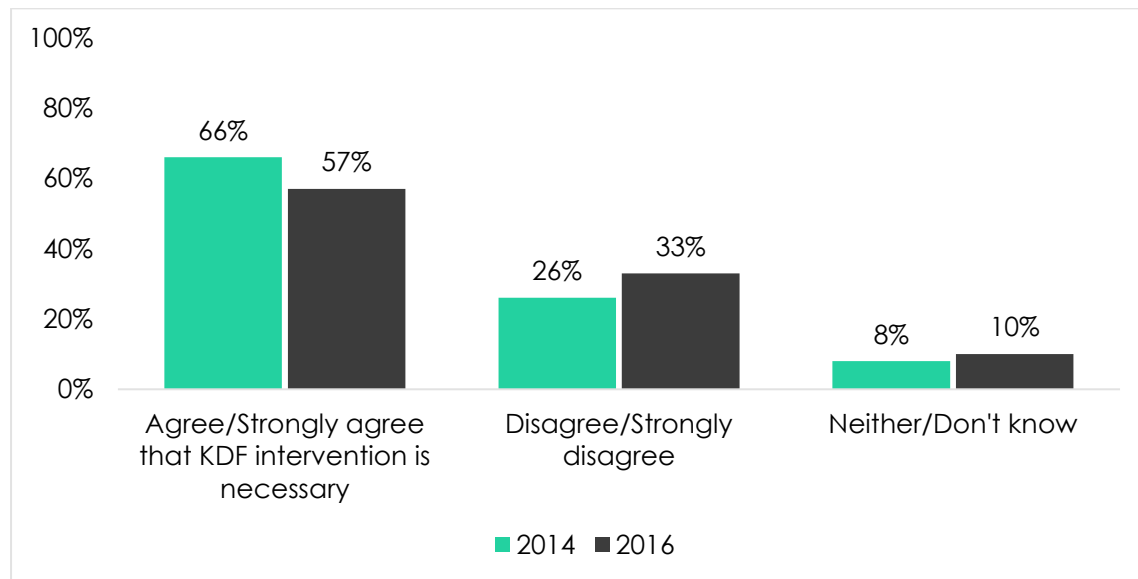
Among the five countries that are the focus of this study, Kenya has been the most heavily impacted by violent extremism and associated acts of terrorism. In 2011, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) invaded Somalia as a "coordinated pre-emptive action" against Al Shabaab (Al Jazeera, 2011). Al Shabaab responded with a series of reprisal attacks against Kenyan citizens and security personnel. A year later, KDF personnel were formally integrated into AMISOM, which has been engaged in an up-and-down military intervention ever since.

⁶ For example, in 2014, the Kenyan government launched Usalama Watch to improve security and capture alleged Al Shabaab supporters in Kenya. Amnesty International (2014) has documented numerous cases of beatings, intimidation, extortion, and forcible relocation at the hands of government security forces, especially targeting the Somali Kenyan community.

As Al Shabaab attacks in Kenya have continued, popular support for the KDF intervention in Somalia has declined. In 2014, two-thirds (66%) of Kenyan survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that KDF involvement in Somalia was necessary despite Al Shabaab reprisal attacks. By 2016, support for this view had dropped to 57% (Figure 7).

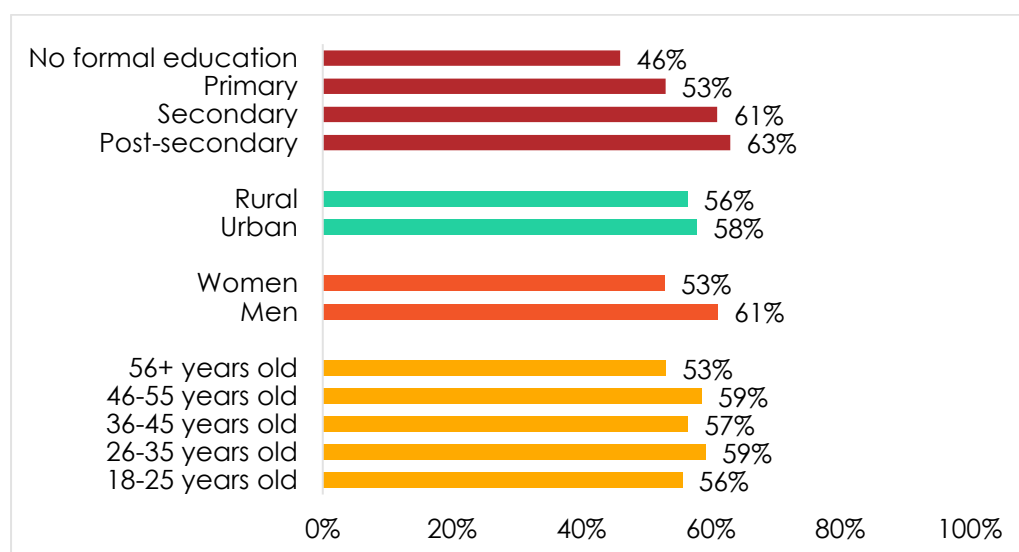
Support for the KDF intervention in Somalia in 2016 was higher among men (61%) than women (53%). More-educated respondents were more likely to favour the intervention, with support ranging from 46% among those with no formal education to 63% of those with post-secondary qualifications (Figure 8). Respondents’ age and rural vs. urban residency seemed to bear little relationship with their level of support for the KDF intervention.

Figure 7: Support for KDF intervention in Somalia | Kenya | 2014-2016

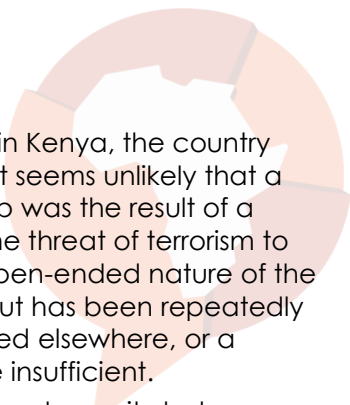


Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: The involvement of Kenya Defence Forces or KDF in Somalia has been necessary despite the terrorist problems resulting from it?

Figure 8: Support for KDF intervention in Somalia | by socio-demographic group | Kenya | 2016



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say: The involvement of Kenya Defence Forces or KDF in Somalia has been necessary despite the terrorist problems resulting from it? (% “agree” or “strongly agree”)



As discussed above, in the 12 months preceding the Round 7 survey in Kenya, the country had seen some of the worst terrorist incidents in its history. Therefore, it seems unlikely that a decline in support for the KDF military intervention against Al Shabaab was the result of a perception that the intervention had been effective in neutralizing the threat of terrorism to Kenyan citizens. Rather, it could reflect frustration at the seemingly open-ended nature of the intervention (the mandate of AMISOM was originally just six months but has been repeatedly extended), a belief that government efforts could be better expended elsewhere, or a judgment that purely military approaches to combating terrorism are insufficient.

A government's handling of extremist violence not only impacts national security but can also have wider social and political implications. Citizens' feelings of insecurity and fear generated by the threat of terrorism can be instrumentalized by governments to undermine democratic norms and to divide, suppress, or discredit opposition voices. Alternatively, in their approach to extremist violence, governments can choose to practice responsible crisis communication and promote unifying narratives that strengthen support for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and other civil liberties (Bakker & de Graaf, 2014).

Fear of terrorism, tolerance, and support for democracy

The impact of terrorism is commonly measured in direct casualties and material destruction. However, terrorism is employed to have political and socio-psychological consequences as well; groups that engage in terrorism often seek to create a climate of fear, sow social discord, or force governments to abandon principles of democracy and pluralism in favour of authoritarian or repressive security measures.

Fear of violent extremism

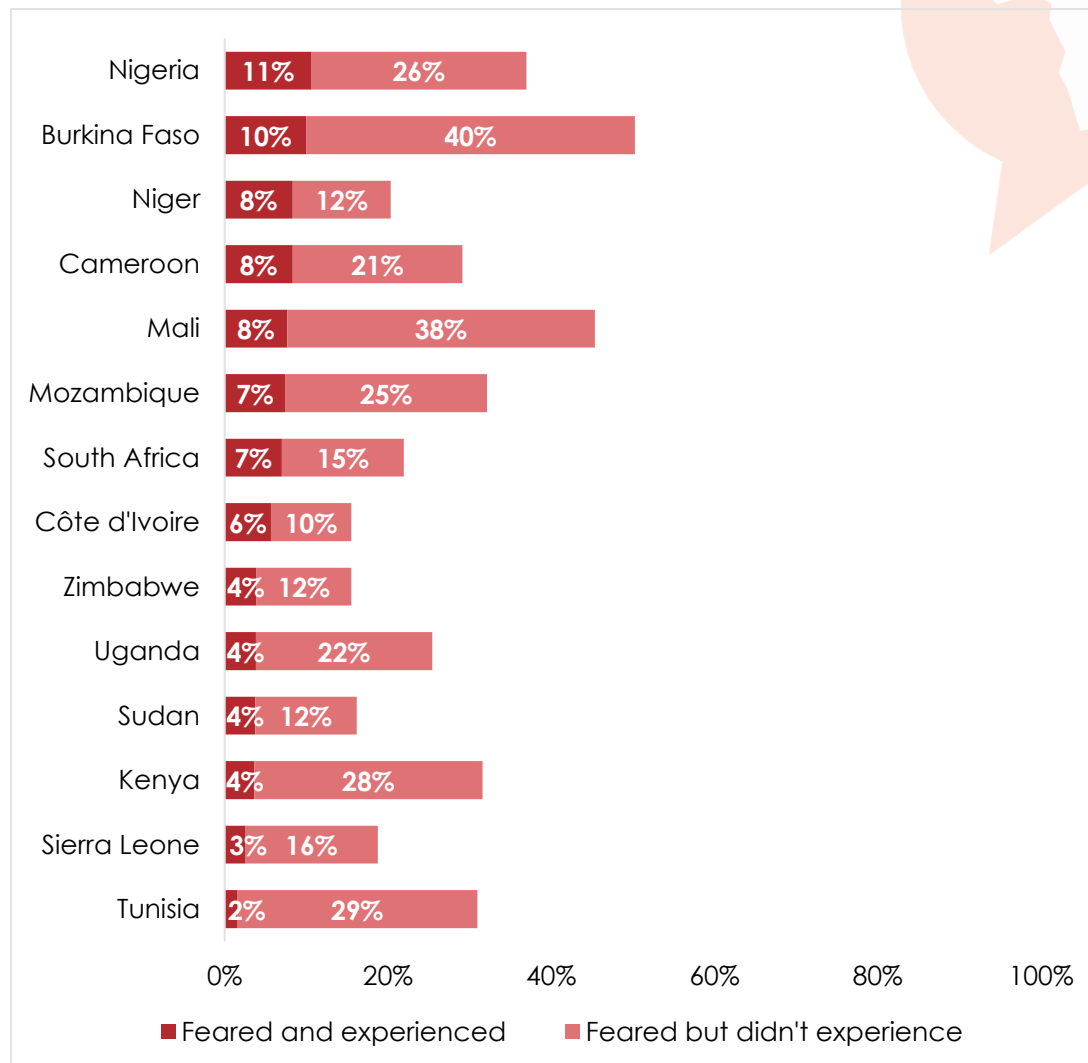
In 14 of the 34 countries that Afrobarometer surveyed during Round 7, citizens were asked whether they had feared or personally experienced an armed attack by political or religious extremists during the previous two years. About one in 10 Nigerians (11%) and Burkinabè (10%) said they had experienced such an attack, followed by 8% of respondents in Cameroon, Niger, and Mali. Up to four in 10 Burkinabè (40%) and Malians (38%) said they had feared but not experienced extremist violence (Figure 9).

In some cases, high levels of fear go hand in hand with high levels of experienced violence. This is the case in Burkina Faso (10% experienced, 40% feared but did not experience) and Mali (8% and 38%). But fear does not always align with citizens' reported experience of extremist violence. For example, while Tunisia registered the smallest proportion of respondents who said they had experienced an armed attack by extremists (2%), it also had one of the largest proportions who said they feared such an attack (29%).

Among the East Africa Corridor countries where these questions were asked, Mozambicans (7%) and South Africans (7%) were about twice as likely as Ugandans (4%) and Kenyans (4%) to say they had experienced extremist violence during the previous two years. But Kenyans (28%) and Ugandans (22%) were, like Mozambicans (25%), considerably more likely than South Africans (15%) to have feared (without experiencing) such violence. Since South Africa has not experienced as much Islamist extremist violence as Kenya, Uganda, and Mozambique, some South African respondents who reported experiencing extremist violence in the past two years may have been referring to xenophobic or racially motivated violence.

The relationship between levels of fear and actual experience of extremist violence in these 14 countries is unclear. The scale, frequency, targets, and geographic location of attacks could all affect the threat level that terrorism is perceived to pose. So could media coverage. Nellis and Savage (2012), for example, found that "exposure to terrorism-related news is positively associated with perceived risk of terrorism," while Godefroidt and Langer (2018) argue that the negative impact of fear of terrorism on social trust is most prevalent among individuals who are more frequently exposed to television news.

Figure 9: Fear and experience of violent extremism | 14 countries | 2016/2018



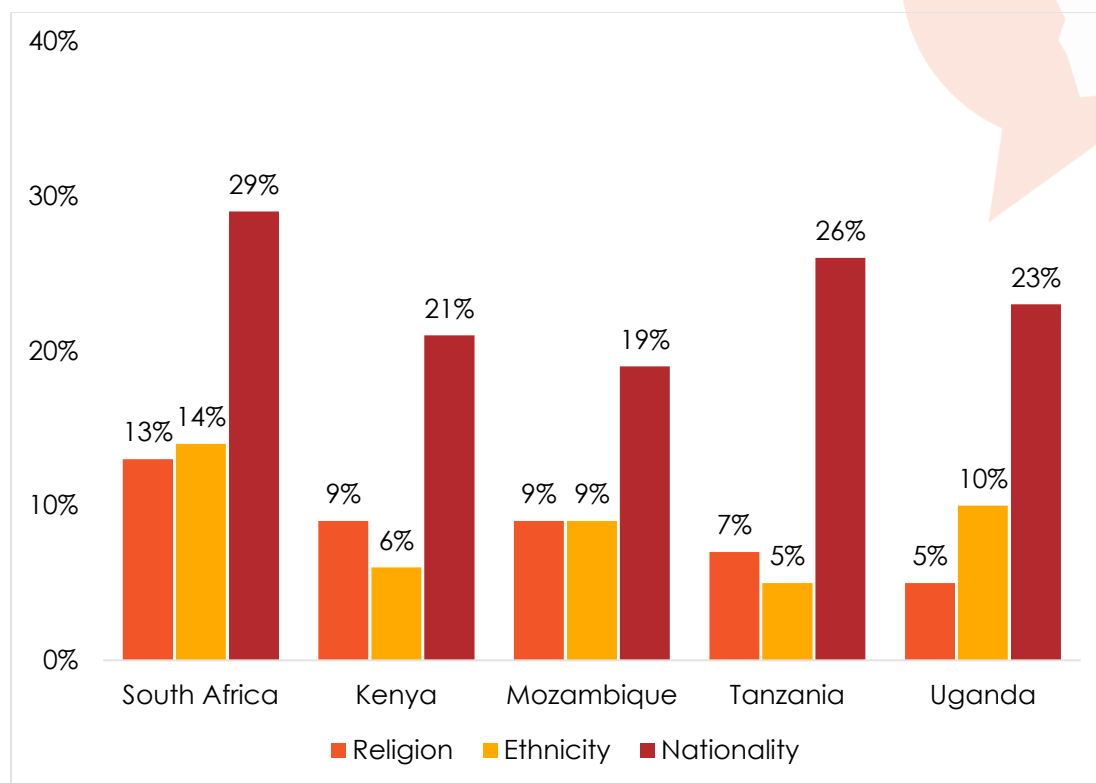
Respondents were asked: *In any society, people will sometimes disagree with one another. These disagreements occasionally escalate into physical violence. Please tell me whether, in the past two years, you have ever personally feared any of the following types of violence: An armed attack by political or religious extremists? [If yes:] Have you actually personally experienced this type of violence in the past two years?*

Tolerance

A foundational concept in social psychology is that people define themselves in terms of “in-groups” and “out-groups” based on a variety of shared qualities and perceived differences (Tajfel, 1974). Several studies have sought to examine the impact fear induced by terrorism has on the attitudes and behaviour of a society. As Godefroidt and Langer (2018) write, “Perceived threat and anxiety have long been recognized as central for intergroup relations by various social-psychological theories. ... In short, terrorism, by reminding people of their own vulnerability and mortality, leads to in-group favouritism and out-group derogation” (p. 5). Evidence of this behaviour can be seen, for example, in an increase in xenophobic or racially motivated hate crimes against British Muslims following terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists (Hanes & Machin, 2014).

Levels of tolerance between citizens differed across countries in the East Africa Corridor. South Africans were the most likely to “somewhat” or “strongly” dislike having a neighbour of a different religion (13%), ethnic group (14%), or nationality (29%), while far fewer Ugandans expressed intolerance of these groups (5%, 10%, and 23%, respectively) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Intolerance toward other religions, ethnicities, and nationalities
| 5 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: For each of the following types of people, please tell me whether you would like having people from this group as neighbours, dislike it, or not care: People of a different religion? People from other ethnic groups? Immigrants or foreign workers? (% who said “somewhat dislike” or “strongly dislike”)

When asked whether they had been the target of discrimination based on their religion, 14% of South Africans and Ugandans said they had experienced this form of discrimination “once or twice,” “several times,” or “many times” during the previous 12 months (Table 3). This was followed by 13% of Mozambicans, 10% of Kenyans, and 2% of Tanzanians. Ugandans and Kenyans were the most likely to say they had suffered discrimination based on their ethnicity (25% and 23%, respectively).

Table 3: Experienced discrimination based on religion and ethnicity | 5 countries
| 2016/2018

| | Based on religion (once or twice/several times/many times) | Based on ethnicity (once or twice/several times/many times) |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Kenya | 10% | 23% |
| Mozambique | 13% | 15% |
| South Africa | 14% | 16% |
| Tanzania | 2% | 3% |
| Uganda | 14% | 25% |

Respondents were asked: In the past year, how often, if at all, have you personally been discriminated against based on any of the following: Your religion? Your ethnicity?

Support for civil liberties

The end of the Cold War accelerated a wave of democratization across Africa, including the restoration or establishment of liberal democratic institutions. However, over the past two decades, some of these democratic gains have receded as states have slipped toward authoritarianism. According to Freedom House, only 11% of Africa is “politically free,” and “the average level of democracy, understood as respect for political rights and civil liberties, fell in each of the last 14 years” (cited in Cheeseman & Smith, 2019).

This period coincided with the expansion of violent extremist organizations and increased terrorist incidents across the continent.⁷ Empirical research has shown that the threat of terrorism can generate higher levels of support for right-wing authoritarianism (Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005). Merolla and Zechmeister (2009), drawing on data from the United States and Mexico, found that an increased threat of terrorist violence led voters to prize strong leadership and to give greater authority to such leaders at the expense of institutional checks and balances.

In the five East Africa Corridor countries examined in this paper, substantial proportions of the population would accept restrictions on some civil liberties when faced with a threat to public security, such as terrorism.

Majorities in Tanzania (65%) and Kenya (57%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the government “should be able to monitor private communications, for example on mobile phones, to make sure that people are not plotting violence” (Figure 11). This view was also endorsed by 50% of Ugandans, 38% of South Africans, and 37% of Mozambicans.

Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question, for any country and survey round. It’s easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

Similarly, more than two-thirds of Ugandans (68%) and about half of Kenyans (53%), Mozambicans (49%), and Tanzanians (48%) said the government should have the right

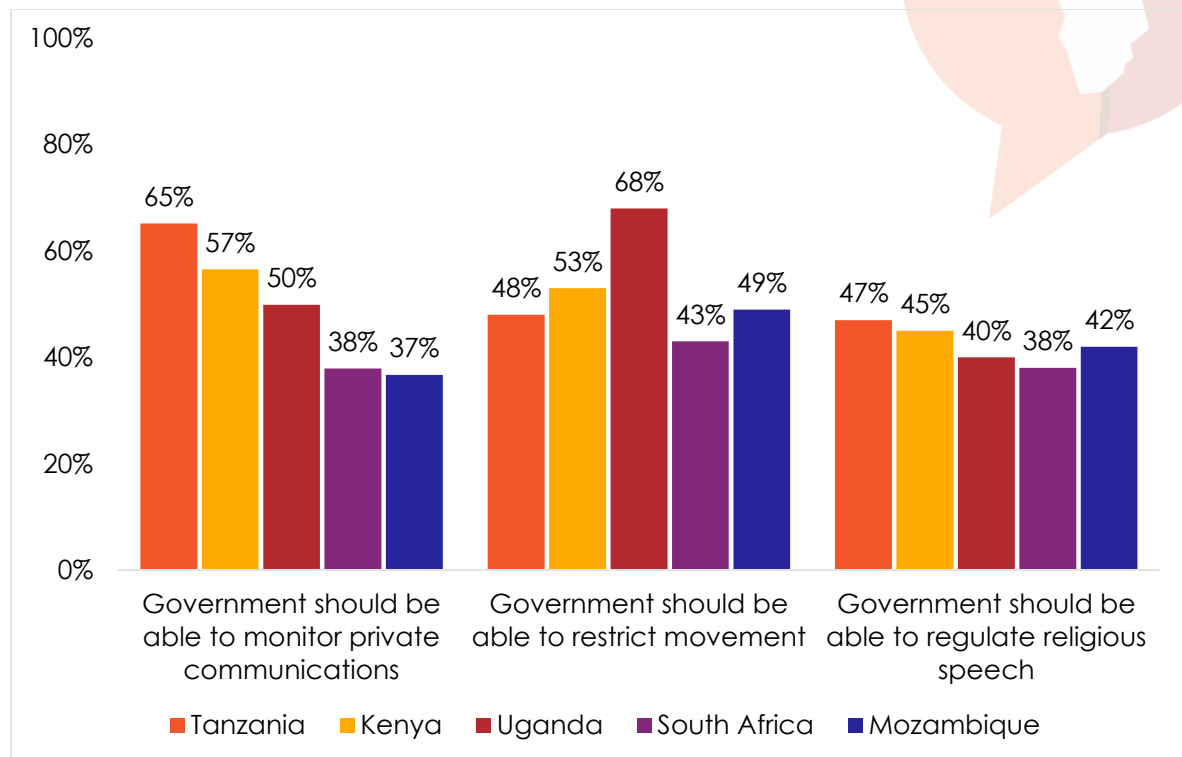
to impose curfews and set up roadblocks if faced with threats to public security. Almost as many agreed in South Africa (43%). (See Figure A.1 in the Appendix for detailed results by country.)

And around four in 10 citizens in all five countries agreed that the government should be able to “regulate what is said in places of worship, especially if preachers or congregants threaten public security.”

The willingness of significant parts of these populations to accept government restrictions on fundamental civil liberties, such as the rights to privacy, freedom of movement, and freedom of religion, suggests the impact that fear of terrorism can have on citizen attitudes. It also highlights the care that responsible governments must take in developing counter-terrorism responses that do not undermine democratic ideals.

⁷ During the Soviet-Afghan War, Muslims from several African countries answered the call to *jihad* to support Al Qaeda and the Taliban against the Soviet forces. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, many returned home and were instrumental in founding Islamist militant groups on the continent, such as Al Al-Itihaad al-Islami in Somalia, which would later become Al Shabaab. The first major terrorist attacks on the continent were perpetrated by Al Qaeda in collaboration with Kenyan Islamist militants against the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998 (Hansen, 2013).

Figure 11: Government should be able to monitor private communication, limit freedom of movement, and regulate religious speech | 5 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Government should be able to monitor private communications, for example on mobile phones, to make sure that people are not plotting violence.

Statement 2: People should have the right to communicate in private without a government agency reading or listening to what they are saying.

(% who "agreed" or "agreed very strongly" with Statement 1)

Statement 1: Even if faced with threats to public security, people should be free to move about the country at any time of day or night.

Statement 2: When faced with threats to public security, the government should be able to impose curfews and set up special roadblocks to prevent people from moving around.

(% who "agreed" or "agreed very strongly" with Statement 2)

Statement 1: Freedom of religion and worship are absolute, meaning that government should never limit what is said in a place of worship.

Statement 2: Government should have the power to regulate what is said in places of worship, especially if preachers or congregants threaten public security.

(% who "agreed" or "agreed very strongly" with Statement 2)

Conclusion

Violent extremism poses a serious security threat to governments and peoples across the African continent. Over the past two decades, national insurgencies by terrorist groups have increasingly crossed borders, creating complex, intractable regional conflict systems. In East Africa, Al Shabaab has been able to transcend its Somali origins and become a regional organization, while countries as far south as Mozambique and South Africa have experienced a rise in terrorist activity.

The impact of terrorism should be measured not only in casualties and damage to property, but also in the profound effects it can have on a society as a whole. Here public opinion data can be useful in assessing changes in citizen perceptions where the threat of terrorism is present, especially in support for policies and practices that may undermine democracy.

For example, in each of five East Africa Corridor countries, at least one-third of citizens – and in some cases more than half – would give government the right to monitor personal communications and curtail freedom of movement and freedom of religion when faced with a threat to public security.

Violent extremist organizations often use acts of terrorism against specific targets to sow discord between communities. Studies have shown that exposure to the threat of violence can undermine social trust within a society (Konty, Duell, & Joireman, 2014). Attitudes toward neighbours of a different religion or ethnicity varied considerably among the East Africa Corridor countries we've examined. Further research on the relationship between terrorist violence and generalized social trust would be of value, especially in circumstances where a specific ethnic group or religion is negatively associated with terrorist activity.

Finally, building trust between communities and security forces is a vital component in successfully combating terrorist activity. Repressive and corrupt security responses have often served to generate resentment among communities and create grievances that support terrorist propaganda narratives against the state.

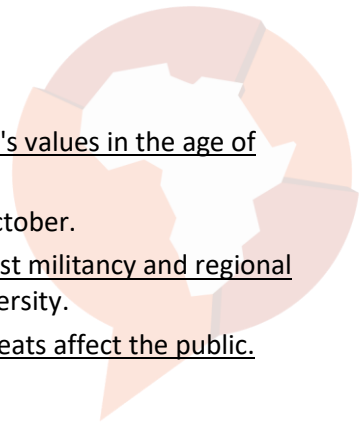
In order for African governments to better address the spread of violent extremism, a more nuanced understanding is needed of how terrorism and the threat of terrorism impact communities and change social behaviour. Only with a thorough understanding of these social dimensions of terrorism can truly effective counter-terrorism policies be developed.





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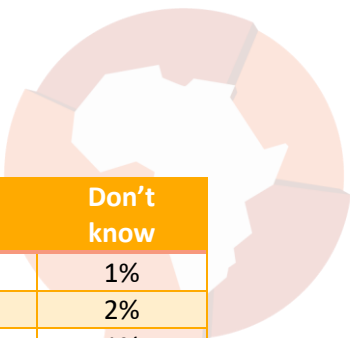
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Appendix

Table A.1: Afrobarometer Round 7 fieldwork dates and previous survey rounds

| Country | Months when Round 7 fieldwork was conducted | Previous survey rounds |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Benin | Dec 2016-Jan 2017 | 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 |
| Botswana | June-July 2017 | 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Burkina Faso | Oct 2017 | 2008, 2012, 2015 |
| Cameroon | May 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Cape Verde | Nov-Dec 2017 | 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Dec 2016-Jan 2017 | 2013, 2014 |
| eSwatini | March 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Gabon | Nov 2017 | 2015 |
| Gambia | July-August 2018 | N/A |
| Ghana | Sept 2017 | 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Guinea | May 2017 | 2013, 2015 |
| Kenya | Sept-Oct 2016 | 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 |
| Lesotho | Nov-Dec 2017 | 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Liberia | June-July 2018 | 2008, 2012, 2015 |
| Madagascar | Jan-Feb 2018 | 2005, 2008, 2013, 2015 |
| Malawi | Dec 2016-Jan 2017 | 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Mali | Feb 2017 | 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2014 |
| Mauritius | Oct-Nov 2017 | 2012, 2014 |
| Morocco | May 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Mozambique | July-August 2018 | 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015 |
| Namibia | Nov 2017 | 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Niger | April-May 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Nigeria | April-May 2017 | 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2015 |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | July 2018 | 2015 |
| Senegal | Dec 2017 | 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2014 |
| Sierra Leone | July 2018 | 2012, 2015 |
| South Africa | August-Sept 2018 | 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015 |
| Sudan | July-August 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Tanzania | April-June 2017 | 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014 |
| Togo | Nov 2017 | 2012, 2014 |
| Tunisia | April-May 2018 | 2013, 2015 |
| Uganda | Dec 2016-Jan 2017 | 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015 |
| Zambia | April 2017 | 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014 |
| Zimbabwe | Jan-Feb 2017 | 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014 |

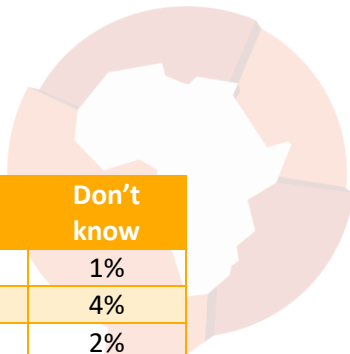
Table A.2: Trust in police | 34 countries | 2016/2018



| | Not at all | Just a little | Somewhat | A lot | Don't know |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|----------|-------|------------|
| Benin | 22% | 25% | 21% | 31% | 1% |
| Botswana | 14% | 22% | 18% | 44% | 2% |
| Burkina Faso | 8% | 16% | 25% | 49% | 1% |
| Cabo Verde | 20% | 25% | 32% | 22% | 1% |
| Cameroon | 29% | 20% | 20% | 29% | 2% |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 18% | 26% | 26% | 29% | 1% |
| eSwatini | 20% | 18% | 31% | 29% | 2% |
| Gabon | 40% | 27% | 21% | 12% | 0% |
| Gambia | 14% | 23% | 16% | 43% | 3% |
| Ghana | 35% | 24% | 22% | 17% | 2% |
| Guinea | 35% | 21% | 17% | 24% | 2% |
| Kenya | 36% | 29% | 20% | 14% | 1% |
| Lesotho | 31% | 24% | 18% | 26% | 1% |
| Liberia | 27% | 39% | 11% | 24% | |
| Madagascar | 32% | 26% | 30% | 11% | 1% |
| Malawi | 24% | 24% | 15% | 36% | 1% |
| Mali | 23% | 24% | 20% | 33% | 1% |
| Mauritius | 14% | 36% | 34% | 14% | 2% |
| Morocco | 15% | 17% | 34% | 32% | 2% |
| Mozambique | 12% | 18% | 25% | 39% | 6% |
| Namibia | 14% | 20% | 25% | 38% | 2% |
| Niger | 13% | 9% | 16% | 61% | 1% |
| Nigeria | 48% | 25% | 17% | 9% | 1% |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | 30% | 36% | 14% | 19% | 1% |
| Senegal | 5% | 7% | 19% | 67% | 2% |
| Sierra Leone | 32% | 31% | 23% | 13% | 2% |
| South Africa | 40% | 25% | 17% | 18% | 1% |
| Sudan | 21% | 26% | 27% | 24% | 1% |
| Tanzania | 12% | 25% | 22% | 40% | 2% |
| Togo | 32% | 23% | 23% | 20% | 1% |
| Tunisia | 18% | 20% | 25% | 33% | 4% |
| Uganda | 21% | 22% | 31% | 24% | 1% |
| Zambia | 26% | 25% | 18% | 29% | 2% |
| Zimbabwe | 24% | 24% | 25% | 25% | 1% |
| | | | | | |
| 34-country average | 24% | 24% | 22% | 29% | 2% |

Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The police?

Table A.3: Trust in the army | 34 countries | 2016/2018



| | Not at all | Just a little | Somewhat | A lot | Don't know |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|----------|-------|------------|
| Benin | 17% | 25% | 23% | 35% | 1% |
| Botswana | 9% | 14% | 15% | 57% | 4% |
| Burkina Faso | 8% | 15% | 24% | 52% | 2% |
| Cabo Verde | 14% | 22% | 32% | 30% | 2% |
| Cameroon | 21% | 14% | 14% | 49% | 3% |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 25% | 24% | 21% | 29% | 1% |
| eSwatini | 19% | 15% | 28% | 32% | 5% |
| Gabon | 37% | 27% | 21% | 14% | 1% |
| Gambia | 12% | 19% | 17% | 48% | 4% |
| Ghana | 8% | 13% | 25% | 52% | 3% |
| Guinea | 27% | 19% | 18% | 33% | 2% |
| Kenya | 11% | 21% | 28% | 32% | 8% |
| Lesotho | 33% | 22% | 15% | 26% | 3% |
| Liberia | 12% | 27% | 17% | 44% | 1% |
| Madagascar | 26% | 26% | 32% | 14% | 3% |
| Malawi | 14% | 9% | 11% | 62% | 5% |
| Mali | 7% | 11% | 15% | 67% | 1% |
| Mauritius | 11% | 32% | 35% | 16% | 5% |
| Morocco | 11% | 11% | 25% | 49% | 4% |
| Mozambique | 11% | 18% | 25% | 36% | 9% |
| Namibia | 15% | 20% | 21% | 40% | 4% |
| Niger | 7% | 5% | 12% | 75% | 1% |
| Nigeria | 16% | 25% | 26% | 32% | 1% |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | 19% | 35% | 16% | 29% | 1% |
| Senegal | 3% | 4% | 12% | 78% | 3% |
| Sierra Leone | 7% | 11% | 34% | 47% | 1% |
| South Africa | 20% | 19% | 18% | 37% | 6% |
| Sudan | 13% | 17% | 25% | 43% | 2% |
| Tanzania | 3% | 11% | 9% | 75% | 2% |
| Togo | 36% | 20% | 21% | 22% | 2% |
| Tunisia | 2% | 6% | 12% | 77% | 3% |
| Uganda | 8% | 13% | 28% | 48% | 3% |
| Zambia | 12% | 14% | 19% | 50% | 5% |
| Zimbabwe | 13% | 19% | 29% | 36% | 3% |
| | | | | | |
| 34-country average | 14% | 18% | 21% | 44% | 4% |

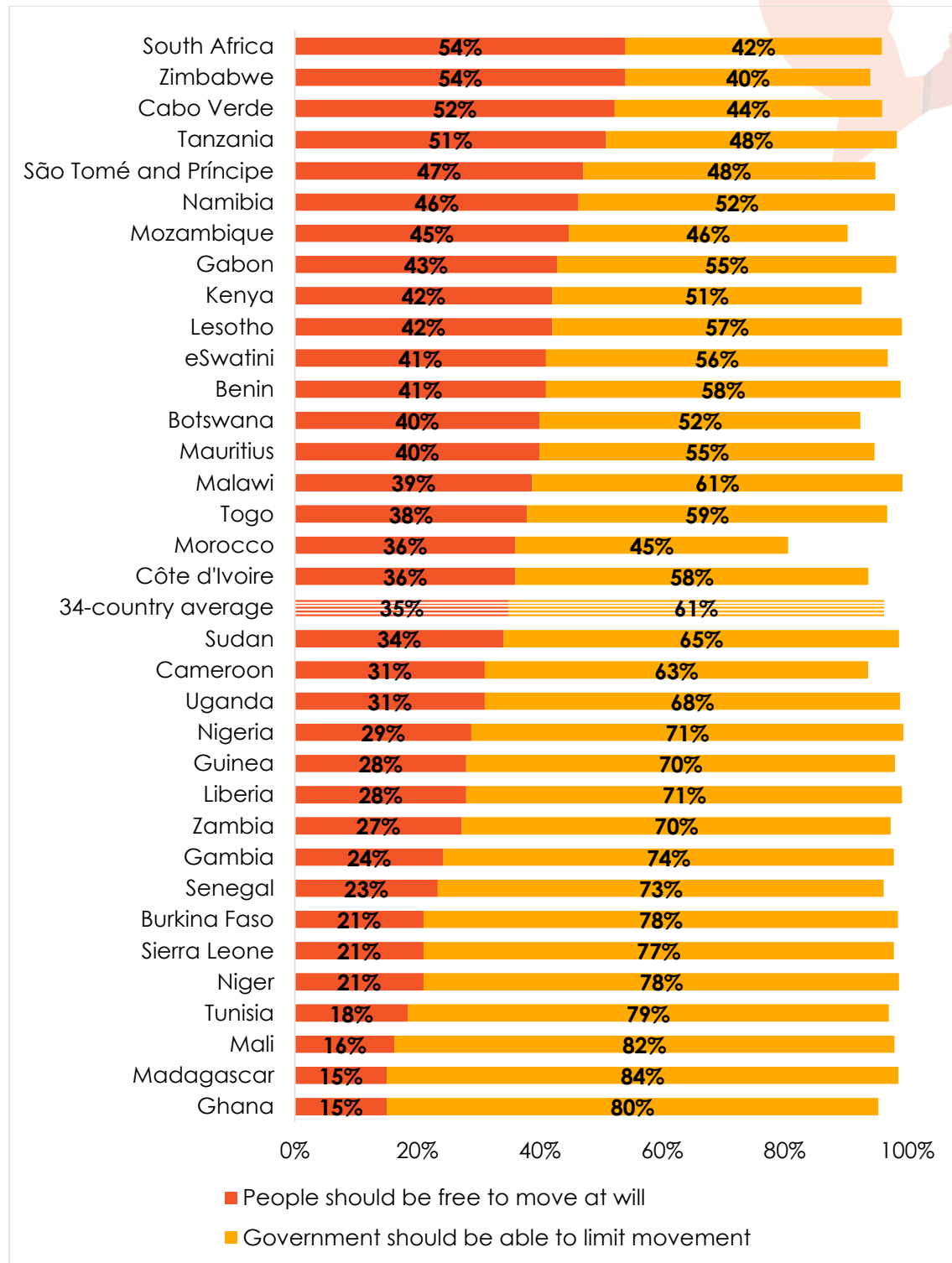
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The army?

Table A.4: Perceived corruption in police force | 34 countries | 2016/2018

| | All of them | Most of them | Some of them | None of them | Don't know |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Benin | 27% | 27% | 36% | 7% | 2% |
| Botswana | 10% | 28% | 42% | 8% | 12% |
| Burkina Faso | 11% | 18% | 43% | 21% | 7% |
| Cabo Verde | 5% | 18% | 40% | 20% | 16% |
| Cameroon | 33% | 28% | 28% | 3% | 7% |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 20% | 29% | 40% | 6% | 4% |
| eSwatini | 8% | 22% | 41% | 9% | 20% |
| Gabon | 43% | 33% | 21% | 2% | 2% |
| Gambia | 10% | 28% | 39% | 12% | 11% |
| Ghana | 27% | 32% | 33% | 3% | 6% |
| Guinea | 32% | 25% | 32% | 7% | 4% |
| Kenya | 29% | 38% | 25% | 3% | 6% |
| Lesotho | 7% | 26% | 47% | 10% | 9% |
| Liberia | 29% | 33% | 33% | 4% | 1% |
| Madagascar | 11% | 34% | 42% | 10% | 3% |
| Malawi | 25% | 29% | 29% | 12% | 6% |
| Mali | 20% | 35% | 28% | 14% | 3% |
| Mauritius | 4% | 13% | 67% | 6% | 8% |
| Morocco | 5% | 18% | 55% | 10% | 9% |
| Mozambique | 17% | 30% | 31% | 6% | 15% |
| Namibia | 9% | 33% | 41% | 10% | 7% |
| Niger | 8% | 23% | 45% | 17% | 7% |
| Nigeria | 35% | 33% | 26% | 4% | 1% |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | 9% | 16% | 47% | 13% | 13% |
| Senegal | 8% | 20% | 39% | 13% | 20% |
| Sierra Leone | 21% | 35% | 32% | 5% | 7% |
| South Africa | 19% | 29% | 41% | 7% | 4% |
| Sudan | 11% | 23% | 48% | 12% | 6% |
| Tanzania | 5% | 30% | 42% | 8% | 15% |
| Togo | 27% | 28% | 33% | 4% | 8% |
| Tunisia | 11% | 11% | 43% | 11% | 22% |
| Uganda | 37% | 33% | 24% | 3% | 3% |
| Zambia | 20% | 36% | 33% | 6% | 5% |
| Zimbabwe | 25% | 32% | 30% | 8% | 6% |
| 34-country average | 18% | 28% | 37% | 8% | 8% |

Respondents were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The police?

Figure A.1: Government right to limit movement when public security is threatened
 | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Even if faced with threats to public security, people should be free to move about the country at any time of day or night.
 Statement 2: When faced with threats to public security, the government should be able to impose curfews and set up special roadblocks to prevent people from moving around.
 (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with each statement)

AFRO BAROMETER

LET THE PEOPLE HAVE A SAY



Sibusiso Nkomo is head of communications for Afrobarometer, based at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in Cape Town, South Africa.

Stephen Buchanan-Clarke is a security analyst and works as a senior project leader in the peace-building interventions unit at the IJR.

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Cover: Adapted from an Ilyas Ahmed photograph for AMISOM. An AMISOM commander examines weapons captured from Al Shabaab militants in June 2016.

Contact: snkomo@afrobarometer.org, sclarke@ijr.org.za