

Perils of ignoring Africa

OPINION
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Perils of ignoring Africa

Armed radical groups, who are following and trying to impose their skewed interpretation of the Qur'an on others, are currently active around Mali, Algeria and Libya. These groups are not much different from Daesh or Al-Qaeda.

Husain Yalqin

In the months of October and November, terrorists struck major world cities such as Ankara and Paris leaving the whole world in a state of shock over the barbaric and very gross attacks. These attacks were followed by the aftermath of such dastardly attacks in which we were witnessing what is the most such place in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, France or any other country across the globe. Most of the unfortunate events/fallouts in attracting world's attention. Ironically, similar events and human catastrophes in Africa mostly fail to appear on the media and Africa, which continues to be regarded by large countries, civil wars and terrorism, appears to be of less concern to people.

The attack on the luxury Radisson Hotel in Mali in November attracted the attention of the international community because of its timing and its target. Coming just two days after the Paris attack, this horrifying incident was regarded as a message to France and international institutions from the leadership in a luxury hotel where UN representatives as military envoys were staying. Linking it to Africa in general, however, stands always as a peculiar, historic, military, official and military kidnapping belonging to western organizations, shipping centers and industries. At this point we need to remember that the West is the prime target of the radicals.

Armed radical groups, who are following and trying to impose their skewed interpretation of the Qur'an on others, are currently active around Mali, Algeria and Libya. These groups are not much different from Daesh or Al-Qaeda, therefore the international community should not ignore these groups and the terror they create as being the isolated incidents of that region. Terrorism is no longer any particular country or region's problem. This Daesh or Al-Qaeda, the Islamic militant groups have the potential to spread their ugly tentacles across the continent and beyond.

Perhaps, that is why the decision for a military intervention in Mali in 2013 was taken by many countries in the UN Security Council. As a result, it is very unusual for a decision to be passed unanimously by the Security Council. However, my recall, the 2015 intervention needed very quick UN action. The French army set about counteracting radical groups, which at no point were although this was regarded as a victory for the West. However, the UN Security Council had to act and the truth however was obvious. Armed radical groups had already moved in order to wait for a better time and place. Now these groups have staged a comeback, as we witness from reports in, what we would say "According to UN Security Council," as being as there are people willing to go on suicide missions that type of attacks will be all over the continent.

Meanwhile, UN Security Council's 2014 embargo resolution, regarding the situation in these words, "States are almost impossible to prevent." What is important is how we manage the follow-up.

In we have seen, Mali, which is facing economic problems, besides the one of Africa literally surrendered to the radicals. Military interventions clearly cost



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Removing misconceptions

This is with reference to the report "Human catastrophe: more concern over the impact of the Arab Spring" (Dec 4). Many of these misconceptions about Arab Spring are the result of ignorance. It is easy to make generalizations about a group of people in a country. Those who believe in stereotypes about Arabs or any other people usually don't want to seek the truth. They tend to believe that they are superior to other people and don't hold respect for their welfare in lower than the others.

Turkey-Russia row

The timing of the confrontation between Turkey and Russia is not very suitable. Both sides should try to de-escalate the situation, as it is in the interest of the two countries, the region and the entire world. They are partners in the fight against Daesh. The incident of downing of Russian warplane was unfortunate but the two sides should not allow anyone to take advantage of this situation. Instead of continuing accusations, Moscow and Ankara should chalk out a strategy to prevent occurrence of such incidents in future. The incident also indicates a lack of effective communication between the two sides.

Living in past

Thank you with reference to the report "Terrorist police move return of 1000-1000" (Dec 4) issued from Beirut (Dec 4). What is the use of waiting your time over such silly matters? In this question, many people will instantly respond as a matter of a person with respect for his national past. The way how we look ahead in life? We have become a nation, which continues to take pride in the achievement of their ancestors and do nothing to make our future generations feel proud of it.

Climate issues

I read with interest the article "COP-21: the magic number" by Abdelkhalik Al-Malibani (Dec 3). The writer never fails to attract the readers' attention by using simple and easily understandable examples. For doing so, he only gets his readers engaged. I do agree with the writer that there is a viable difference in the overall climate conditions of the entire world. We need to take concrete measures to address this issue. This issue is not, we cannot afford to ignore the fact that the future of our planet is at stake. The most important economic measure to help our respective governments play their part in this regard. Sustainable welfare is the use of the industrialization, which is

these armed groups to retreat for a while. Moreover, some angry Africans seek a solution to their long pending problems by placing them. The situation shows that this is not a political or military issue.

What the UN needs to do is to understand the reasons why people support these. The two main factors that make people to believe are the indication whose influence they fall under and support it to clear that radical ideas are able to spread very rapidly than when it takes years of ideas combined with anger the result may be a very dangerous one. If the international community really wants to find a solution it needs to consider a moderate, long-term and deep-rooted solution that can win the support.

In addition to political issues, we need to remember that Mali is a one of those countries of Africa that is most affected by poverty and hunger with its 50 percent of the world's poorest countries.

Despite its political poverty it possesses a rich and unexploited natural resources. It is rich in gold and uranium. According to the latest figures, 1.5 million people are facing starvation in Mali. The World Food Programme has called for more than \$1 billion to improve access to education by providing meals to 350,000 school children this year. This is the third time only since the start of the year.

Following clashes in Mali in 2012-2013, hundreds of thousands of people fled to neighboring countries. A large part of the country is still under the control of armed groups. Applying such a large number of people, and other cities are very high.

What we need to do is to depend on people who are willing to bring a new violence with violence or military measures in this country and this region. Proper education, however, will have a dramatic effect through the generation of a solution. For an unacceptable length of time, huge efforts have been made to solve troubles and problems with war, money and violence. And the result has always been an even worse unacceptable problem. This time, the international community should try to focus on the cause of these wars. It must also look for a solution there. Although it might seem as a proper course of action to respond with force to the fact of violence, it is no solution. The true solution lies in being able to believe morally and ethically in the face of violence.

■ The writer has published more than 300 books translated into 75 languages on subjects: religion and science. An Awateh Observer, Lagos

We are not planning to engage in military saber-rattling (with Turkey).
— Russian President Vladimir Putin

Conducting airstrikes against Daesh in Syria will help to bring a political settlement to the country.
— British Prime Minister David Cameron

German reconnaissance planes will soon arrive in Turkey's Iskihit air base to support the US-led coalition's fight against Daesh.
— British Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu



Protecting forests

It has been 50 years since the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations launched the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, the first global environmental initiative to help forest loss. Since then, international bodies have continued to work on the issue. However, the most significant effort to help forest loss is the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention on Desertification and Forest Degradation (UNCCD), and the most important outcome of these two agreements has been, in the production of a series of regional forestry reports. UNCCD is now central as part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the agreement governing implementation is expected to be finalized during the UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris that World leaders are set to meet about halting forest loss. They should avoid allowing UNCCD and replace it with a mechanism that addresses the underlying drivers of large-scale deforestation. The focus in UNCCD is on reducing the pressure on forests in order to meet the vast majority of the project forest project and forest loss in the main regions of deforestation. UNCCD project developers seem to be especially fond of projects that focus on restoring traditional farming practices, even as they do very little to address the underlying drivers of deforestation. The project developers, creative agricultural projects, large-scale logging and commercial plantations.

These shortcomings are exemplified by the Sustainable Program, a UNCCD initiative in Indonesia, which efforts to control forest conversion and prevent forest fires. The project has been largely successful in reducing deforestation. Under the program, forest degradation has been reduced by 50 percent. However, the Ministry of Environment, approved to restrict forest use in order to avoid small-scale payments. At the same time, the program's focus on agricultural practices has the agreement of the area under the plan to be converted to agricultural or mining. This project's focus on forest loss is not a particularly effective way to address the underlying drivers of deforestation. The project's focus on forest loss is not a particularly effective way to address the underlying drivers of deforestation. The project's focus on forest loss is not a particularly effective way to address the underlying drivers of deforestation.

There is a disturbing trend that has emerged in order to allow conversion to extract the forest funds that use the underlying drivers of the problem.

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In the months of October and November, terrorists struck major world cities such as Ankara and Paris leaving the whole world in a state of shock over their barbarity and their growing reach. Human tragedy that unfolds in the aftermath of such dastardly attacks is always heart wrenching whether the attack takes place in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, France or any other country across the globe. Most of these unfortunate events seldom fail in attracting world's attention.

Ironically, similar events and human catastrophes in Africa mostly fail to appear on the media radar. Africa, which continues to be wracked by hunger, famine, civil wars and terrorism, appears to be of less concern to people.

The attack on the luxury Radisson Hotel in Mali in November attracted the attention of the international community because of its timing and the target. Coming immediately after the Paris attack, this horrifying incident was regarded as a message to France and attracted attention because it happened in a luxury hotel where UN representatives and many foreigners were staying. Looking at Africa in general, however, attacks always target similar areas; luxury hotels, official and military

buildings belonging to western organizations, shopping centers and embassies. At this point we need to remember that the West is the prime target of the radicals.

Armed radical groups, who are following and trying to impose their skewed interpretation of the Qur'an on others, are currently active around Mali, Algeria and Libya. These groups are not much different from Daesh or Al-Qaeda; therefore the international community should not ignore these groups and the unrest they create as being the internal matters of that region. Terrorism is no longer any particular country or region's problem. Like Daesh or Al-Qaeda, the Africa-based terror groups have the potential to spread their ugly tentacles across the continent and beyond.

Perhaps, that is why the decision for a military intervention in Mali in 2013 was taken by unanimous vote in the UN Security Council. As is known, it is very unusual for a decision to be passed unanimously by the Security Council. Observer may recall, the 2013 intervention ended very quickly. Under the UN's supervision, the French army set about neutralizing radical groups, which soon withdrew. Although this was regarded as a huge success at the time and it was felt that the terror-related tensions in the country had come to an end, the truth however was otherwise. Armed radical groups had merely retreated in order to wait for a better time and place. Now those groups have staged a comeback, as is evident from reports. So, what went wrong?

According to a UN security analyst, "As long as there are people willing to go on suicide missions, this type of attack(s) will be difficult to stop."

Mamadou Coulibaly, the head of the Mali employers' federation, explains the situation in these words: "Attacks are almost impossible to prevent." "What is important is how we manage the fallout."

As we have seen, Mali, which is facing numerous problems, has like the rest of Africa literally surrendered to the radicals. Military interventions merely cause these armed groups to retreat for a while. Moreover, some angry Africans seek a solution to their lingering problems by joining them. The situation shows that the solution to this problem does not lie in military measures.

What the UN needs to do is to understand the reasons why radicals in the region become even more radicalized and the reasons why people support them. The two main factors that incite people to violence are the indoctrination whose influence they fall under, and anger. It is clear that radical ideas are able to spread very easily in this age. When this false system of ideas combines with anger, the result may be very dangerous indeed. If the international community really wants to find a solution it needs to consider a moderate, ideological and deep-rooted solution that can drain the swamp.

In addition to political crises, we need to remember that Mali is one of those countries of Africa that is most afflicted by poverty and hunger. With its 90 percent Muslim population, Mali is one of the world's poorest countries. Yet despite its profound poverty it possesses dazzling underground resources. It is rich in gold and uranium. According to the latest figures, 2.5 million people are facing starvation in this poverty-wracked country. Three out of every 10 children under the age of two are chronically malnourished. The World Food Programme plans to improve access to education by providing meals to 162,000 schoolchildren this year. This is often their only meal of the day.


Following clashes in Mali in 2012-2013, hundreds of thousands of people ended up as refugees in other countries. A large part of the country is still under the control of armed groups. Appalling mafia-like groups control one part; and crime rates are very high.

We should not make this depressing picture even more depressing by seeking to answer violence with violence or military measures in the country and the region. Proper education, however, will have a domino effect through the correct outcomes it achieves. For no inconsiderable length of time, huge efforts have been made to solve troubles and problems with ever more arms and soldiers. And the result has always been an even worse insoluble problem. This time, the international community should try to focus on the causes of these afflictions. It must also look for a solution there. Although it might seem to be a proper course of action to respond with anger in the face of violence, it is no solution. The true solution lies in being able to behave sensibly and rationally in the face of violence.

Adnan Oktar's piece on Arab News & News Rescue:

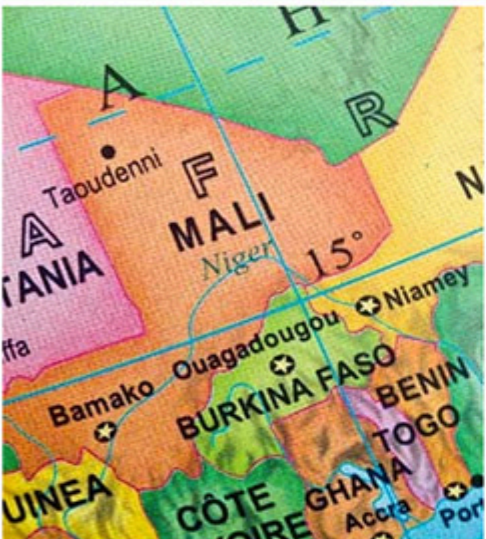
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PERILS OF IGNORING AFRICA

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by Harun Yahya

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