



Before and Beyond Al-Shabaab

National Islamic Councils, Contentious Politics and the Rise of Jihadism in East Africa

Jannis Saalfeld

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ABSTRACT

Following the 2010 Kampala bombings and the high-profile attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in 2013, research on violent extremism in East Africa has focused on Al-Shabaab's evolution into a persistent transnational security threat. However, the regional advent of Jihadism(s) predates the onset of Somalia's present civil war. Examining broader historical patterns of politico-religious mobilisation, the report argues that the genesis and expansion of militant Islamist networks in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique can be attributed, among other things, to the failure of largely non-Muslim post-colonial ruling elites to effectively regulate the Islamic sphere. Specifically, it shows how the disintegration of Muslim contestation movements created a political environment conducive to collective radicalisation. By shedding light on this development, the report provides evidence that while the timing and escalatory dynamics of Jihadist violence and radicalisation have depended on specific domestic context conditions, the overarching trajectories of contentious Muslim politics that have unfolded in East Africa's religiously heterogeneous societies share crucial similarities.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nach den Bombenanschlägen 2010 in Kampala und dem Überfall auf das Westgate Einkaufszentrum in Nairobi 2013 hat sich der wissenschaftlich-politische Diskurs über gewalttätigen Extremismus in Ostafrika vor allem mit Al-Shabaabs Transformation in eine nachhaltige transnationale Sicherheitsbedrohung befasst. Dabei droht in Vergessenheit zu geraten, dass das regionale Aufkommen des Dschihadismus nicht erst mit dem gegenwärtigen somalischen Bürgerkrieg begonnen hat. Vor diesem Hintergrund untersucht der INEF-Report 113 breitere historische Muster politisch-religiöser Mobilisierung in Ostafrika. Entstehung und Expansion militant-islamistischer Netzwerke seit dem Ende des Kolonialismus werden in vier Ländern (Kenia, Uganda, Tansania und Mosambik) nachgezeichnet. In allen Fällen sind sie unter anderem auf das Versagen weitgehend nicht-muslimischer Herrschaftseliten zurückzuführen, die islamische Sphäre durch nationale Muslimverbände wirksam zu regulieren. Konkret zeigt der Report wie die Desintegration muslimischer sozialer Bewegungen ein politisches Umfeld schuf, das der kollektiven Radikalisierung zuträglich war. Der INEF-Report kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die übergeordneten Pfade islamischer Kontestation, die sich in den multi-religiösen Gesellschaften Ostafrikas entfaltet haben, bedeutende Ähnlichkeiten aufweisen. Gleichzeitig macht die Studie deutlich, dass *Timing* und Eskalationsdynamiken dschihadistischer Gewalt und Radikalisierung von länderspezifischen Rahmenbedingungen abhängig gewesen sind.

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1. Introduction

In the years following the July 2010 Kampala bombings and the high-profile attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in September 2013, research on violent extremism in East Africa has focused on Al-Shabaab's evolution into a persistent transnational security threat (see, e.g., ICG 2018; IGAD 2016; Ali 2016; Anderson/McKnight 2014; Amble/Meleagrou-Hitchens 2014). However, while the terrorist militia has clearly left a significant imprint on current dynamics of Islamist violence and radicalisation, the regional advent of Jihadism(s) predates the onset of Somalia's present civil war. For instance, back in the early 1990s, the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army (UMLA) was established. Headed by the Salafi¹ cleric Sheikh Jamir Mukulu, the guerrilla vowed to topple the country's Christian President Yoweri Museveni in order to set up an Islamic state (Prunier 2009: 369-375). At about the same time, Sheikh Khalid Balala, a militant street preacher active in Mombasa's Mwembe Tayari market square, rose to prominence as one of the most outspoken critics of Kenya's long-standing head of state, Daniel arap Moi, and his Kenyan African National Union (KANU). As the informal leader of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK), Balala regularly issued "holy decrees" that ordered the murder of ruling party representatives and threatened suicide bombings as well as the formation of a Muslim youth army (Oded 2000: 135-162; Bohoko 1993).

Moving beyond a narrow focus on Al-Shabaab's regional recruitment efforts, this report argues that the political biographies of Mukulu and Balala are part of broader historical patterns of politico-religious mobilisation, which emanate from the unsuccessful endeavours of post-colonial governments to regulate the Islamic sphere. Starting in the 1960s, East Africa's largely non-Muslim ruling elites promoted and actively participated in the establishment of national Islamic councils officially intended to act as intermediaries between the state and Muslim communities.

However, plagued by corruption, factionalism and managerial incompetence, these associations rapidly proved incapable of advancing urban grassroots interests. Instead, they were increasingly perceived as instruments of authoritarian control. The report shows that in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique this outcome paved the way for the emergence of Islamic contestation movements challenging established Muslim elites and their governmental patrons. Drawing on the sociological work of Tilly and Tarrow (2007), Kriesi (1996) and Zald and Ash (1966), the analysis will demonstrate that, facing unfavourable socio-religious demographics and hostile reactions of incumbent governments, none of these movements became comprehensively

¹ Salafism represents a reformist current within Sunni Islam. It is characterised, inter alia, by "the direct consultation of foundational texts rather than allegiance to established legal schools; an impulse to 'purify others' and a rejection of Sufism" (Thurston 2016: 5). While associated with Wahhabism and its founder Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92), the origins of Salafism are not confined to present-day Saudi Arabia but can also be traced to 18th and 19th century thinkers from Yemen and India as well as to the rise of Islamic modernism in the late 19th and early 20th century (see *ibid.*: 1-27).



integrated into the political process. Rather, they all underwent fragmentation processes conducive to the genesis and/or expansion of militant networks mobilising against the post-colonial state.

By tracing these historical sequences, the report provides empirical groundwork. It reveals that the overarching trajectories of contentious Muslim politics, which have unfolded in East Africa's religiously heterogeneous societies since the 1980s, share crucial similarities. Based on this insight, it further indicates that the exact timing and escalatory dynamics of Jihadist violence and radicalisation have depended on specific domestic context conditions including different degrees of state capacity and repression as well as divergent intra-movement constellations and varying levels of exposure to external Islamist influence. The report thereby offers fruitful avenues for theory-oriented comparative research.

Building upon Denoëux's (2002: 61) definition of Islamism as "a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organisations that pursue political objectives" using "reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition", the report applies the labels "militant Islamism" and "Jihadism" to collective and individual Islamist actors who politicise religion to instigate the violent subversion of given socio-political orders. Guided by this conceptual clarification, the analysis proceeds as follows: The next chapter tracks how in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique post-colonial rulers eventually chose to interact with the Islamic sphere through national Muslim councils. It also shows how these councils failed to engage in effective advocacy on behalf of their envisaged constituents. In doing so, it provides the historical background to the third chapter, which introduces some basic theoretical considerations on the evolution of social movements organisations and subsequently illuminates the development of East Africa's Muslim contestation movements with a focus on their disintegration and the concomitant rise of militant currents. Finally, the conclusion identifies factors potentially accounting for cross-country differences in the forms and dynamics of violent Islamist activity. In accordance with the regional chronology of collective Jihadist mobilisation, both empirical parts start with an examination of developments in Uganda and end with a case study of Mozambique where the latest escalation of Islamist violence has taken place.

2. The Post-Colonial Creation and (Self-) Delegitimation of National Islamic Councils

Roman Loimeier (2007: 137-138) divides African countries with Muslim populations into three groups: (1) countries where Muslims constitute a huge and uncontested majority (e.g. Senegal or Somalia), (2) countries where Muslims form a tiny minority (e.g. South Africa or Zambia), and (3) countries where Muslims either make up a small majority or substantial minority of the population. According to Loimeier, the latter category, which includes the four states studied in this report, is characterised by distinct politico-religious dynamics revolving around protracted disputes over socio-economic and political disparities between Christians and Muslims. In fact, countries like Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda

and Mozambique even lack a basic societal consensus about the relative size of their religious communities. For instance, whereas many Tanzanian Muslims maintain that they outnumber Christians by three to two, the latter regularly call attention to the 1967 census, which estimates Christian and Muslim population shares at 32 and 30% respectively (ibid.: 148-149).²

In Uganda and Mozambique, official figures suggesting that Muslims make up 13 and 18% of the population have been challenged as too low as well (Muslim Centre for Justice and Law 2017: 5; Morier-Genoud 2007: 248-249). Likewise, while Kenyan Muslims often claim to represent more than 20% of the population, the country's 2009 census estimates their share at only 10% (Ndzovu 2012: 29). These "statistical quarrels" interweave with historical perceptions of religious discrimination grounding in Muslims' restricted access to high-level positions in East Africa's post-colonial government bureaucracies. In the four countries under investigation, British and Portuguese colonial authorities actively facilitated the emergence of mission-based educational systems, which contributed to the spread of Christianity and inhibited the development of Muslim intelligentsias (Ndzovu 2014: 30; Morier-Genoud 2007: 245; Chande 1993; Kiyimba 1986). Against this background, the late colonial period saw the creation of a multiplicity of Muslim interest associations mirroring pervasive intra-Islamic divides along ethno-regional, racial and theological lines (Constantin 1993: 49). By contrast, the influential East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS) pursued a pan-Islamic agenda. Established in 1945 by the Aga Khan³, it worked towards the regional spread of Islam and the socio-economic development of existing Muslim communities (Westerlund 1980: 100). Yet, following decolonisation and the rise of authoritarianism throughout East Africa, the EAMWS rapidly fell victim to the arrival of a new type of organisation, the national Islamic council. Trying to explain the regional proliferation of this kind of association, Constantin (1993: 48) contends that

"the extension of political control over believers in single-party states required that religious communities should be organized along the same principles as all other communities, that is, they should be unified within a single national association which reproduced most of the principles of the state-system itself: a centralized bureaucracy capable of enforcing a sense of identity among the believers through clearly designated spokesmen."

Even though this assessment is overly functionalist and deterministic, it rightly points to the new organisations' grounding in post-colonial projects of rule. As will be shown in this chapter, while in Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique the formation of national Islamic associations was directed by government elites, in Kenya, a body launched without proactive state involvement rapidly became tied to the political establishment. Failing to adequately represent prominent Muslim community concerns all four councils would become known for their lack of professionalism and their subordination to the interests of authoritarian ruling elites primarily composed of non-Muslim politicians.

² Since 1967, the Tanzanian government has refrained from collecting data on the religious composition of the population, which illustrates the sensitivity of the matter.

³ Aga Khan is a title held by the Imam of the Nizari-Ismailia Shias who form a small but relatively wealthy minority among East Africa's Muslim populations.



2.1 Uganda: Politico-Religious Elite Rivalries and the Constant Paralysis of the UMSC

The origins of Uganda's Muslim minority date back to the mid-19th century. While in the north, Islam arrived together with Sudanese merchants and soldiers, in the south, it was introduced by Arab-Swahili traders from the East African coast present at the court of the Buganda Kingdom, which would become the nucleus of the Ugandan state (Kasozi 1985: 35-36).

Following independence in 1962, the government of then Prime Minister Milton Obote sponsored the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims (NAAM). Headed by Akbar Adoko Nekyon, a cabinet minister and cousin of Obote, the NAAM brought together Muslim clerics and Western educated elite functionaries opposed to the Bugandan monarchy. In particular, this group set out to undermine the politico-religious pre-eminence of Prince Badru Kakungulu (Kayunga 1994: 333; Kasozi 1985: 38-39). A member of the royal family and one of the leaders of the EAMWS, Kakungulu had emerged as the dominant Islamic figure in colonial Uganda, promoting the expansion of Muslim education with the financial assistance of the Aga Khan (Kiggundu/Lukwago 1982: 123-125). On the path to independence, he had also become actively involved in politics as a representative of the monarchist Kabaka Yekka party (Kayunga 1994: 333). When the Buganda Kingdom was eventually abolished in 1967, the intra-Muslim rivalry between Kakungulu's camp and the pro-Obote faction further intensified. While the NAAM continued to support the President, the royalists provided a platform to Obote's major adversary, Colonel Idi Amin, by allowing him to speak at their religious gatherings (Kasozi 1994: 96).

In January 1971, Amin eventually became Uganda's first Muslim head of state after seizing power in a military coup. Denouncing the disunity that had plagued the country's Muslim community since the early 20th century, he swiftly initiated the creation of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) (Kiggundu/Lukwago 1982: 127-128). Existing Islamic associations such as the NAAM were disbanded and ordered to hand their properties to the new organisation (Kasozi 1994: 107). Yet, far from allowing for the emergence and consolidation of a professional Muslim leadership, the UMSC became affected by Amin's arbitrary and despotic rule from the outset. Maintaining a tight grip over the council, the President entrusted its administration to unqualified low-level military officials while established Muslim elite figures like Kakungulu were rendered to the sidelines. Against this background, the financial contributions the UMSC received from Arab countries like Libya and Saudi-Arabia remained largely unaccounted for (ibid.: 109-110; Kasozi 1985: 41-42; Kiggundu/Lukwago 1982: 128). Overall, according to Kasozi (1985: 43), during the Amin era "the UMSC was an organisation in name; it was run by the Head of State and all major decisions were referred to him."

In the aftermath of Amin's fall in 1979, Kakungulu managed to ensure the UMSC's survival. A few weeks after Kampala had been captured by Tanzanian troops, he oversaw the appointment of a transitional administration at a meeting of Muslim leaders in Kibuli (Kasozi 1985: 45). However, in the following years, the UMSC was paralysed by the country's traditional intra-Muslim antagonism

between a pre-dominantly Buganda camp and a largely non-Buganda faction. While a group headed by Sheikh Abdu Kamulegeya supported Milton Obote's aspirations to return to power, the council's interim leader Kassim Mulumba cooperated with Paulo Muwanga, the Chairman of the Military Commission and then de facto President of Uganda. The struggle between Kamulegeya and Mulumba manifested itself in heated disputes over the legitimacy of intra-UMSC elections and persisted until the mid-1980s (Kayunga 1994: 336-340).

In 1986, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army emerged victorious from a six-year civil war. Seeking international recognition and assistance to consolidate its authority, the new government vowed to address some of the injustices committed during Idi Amin's rule. Most crucially, Museveni announced his intention to return the assets expropriated during the 1972 expulsion of Uganda's Asian minority to their original owners. As one of the major beneficiaries of the expropriations, the UMSC had taken control over several properties belonging to the Shia Ismaili community (Kasozi 1985: 42). Thus, when the authorities sided with the Asians, they alienated many "indigenous" Muslims (Kayunga 1994: 355-356). At the same time, with Sheikh Ibrahim Luwemba the government also found a powerful clerical supporter of its restitution initiative.

In 1987, Luwemba had been elected leader of the UMSC in a highly controversial vote that was boycotted by the supporters of his major rival Sheikh Rajab Kakooza.⁴ After four years of institutional standstill during which the UMSC's general assembly failed to convene, the Ugandan Supreme Court eventually declared Luwemba the legitimate head of the council in March 1991, several weeks after he had accompanied Museveni on a journey to Iran (Kayunga 1994: 338-342, 355-356). As will be shown in the next chapter, this court ruling would trigger an escalation of tensions between the state and an informal Islamic opposition movement that had emerged since the early 1980s following the return of Ugandan students from the Middle East.

2.2 Kenya: SUPKEM's Rapid Transformation into an Unpopular Government Client

Kenya's Muslim minority population is concentrated in the country's Somali-dominated north-east and in the coastal region, which came under Omani influence in the late 17th century and officially remained part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar until 1963.⁵ In 1968, five years after independence, several coastal leaders established the National Union of Kenya Muslims (NUKEM). It was

⁴ Luwemba and Kakooza continued the factional struggle of the Kamulegeya/Mulumba era after the latter two had agreed to step aside during mediation talks organised by the Muslim World League (Kayunga 1994: 340).

⁵ In 1895, Great Britain took over the administration and protection of a ten-mile coastal strip which Sultan Hamed bin Thuwaini had leased to the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888. While the Kenya Protectorate nominally remained under the Sultan's suzerainty, the interior of British East Africa was declared a colony in 1920. Yet, despite its special status, the coastal strip was included in the colony's system of regional administration. In October 1963, Kenyan Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta and his Zanzibari counterpart Mohammed Shante eventually signed an agreement that abrogated the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan (see Brennan 2008).



headed by Mohammed Jahazi and Mohammed Salim Balala, both assistant ministers in the government of President Jomo Kenyatta (Oded 2000: 21). During the early 1960s, these two Muslim politicians had backed Kenyatta and his unitarist KANU party against the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), which, headed by the Christian coastal grandee Ronald Ngala, demanded the creation of a federal republic (Beja 2013). Following KADU's dissolution in 1964, Ngala crossed over to the ruling party and managed to establish himself as a major KANU leader. Against this background, Jahazi and Balala tried to use NUKEM as a platform to challenge Ngala's influence in the coastal region on a religious basis (Oded 2000: 21-22). However, following Ngala's death in 1972, NUKEM increasingly focused on the promotion of modern Islamic education while Muslim political elites shifted their focus to a new organisation (ibid.: 22; Kubai 2000: 43).

In May 1973, the visit of a high-level clerical delegation from Saudi-Arabia was accompanied by a national conference of Muslim leaders which resulted in the formation of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) (Kinyua 2014: 79). Two years later, the body's annual general meeting initiated the preparation of a detailed constitution which provided for the establishment of SUPKEM district council's all over the country and consolidated the organisation's administrative structure based on specialised directorates. In 1979, the government subsequently recognised SUPKEM as the official representative of Kenya's Muslim population (Oded 2000: 23-24). Yet, while the organisation gained the acceptance of the country's ruling elite, it rapidly delegitimised itself among its envisaged constituency.

To begin with, SUPKEM persistently defended the increasingly authoritarian rule of Kenyatta's successor Daniel arap Moi even though some of the President's moves alienated many Muslims. For instance, in July 1981, Moi's government caused a storm of protest by deciding to put into effect the Law of Succession Act, a uniform inheritance statute touching upon sensitive issues of Islamic jurisprudence. In response to the criticisms, SUPKEM chairman Kassim Mwamzandi asked his co-religionists to calm down, stay loyal to the head of state and trust in the council's ability to explain their case to the government (Oded 2000: 90-92).⁶ Despite this assurance, it was only nine years later that Muslims were eventually exempted from the law (Ndzovu 2014: 71-72). Furthermore, when in 1988 Moi introduced a controversial queue voting system for the primary elections of KANU's parliamentary candidates, SUPKEM was among the first organisations coming out in support of this anti-democratic decision which set the stage for massive fraud and voter intimidation (Kamau 1989).

The council's allegiance to the government can be attributed to the fact that from the outset most of its leadership positions were occupied by senior public officials. For example, SUPKEM's long-time chairman Mwamzandi served as an assistant minister in the cabinets of Kenyatta and Moi (Ndzovu 2014: 81). Moreover, while Mohammed Salim Balala and Mohammed Shaikh Aden, another assistant minister, became the council's first directors of education, the

⁶ Following independence, Kenyan Muslims were constitutionally guaranteed the right to resolve legal disputes pertaining to family and inheritance law through Islamic Kadhi courts which represent an institutional legacy from the Sultanate of Zanzibar. These courts still exist today.



deputy governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, Ahmad Abdallah, acted as SUPKEM's director-general (Oded 2000: 23). Naturally, these elite figures did not intend to risk their careers by assertively articulating Muslim perceptions of marginalisation. SUPKEM's long-term secretary general Ahmed Khalif was an exception, however. In 1989, he criticised the continuous governmental discrimination against Kenyan Somalis, denouncing a policy that required them to be ethnically screened and carry special identity cards. As a result, Khalif was suspended by a SUPKEM sub-committee that reiterated the body's allegiance to President Moi (Lochery 2012: 629-630; Kamau 1989).

Apart from its lack of political independence, SUPKEM's reputation also suffered from its failure to make a significant contribution in the field of Muslim education. Even though SUPKEM leaders frequently declared their commitment to construct modern schools and cultural institutions, the council was rapidly plagued by financial shortages and accusations of embezzlement (Oded 2000: 24). Against this background, the 1980s saw a group of young academics and clerics, whose mobilisational efforts will be illuminated below, setting out to challenge Kenya's Muslim establishment and its authoritarian patrons.

2.3 Tanzania⁷: Bakwata as an Inefficient Tool of a Socialist Party-State Machinery

The fact that present-day Tanzania accommodates a comparatively large Muslim population can be attributed, among other factors, to the overall religious impartiality and coastal focus of German colonialism⁸ as well as to the strong presence of the Qadiriyya and Shadiliyya Sufi⁹ brotherhoods. Starting in the late 19th century, they popularised Islam among the "African" masses (Nimtz 1980: 55-95; Iliffe 1979: 208-216). While the Tanganyikan independence movement was initially led by coastal Muslim traders (Said 1998: 167-188), the 1950s witnessed the rise of educated Christian elites who ended up dominating the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and, after independence in 1961, the Tanganyikan government (Loimeier 2007: 140). In the light of this development, Muslim leaders inside and outside the ruling party actively worked towards the socio-economic empowerment of their co-religionists. Most notably, in 1962, a national Muslim conference elected Said Tewa Said, then Minister for Lands and

⁷ The United Republic of Tanzania was established in 1964 through the merger of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. While the Tanganyikan state was dissolved, the islands were turned into a semi-autonomous entity.

⁸ Following a period of violent coastal resistance against the imposition of German rule in the late 19th century, relations between the colonialists and the Arab-Swahili establishment became more amicable. Tanganyika's first governor Julius von Soden used coastal communities as intermediaries and promoted the creation of secular government schools in coastal towns (Iliffe 1979: 208-209).

⁹ Sufism is an umbrella term applied to mystic currents within Islam that revolve around the personal experience of and self-identification with God and can be traced back to the appearance of asceticism in the first centuries of the Islamic era. Institutionally, Sufism started to manifest itself in hierarchically organised religious orders by the 12th century (Woodward et al. 2013: 60-65). In Zanzibar and on the East African mainland south of Somalia, such orders gained increasing influence in the wake of the influx of "new" religious scholars from Hadramaut, the Benadir coast and the Comoro Islands in the mid-19th century (see Bang 2014).



Settlement, the new chairman of the Territorial Council of the EAMWS and entrusted the organisation with the establishment of a department of education intended to oversee the construction of Islamic schools throughout the country (Said 1998: 265).

During the immediate post-independence period, the EAMWS, whose headquarters had been moved from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam in 1961, evolved from a social welfare institution into Tanzania's de facto national Muslim council, much to the dislike of TANU leader and Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere who envisioned the creation of a ruling party-controlled body (Gilsaa 2012: 159-165). Against this backdrop, relations between Nyerere and some of the most prestigious Muslim elite representatives grew increasingly sour. For example, in 1963, Justice Minister Chief Abdallah Fundikira, who had preceded Tewa as EAMWS chairman, resigned in protest to the President's push for the creation of a single party state which would come into existence two years later (Westerlund 1980: 94). Tewa, in turn, was dropped from the cabinet and appointed ambassador to China several weeks after signing a memorandum of understanding concerning the provision of funds for the establishment of an Islamic university during a state visit to Egypt in April 1964 (Said 1998: 274).

In 1968, one year after TANU's famous Arusha declaration had officially turned Tanzania into a socialist state, growing intra-EAMWS tensions between nationalist/pro-socialist and pan-Islamic/anti-socialist factions culminated in the organisation's government-facilitated dissolution and the concomitant formation of the Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania (Supreme Council of Muslims Tanzania, Bakwata) (Chande 1991: 171-177). Headed by the TANU functionaries Saleh Masasi, Adam Nasibu and Sheikh Abdallah Chaurembo, the new council became part of an extensive party-state machinery. In fact, the Bakwata leadership even decided against issuing membership cards as every Tanzanian Muslim was officially considered a member (Gilsaa 2012: 179).

During the first two decades of its existence, the council proved extremely ineffective in addressing educational disparities between Muslims and Christians. It did not manage to build a single new secondary school and failed to take up the initiative for the construction of an Islamic university (Chande 1991: 248).¹⁰ Rather, Bakwata's leaders seriously compromised themselves by misusing their positions for personal gain. For example, Adam Nasibu, who at different times served as the council's secretary general, embezzled money accruing from the renting of Bakwata-owned buildings and stole from funds provided for the pilgrimage to Mecca (ibid.: 251-252). In a similar fashion, Bakwata chairman Masasi enriched himself by selling most of the council's lorries (ibid.: 277). Nevertheless, in the late 1970s, it appeared as if under the influence of Sheikh Mohamed Ali al-Buhriy, then one of Tanzania's most respected Muslim scholars, the council was about to turn into a more assertive and professional organisation. As acting secretary general, al-Buhriy successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education for the development of an Islamic curriculum mirroring existing Christian arrangements of religious instruction. In 1979, he subsequently received permission to turn three of Bakwata's four secondary

¹⁰ It was only in 2004 that an Islamic university was eventually established in Morogoro.

schools into Islamic seminaries, i.e. private schools teaching religious as well as secular subjects. Yet, reacting to growing Christian criticism, the government rapidly reversed its position, pressuring al-Buhriy to reconvert the schools to their original status. Refusing to follow this instruction, the cleric eventually resigned in 1982. In turn, Adam Nasibu was reinstalled as secretary general (ibid.: 228-242).

As will be illustrated in chapter 3, al-Buhriy's seminary initiative had been vigorously supported by a nascent Muslim intelligentsia which would become the backbone of an urban-based anti-Bakwata movement in the early 1990s.

2.4 Mozambique: Cislamo and the Frelimo State's Ambivalent Interactions with the Islamic Sphere

The majority of Mozambican Muslims resides in the country's north where Islam historically spread inland based on the slave trading activities of coastal Swahili clans and the later entrenchment of the Qadiriyya and Shadiliyya orders (Bonate 2007: 47-55, 79-112). In the 1960s, traditional Sufi Islam came under attack by a southern-dominated and multi-racial Salafi movement headed by the Saudi-educated cleric Abubacar Ismael "Mangira". Branding established religious practices such as saint veneration and tomb visitation as unislamic innovations, Mangira and his followers openly challenged the authority of the established northern Muslim leadership (Pires 2008: 54-56; Bonate 2007: 176-183).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Sufi-Salafi rivalry also concerned the Portuguese colonial government. Against the backdrop of the Mozambican independence war, the Portuguese sought allies among different social groups, including the territory's Muslim population. In this endeavour, they eventually decided to back the entrenched Sufi clergy against its reformist critics (Alpers 1999: 181-183). Hence, when Mangira tried to convince the colonial authorities that he was better educated than the "backward" Sufi leaders and asked for a roundtable with his opponents to demonstrate his theological superiority, he was turned down (Bonate 2007: 207-208). As a result, the Salafi preacher shifted his focus to the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front, Frelimo). Following independence in 1974 and Frelimo's takeover of power, Mangira actively courted the ruling party, presenting himself and his followers as dedicated nationalists and accusing conventional Sufi Islam of "obscurantism" in line with Frelimo's Marxist-Leninist discourse (Bonate 2008: 645). However, during the first years after independence, the ruling party pursued a radically anti-religious policy. It nationalised religious institutions, banned faith-based associations and introduced strictly atheist school curricula. This hardline stance only gave way to a more pragmatic policy in the early 1980s. In the context of an unfolding foreign-induced civil war, Frelimo leaders realised that their confrontational approach risked alienating large parts of the country's population. Changing its strategy towards the religious realm from elimination to control, the government eventually initiated the establishment of national Christian and Muslim organisations (Morier-Genoud 2007: 245-247).

In the Islamic sphere, Frelimo's change of mind provided Salafi leader Mangira with an opportunity to significantly enhance his politico-religious standing. In January 1981, a national Islamic council, the Conselho Islâmico de



Moçambique (Islamic Council of Mozambique, Cislamo), was founded at a meeting between the government and a group of mostly reformist Maputo clerics. Mangira was elected the new organisation's chief coordinator (Bonate 2008: 643-646).¹¹ Two years later, he publicly emphasised his loyalty to the ruling party during an historic inter-confessional meeting organised by Mozambican President Samora Machel. Calling Frelimo "our party" (*o nosso partido*), the Mangira declared patriotism a key pillar of the Islamic faith while also soliciting government support for young Mozambican Muslims willing to study in the Arab world (Pires 2009: 97).

Under Machel's successor Joaquim Chissano, the linkages between the ruling party and the Cislamo became more extensive. In 1992, Frelimo and the rebel group Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance, Renamo) signed a peace accord that put an end to the country's civil war and provided for the holding of competitive multi-party elections. Against this background, Chissano set out to recruit several prominent Muslim leaders to the ruling party, including influential Cislamo representatives (Pires 2009: 104-105; Morier-Genoud 2007: 255). In the 1994 legislative election, 20 Muslim notables, mostly Asian or mixed-raced Cislamo members from southern Mozambique, were elected to parliament on a Frelimo ticket. After forming a Muslim parliamentary caucus, the Movimento Islâmico (Islamic Movement), these representatives campaigned for the Id festivals to be recognised as official national holidays (Bonate 2008: 649, Pires 2009: 105-107). They justified this initiative on the grounds that colonialism had put Islam in an inferior position to the Catholic church and that in 1982, Christmas had been declared an official holiday under the secular label "Family Day". In March 1996, a law establishing the new holidays was subsequently passed by the Mozambican National Assembly. Yet, facing fierce interdenominational church opposition, President Chissano refused to sign it into force. Rather, he sent the bill to the Supreme Court, which declared it unconstitutional in December 1996. Two years later, parliament then eventually adjourned the projected law *sine die* (Morier-Genoud 2000: 412-413). As will be shown below, this outcome appears to be one of the factors that prompted a group of young Cislamo members to leave the council and establish a new movement critical of the Islamic establishment and its proximity to Frelimo.

3. Islamic Contestation Movements and the Rise of Jihadism

The preceding chapter has highlighted that the politico-religious dynamics unfolding in the Islamic spheres of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique in the first decades after independence share an overarching characteristic:

¹¹ Northern Sufi leaders were largely excluded from the Cislamo. They therefore participated in the creation of another organisation, the Congresso Islâmico de Moçambique (Islamic Congress of Mozambique), which came into existence in 1983. Accommodating a quasi-autonomous group of mostly Sufi-related organisations, the Congress entered into a fierce rivalry with the Cislamo (Bonate 2008: 646-649).

Instead of mitigating historical Muslim grievances, national Islamic councils produced further discontent via their close affiliation with largely non-Muslim authoritarian ruling elites reluctant to constructively address prominent Muslim grassroots concerns. In the cases of Kenya and Mozambique, this is best illustrated by the failure of SUPKEM and Cislamo to convince their governmental patrons of handling religiously sensitive legislation in accordance with popular Muslim preferences. As regards Tanzania, the failure of Bakwata's Islamic seminary initiative manifested a similar pattern of delegitimation. Uganda's UMSC, in turn, had initially been tainted by the despotism of a Muslim head of state. Nevertheless, following Yoweri Museveni's takeover of the presidency and his co-optation of Ibrahim Luwemba, the council would become embroiled in a legitimacy crisis mirroring the regional trend.

3.1 Conceptualising the Transformation of Social Movements and Movement Organisations

As will be shown in this chapter, across East Africa the post-colonial consolidation of Muslim perceptions of marginalisation was eventually followed by periods of substantial politico-religious mobilisation. These are best captured by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow's contentious politics framework. According to the two authors, contentious politics can be defined as "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties" (Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 4). They further identify social movements as distinct forms of contentious politics which revolve around "sustained campaign[s] of claim-making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities that sustain these activities" (ibid.: 8).

Examining the metamorphosis of social movement organisations, Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 129-131) adopt a typology developed by Hanspeter Kriesi (1996: 156-157). According to Kriesi, there are four major paths of organisational transformation within social movements: *institutionalisation*, *commercialisation*, *involution* and *radicalisation*. While *institutionalisation* implies "the stabilization of a SMO's [Social Movement Organisation] resource flow, the development of its internal structure, the moderation of its goals, the conventionalization of its action repertoire and its integration into established systems of interest intermediation", *commercialisation* refers to "the transformation in the direction of a service organisation" (ibid.: 156, insert by author). *Involution*, in turn, occurs when social movement organisations convert into clubs or self-help groups. Lastly, Kriesi (1996: 157) defines *radicalisation* as the path to "reinvigorated mobilisation", which entails the adoption of more extreme goals and tactics.

Kriesi's typology builds upon on the seminal work of Mayer Zald and Roberta Ash (1966). Challenging the notion of a more or less inevitable tendency towards institutionalisation, they contend, inter alia, that "the size of the organizational potential support base, the amount of societal interest in the social movement and its MO's [Movement Organisations], and the direction of that interest (favorable, neutral, or hostile) directly affect the ability of the organization to survive and/or grow" (Zald/Ash 1966: 332, insert by author). According to Zald



and Ash, the combination of a limited potential support base and predominantly hostile or neutral societal attitudes towards the social movement makes the decline of movement organisations highly likely. This is because, over time, members arrive at the conclusion that their organisations are incapable of making a difference. Zald and Ash further point out that under these circumstances, movement adherents can be expected to search for new instruments of political action, including “more radical means” (ibid.: 335).

The basic scenario of organisational decay presented by the two sociologists roughly describes the overarching historical trajectory of contentious Islamic politics in East Africa. In the four countries under investigation, the 1980s and 1990s saw concerted public campaigns of Muslim claim-making directed against the leaders of the existing national Islamic councils and – particularly in Kenya – their governmental allies. Overall, these campaigns were conducted by two distinct types of articulate activists finding common ground in their shared contempt for the “decadence” of established Muslim elites: foreign-trained Salafi clerics and, especially in Kenya and Tanzania, politically conscious middle-class professionals (teachers, lawyers, lecturers and administrators) who had graduated in the wake of the post-colonial expansion of university education. As it rapidly turned out, the institutionalisation of their movements/movement organisations faced two major obstacles. First, incumbent governments impeded the democratisation of Muslim politics by blocking the reform of national Islamic councils or, as in the case of Kenya, by refusing to register a Muslim political party. Second, the limited size of Muslim populations and the activists’ relatively narrow urban base worked against the emergence of influential Islamic interest organisations. As a result, Muslim contestation movements disintegrated amidst increasing youth disenchantment with the political process. While the speed of this development has differed from case to case, fragmentation produced a common cross-country outcome: the opening up of political space for the genesis and/or expansion of militant networks advocating the violent subversion of existing socio-political orders.

3.2 Uganda: Rapidly Escalating State-Salafi Tensions as a Major Driver of Radicalisation

During the 1970s and 1980s, several hundred Ugandan Muslims studied in Pakistan and Saudi-Arabia where they were heavily influenced by puritanical religious teachings and ideologies of pan-Islamic activism (Chande 2000: 355; Kayunga 1994: 346-347). Upon their return, these young men embarked on a program of theological reform. Condemning the “backwardness” of the established clergy, they set out to eradicate traditional Islamic beliefs and rituals such as the popular celebration of the Prophet’s birthday by taking control over existing mosques and by engaging in concerted public preaching activities (Mukisa 2015; Kayunga 1994: 354). Furthermore, the reformists also became involved in the sphere of Muslim education. For instance, in the early 1980s, prestigious Salafi clerics Sheikh Idris Twaib Lutaaya and Sheikh Muhammad Kizito Zziwa launched an Islamic primary school, the Buziga Islamic Theological Institute, which integrated religious and secular curricula and was later supplemented with a secondary section (Kaaya 2016).



Following his return from Pakistan, Sheikh Zziwa had founded the Society for the Preaching of Islam and the Denunciation of Innovations and Qadianism. It subsequently evolved into a politically assertive group commonly referred to as the Tabligh¹² movement (Kayunga 1994: 346-347). Disillusioned with the factional power struggles and nepotism prevalent within the UMSC, it called for the drafting of a new UMSC constitution and the subsequent election of a new leadership (Elischer 2018: 14; Kayunga 1994: 354-355). To advertise their claims, the Salafi activists went as far as seizing the UMSC's Old Kampala headquarters in May 1990. While the government managed to end the occupation peacefully by offering the Tablighis access to several mosques (Elischer 2018: 14), it failed to address the UMSC's overall legitimacy deficit. Besides, the activists complained that even though they had been assured impunity, their leader Sheikh Muhamad Kamoga was sued for damaging UMSC property. Against this background and following the Supreme Court ruling that declared Ibrahim Luwemba the legitimate leader of the council, they captured the headquarters once more in March 1991 (Ssegawa 2015).

The Supreme Court's decision infuriated the movement for two reasons. First, Luwemba's support for the restitution of expropriated Asian properties threatened the Tablighis' material interests as their headquarters, the Nakasero mosque, had belonged to the Shia Ismaili community. Second, Luwemba did not meet the educational requirements stipulated by the UMSC constitution.¹³ Hence, a group of more than 400 Muslim youth headed by Kamoga and Sheikh Jamir Mukulu, the most militant voice within the Tabligh movement, decided to challenge the authorities a second time. The government reacted by sending a contingent of the riot police which engaged in clashes that left one protestor dead. After mediation efforts failed due to Mukulu's intransigence, tensions escalated into a major confrontation culminating in the killing of four policemen and the arrest of the preacher and his followers. Kamoga, who had been willing to negotiate a peaceful withdrawal, escaped detention and fled to Kenya (Kayunga 1994: 355-358).

3.2.1 Split of the Tabligh Movement and the Expansion of Militant Islamist Activity

Following the turmoil of March 1991, the remainder of the Tabligh group elected Sheikh Suleiman Kakeeto as its new leader. Backed by many of the movement's non-clerical supporters including several Muslim secondary school headmasters and lecturers at Makerere University, Kakeeto advocated a less confrontational stance vis-à-vis the UMSC and the authorities (Kayunga 1994: 358-359). In 1993,

¹² The Arab term Tabligh denotes the propagation of the Islamic faith. The Tablighi Jamaat is a global missionary movement which started to emerge in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent in the 1920s. Several of Uganda's leading reformist clerics became adherents to this movement during their studies in Pakistan (Chande 2000: 355-356).

¹³ The constitution required the Mufti of Uganda to at least possess a degree in Sharia or its equivalent. Yet, Luwemba only possessed a Libyan bachelor's degree in Islamic propagation (Kayunga 1994: 356).



the government proved reluctant to accept the UMSC General Assembly's decision to replace the Luwemba administration with an interim leadership envisaged to prepare intra-council grassroots elections. In response, the Tablighis threatened to storm the council's headquarters again. However, in contrast to 1990 and 1991, they refrained from risking violent clashes with the state (Kanyehamba 1998: 139).¹⁴ At the same time, the detained Mukulu faction became further radicalised. Upon his release from Luzira prison in 1994, Mukulu started to propagate Uganda's transformation into an Islamic state. Sponsored by the Sudanese government,¹⁵ he established the Salaf Foundation, a militant underground organisation fiercely opposed to Kakeeto's conciliatory position. Eventually, the radicals relocated from Kampala to the countryside and set up a military training camp in Busekura, near Lake Albert, where the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army¹⁶ was born (Ssegawa 2015).

In February 1995, the Islamist rebels were rapidly decimated in a series of encounters with the Ugandan army. After fleeing to the Ugandan-Zairian border area they joined forces with the Allied Democratic Movement, a neo-monarchist Bugandan guerrilla, and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, an armed movement formed by the Bakonjo tribe of western Uganda. Hence, in late 1995, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) came into existence (Prunier 2009: 369-373; ICG 2012: 2-5). While its operations remained concentrated in the border region, the ADF also launched a terrorist campaign in Kampala which, according to the UN, killed 50 people between 1997 and 2001 (UN Security Council 2003: 3) However, seriously weakened by the counter-insurgency operations of the Ugandan military as well as by an amnesty law for the combatants of armed groups which was passed in 2000, the rebels ultimately retreated to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (ICG 2012: 6-8).

3.2.2 Lasting Consequences of the 1991 Escalation

In April 2015, Jamil Mukulu was eventually arrested in Tanzania and extradited to Uganda (Nakabugo 2015). At the same time, the country's Islamic sphere was rocked by a series of "mysterious" killings. Between 2012 and 2016, twelve Muslim clerics, most of them Tablighis, were shot by unknown assailants (Al Jazeera 2016). Prior to these murders, Muhamad Kamoga had re-established himself as one of the leading representatives of the Salafi milieu after returning to Uganda under the government amnesty. In January 2015, he also reconciled with Sheikh Kakeeto whom the ADF had tried to assassinate in 1996 (Prunier 2009: 374). Following a meeting with the head of the UMSC, Sheikh Shaban Mubaje, the two clerics publicly vowed to unite under the leadership of the council (Uganda Radio Network (URN) 2015). However, the same month

¹⁴ Uganda's former Minister of Justice, George Kanyehamba, who at the time served as the head of the Ugandan delegation at the International Conference on Uganda Muslim Unity and Reconciliation held in Kampala in May 1993, states that together with other members of the delegation, he managed to convince the Tablighis to not seize the council's headquarters again (Kanyehamba 1998: 139).

¹⁵ In the 1990s, the Sudan's Islamist government sought to destabilise Uganda due to Yoweri Museveni's proximity to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (see Prunier 2009: 363-367).

¹⁶ Also referred to as the Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters.

Kamoga and several of his followers were arrested and charged with terrorism and murder against the backdrop of the killing of Sheikh Mustafa Bahiga (Al Jazeera 2017).

Bahiga had belonged to a group of inner-Tabligh critics of Kamoga, accusing him of radicalism and dictatorial leadership (Al Jazeera 2016; World Bulletin 2014). Yet, even though in 2017 the Ugandan High Court found Kamoga guilty of “terrorism” – he was sentenced to life imprisonment for issuing leaflets and speeches intimidating his rivals – he was acquitted of all charges relating to the murder of Bahiga and other clerics (Wesaka and Kigongo 2017). In fact, there have been persistent claims that the killings have been staged by the authorities to create the impression that Uganda is threatened by Jihadism (Al Jazeera 2016). The government, for its part, has repeatedly blamed the murders on the ADF which has recently resurged in the DRC, apparently rediscovering its Salafi roots (Mpagi 2018; Nantulya 2019).¹⁷ Thus, while the different allegations surrounding the shootings are hardly verifiable, it is obvious that Uganda’s Islamic civil society is still haunted by the 1991 split of the Tabligh movement.

3.3 Kenya: The Fateful Degeneration of the Islamic Party of Kenya

As its Ugandan counterpart, Kenya’s Muslim contestation movement was crucially shaped by young Salafi preachers returning from abroad throughout the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸ One of the most vocal clerics within this group was Sheikh Ali Shee. After graduating from the Faculty of Sheriah at the University of Omdurman in the mid-1970s, Shee started to agitate against Sufi traditionalism. Moreover, he decried the socio-economic marginalisation of Muslims in Kenyan society, thereby attracting the attention of the National Intelligence Service which interrogated him several times (Bakari 1995: 184-185). Shee also became one of the most outspoken critics of SUPKEM, publicly accusing the council’s leaders of being government agents (Oded 2000: 24-25, 51). In doing so, he found common ground with a group of young, mostly coastal Muslim middle-class representatives including figures like Rashid Mzee, a professor in veterinary medicine at the University of Nairobi or Omar Mwinyi, a primary school headmaster from Mombasa. In 1986, this intelligentsia created the Muslim Education and Welfare Association to promote the educational advancement of Kenya’s Muslim communities (O’Brien 2003 104-106). Five years later, the “professionals” then turned into the driving force behind the establishment of the IPK.

¹⁷ The number of violent events linked to the ADF have tripled from 38 in 2017 to 132 in 2018 (Nantulya 2019). Renaming itself Madina at Tauheed Wau Muhajedeem (The City of Monotheism and Holy Warriors), the group has launched Islamic State-inspired propaganda efforts directed at a broader East African audience (Congo Research Group 2018: 12-19).

¹⁸ Many of these clerics had been students and followers of Sheikh Muhammad Kasim Mazrui and Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy. Together with their mentor Sheikh al-Amin Mazuri, they had established a local tradition of Salafi-oriented Islamic reformism in the colonial period (see Kresse 2003).



In late 1991, Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi gave in to widespread domestic and international demands for the legalisation of multi-party competition. Following this political opening, the creation of the IPK was announced in Mombasa in January 1992. Led by Mwinyi and Abdulrahman Wandati, a teacher from western Kenya, the new party provided a platform for the articulation of persistent perceptions of Muslim marginalisation revolving around the low representation of Muslims in the government administration, their discrimination by public institutions and a lack of socio-economic investment in pre-dominantly Muslim areas (Oded 2000: 135-147). Alarmed by this agenda, the government refused to officially register the party claiming that its name signalled a religious bias discriminating against non-Muslim citizens (Ndzovu 2014: 87-88). Within the Muslim opposition, this prohibitive stance facilitated the rise of Sheikh Khalid Balala, a confrontational and charismatic street preacher known for his audacious polemics against the Moi regime and its coastal representatives.

3.3.1 Khalid Balala's Rise as the Harbinger of Collective Jihadist Radicalisation

In the 1970s, Balala had left Kenya for Saudi-Arabia after dropping out from high school (Bakari 2013: 29-30). In contrast to other clerical IPK representatives like Sheikh Shee or Sheikh Mohammed Khalifa, he never enrolled in any institution of higher Islamic learning (Ndzovu 2014: 179). Yet, his lack of a formal theological education notwithstanding, Balala managed to attract large crowds with his sermons. His political preaching also appealed to Sudan's military junta which had been angered by Moi's clandestine support for the neighbouring country's southern rebels. Supplying Balala with funds, the Sudanese government helped him to become the IPK's informal leader (Bakari 2013: 20-22).

When in mid-1992 several IPK activists were temporarily arrested, the party responded by organising mass demonstrations that lasted for several days and effectively shut down the port city (Oded 2000: 135-136). This impressive display of support attracted the attention of the leadership of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-K), the country's major opposition party. They eventually entered an electoral alliance with the IPK ahead of the 1992 general election. In exchange for the nomination of its candidates in several coastal constituencies, the IPK called on its followers to vote for FORD-K leader Oginga Odinga in the presidential race. Hence, in December 1992, Rashid Mzee was elected to parliament on a FORD-K ticket (Wolf 2000: 142). However, while the IPK proved competitive in Mombasa, it never managed to establish a foothold in the coastal countryside or in Kenya's pre-dominantly Muslim north-east which remained loyal to KANU throughout the 1990s based on ethno-political considerations (Ndzovu 2014: 90). In fact, by 1995 the IPK had already largely disintegrated.

Having been detained several times, Balala responded to an intensifying state-orchestrated disruption of the Muslim opposition by actively encouraging the escalation of violent tensions against the will of the IPK's founders. In May 1993, the government sponsored the establishment of the United Muslims of Africa (UMA), a quasi-gang led by the KANU youth leader Emanuel Karisa



Maitha (Ndzovu 2014: 95). Attempting to discredit the IPK as an Arab movement, UMA activists started to violently disturb the party's gatherings and harass its leaders. Balala reacted to these efforts by issuing fatwa edicts that ordered the murder of Maitha and other local KANU representatives (Bohoko 1993). Moreover, the preacher urged his young followers to keep protesting against the Moi government, thereby paving the way for the continuation of destructive IPK-police/UMA clashes throughout 1993 (Oded 2000: 155-159).

In July 1994, the IPK's founders eventually expelled Balala from the party, asserting that it had been created to peacefully advocate Muslim interests and highlighting that Balala had never been elected party leader. Following this decision, Balala unsuccessfully tried to set up a new party called Islamic Salvation Front. During a stay in Germany in 1995, he learned that his passport had been cancelled and that he would not be allowed back into Kenya. Even though he was able to return two years later, he failed to re-gain his political influence (Oded 2000: 160-161). At the same time, the IPK fractured entirely. While its leading non-clerical officials set out to pursue political careers within the Christian-dominated patronage networks driving national politics,¹⁹ several of the party's "sheikhs" created the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK), an advocacy organisation rivalling the unpopular SUPKEM which had remained loyal to President Moi throughout the unrest of the early 1990s (Elischer 2019: 8-9; Thordsen 2009: 45).

3.3.2 About Rogo and the Increasing Appeal of Jihadist Thought

Headed by a group of coastal clerics including Sheikh Shee and Sheikh Khalifa, the CIPK represented a decidedly pro-democratic version of politico-religious civil society activism. However, among Mombasa's urban youth, the constant street battles of the early 1990s and the IPK's rapid demise had paved the way for the consolidation of an extremist narrative. One of the most prominent young Muslims belonging to this group was Aboud Rogo, a Salafi preacher influenced by the rigidly anti-secular lectures of the Saudi-educated cleric Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo (Ndzovu 2018).²⁰ After joining the IPK, Rogo had unsuccessfully run for a seat on Mombasa's municipal council on a FORD-K ticket. Rapidly disillusioned with party politics, he subsequently became notorious for using a fanatical rhetoric which depicted the local marginalisation of Muslims as part of a global assault on Islam and presented violent resistance as a legitimate response to this alleged state of oppression (Ndzovu n.d.: 5-7).

Following a terrorist attack on Mombasa's Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in November 2002, Rogo was eventually arrested. He was accused of having

¹⁹ Rashid Mzee's political career came to a rapid end when he lost his Kisauni seat in the 1997 election. Omar Mwinyi, the IPK's former chairman, was eventually elected to parliament in 2013 as a member of Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement. The party's lawyer, Taib Ali Taib, also became close to Odinga and was elected mayor of Mombasa in 2003.

²⁰ Rimo, a Digo Muslim from the south coast, was found guilty of sedition and sentenced to six years in prison in 1990. In contrast to other Salafi critiques of the Moi government, he advocated for the establishment of an Islamic political order (Ndzovu 2018: 4-5).



provided logistical support to Fazul Mohammed, the Comorian mastermind behind Al-Qaeda's operations in East Africa. Yet, after more than two years in detention, he was released in mid-2005 due to lack of prosecutorial evidence (US Embassy/Kenya 2005). As Imam of Mombasa's Masjid Musa, Rogo increasingly turned his attention to events in Somalia, where in late 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) was defeated by Ethiopian forces. Presenting the neighbouring country's civil war as the manifestation of a global Jihad (Mwakimako/Willis 2014: 14), he established contacts to Somalia's militant Islamists. Together with like-minded clerics embarked on actively recruiting local combatants for the expanding Al-Shabaab insurgency. In Mombasa, these efforts were primarily undertaken in Majengo's Musa and Sakina mosques where until 2014 hundreds of young Muslims were mobilised to fight in Somalia (ICG 2016: 11; UN Security Council 2012: 183). At the same time, substantial Al-Shabaab recruitment also occurred in Nairobi under the direction of Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali,²¹ a Rogo confidant who had seized the capital's Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque in January 2007 together with a group of like-minded youth. One year later, Ali officially registered the Muslim Youth Centre, a pressure group which quickly developed into Al-Shabaab's Kenyan affiliate (Chome 2016a).

3.3.3 Escalation of Islamist Violence in the Early 2010s

After the Kenya Defence Forces invaded southern Somalia in October 2011, tensions between the Kenyan state and its Jihadist opponents escalated. Following several smaller bomb and grenade attacks, in September 2013, Al-Shabaab carried out a high-profile assault on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall which killed 67 people and wounded more than 200 others (Anderson/McKnight 2014: 15-16). Two years later, the group staged another major attack, murdering 148 people at Garissa University in Kenya's peripheral north east which has been particularly vulnerable to Al-Shabaab attacks due to its proximity to Somalia (ICG 2019, Chome 2016b).

In the coastal region, escalatory dynamics were driven by extra-judicial shootings of leading Jihadist clerics such as Rogo, Abubakar Shariff and Ibrahim Omar who were killed in August 2012, October 2013 and April 2014, respectively.²² Triggering violent youth riots, these murders – which have most probably been committed by Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (Human Rights Watch 2014) – were followed by a suspected retaliatory assassination campaign against police informers and non-militant preachers. The most prominent victims of these revenge attacks were CIPK chairman Sheikh Mohammed Idriss and the imam of Likoni's Bilaal bin Rabaah Mosque, Sheikh Salim Mwarangi, who were shot in Mombasa in June and November 2014, respectively (ICG 2016: 12; Anderson/McKnight 2014: 17-20).

Jihadism also left its imprint on the coastal countryside. For instance, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a massacre in the village of Mpeketoni in Lamu county where in June 2014, armed men chanting Islamist slogans killed 50

²¹ A detailed account of Ali's biography is provided by Chome (2016a).

²² According to Haki Africa (2016), between 2012 and 2016 at least 81 extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances have been carried out in coastal Kenya.

people (Anderson 2014). Furthermore, the predominantly rural county of Kwale became known as a hotbed of youth radicalism and Al-Shabaab recruitment forcing several clerics and village headmen to go into hiding for fear of assassination (ICG 2016: 12; Jacob 2016).

Following the systematic elimination of militant preachers and the concomitant government-supervised selection of new steering committees for infamous mosques such as Masjid Musa, the domestic propagation of violent Islamist ideologies eventually lost traction (Chome 2019a: 551-552). Nevertheless, Al-Shabaab's attack on Nairobi's Dusit D2 hotel complex, which hit international headlines in January 2019, underlines that the successful mobilisational efforts of Kenya's Jihadist clerics have left a lasting legacy. Four of the five attackers were Kenyan citizens that had joined the ranks of the considerable Al-Shabaab contingent recruited by Aboud Rogo and his fellow activists (Chome 2019b). Militarily trained in Somalia, this pool of radicalised young men and women constitutes a persistent security threat.

3.4 Tanzania: Gradual Radicalisation Following the Failed Reform of Bakwata

In 1970, the Muslim Student Association at the University of Dar es Salaam (MSAUD) was created. Bringing together the members of a nascent Muslim intelligentsia, it quickly turned into a forum for the critical discussion of the Tanzanian party state's socialist ideology and the poor performance of Bakwata (Gilsaa 2012: 196-198). Moreover, the MSAUD also started to organise reading groups which introduced Muslim students to the work of famous Islamist writers like Maulana Maududi or Said Qutb. The popularisation of these authors among the educated youth was crucially facilitated by Muhammad Malik, a Pakistani math teacher at Kinondoni secondary school who had moved to Tanzania in 1965 (Chande 1991: 230-232). Actively involved in the MSAUD, he instilled in many students a spirit of activism revolving around a critique of anti-Islamic colonial propaganda and an emphasis on the need for Muslims to work towards their socio-economic development as well as towards the expansion of their political influence (Gilsaa 2012: 198-200).

In the mid-1970s, Malik also became one of the key figures within the Warsha ya Waandishi wa Kiislam (Workshop of Muslim Writers, Warsha), a group of young educationalists closely related to MSAUD. It worked on the translation of Islamic books and the development of the religious curriculum Bakwata's then Secretary General al-Buhriy envisaged. Furthermore, in cooperation with al-Buhriy, Warsha firmly advocated the establishment of Islamic seminaries. By 1979, the group had developed into an important intra-Bakwata force, organising lectures and seminars and publishing booklets on religious as well as socio-economic issues. However, in the wake of al-Buhriy's resignation in 1982, Warsha was pushed out of Bakwata, too. While its "indigenous" members were denied access to the council's facilities on the grounds that they were mixing religion with politics, Muhammad Malik had to leave Tanzania after the Ministry of Internal Affairs refused to renew his work permit (Chande 1991: 230-243).

Alongside the emergence of MSAUD and Warsha activism, the 1970s and 1980s also saw the return of Salafi clerics trained in the Middle East. Many of



these graduates had benefited from scholarships provided by the Saudi Arabian al-Haramain organisation which had established a presence in Dar es Salaam. Its local leader, the Sudanese cleric Sheikh Abbas Mustafa, had become an influential figure within Bakwata (Gilsaa 2012: 193). While some of the returnees found employment within the national Islamic council, the majority became part of the Ansar al-Sunna²³, a “network of individual, semi-independent and privately-owned organisations devoted to ‘purifying’ local Islamic practices in contemporary Tanzania” (ibid.: 249). Far from confining themselves to a theological critique of traditional Sufi Islam, the Ansaris would join a burgeoning anti-Bakwata movement which, in 1991, tried to reform the council against the backdrop of an incipient political opening of the single party state.

3.4.1 The “Old” Bakwata’s Resilience

In February 1990, Julius Nyerere, who had resigned as Tanzanian President in 1985 but remained chairman of the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi²⁴ (Party of the Revolution, CCM), publicly encouraged a societal debate on multi-partyism under the impression of the unfolding third wave of democratisation. One year later, his successor as head of state, the Zanzibari Muslim Ali Hassan Mwinyi, appointed a presidential commission tasked with developing recommendations on political reforms based on the collection of citizens’ views (Bakari 2006: 59-60). Importantly, Mwinyi also appeared to be willing to sever the party-state’s alliance with the entrenched Bakwata leadership. According to Mohammed Said²⁵ (1998: 1-2), in April 1991, Bakwata’s vice-chairman Suleiman Hegga complained about the council’s critics at a religious gathering. The President, who was present as a guest of honour, allegedly called on the Bakwata leadership to stop lamenting and provide for the democratic resolution of intra-Muslim differences. Five months later, a huge Muslim conference met at the University of Dar es Salaam. Chaired by the old Said Tewa and boycotted by Bakwata’s leaders, it brought together leading representatives of the MSAUD-related intelligentsia and the Ansar al-Sunna as well as some of the country’s most senior Muslim civil servants and clerics such as Sheikh al-Buhriy or Sheikh Nur-u-Din Hussein, the leader of the local Shadiliyya Sufi order.²⁶ Resolving to take over the national Islamic council, the conference selected a “taskforce” which oversaw the drafting of a revised Bakwata constitution. The latter was subsequently passed at a second gathering in January 1992. Simultaneously, a large crowd seized Bakwata’s headquarters in Kinondoni acting on the instructions of the taskforce (Gilsaa 2012: 308-317).

²³ An Arab term that translates into the “defenders”, “saviours”, “followers” or “helpers” of the Sunnah.

²⁴ The CCM was created in 1977 through a merger of TANU and Zanzibar’s Afro-Shirazi Party.

²⁵ Mohammed Said is one of Tanzania’s leading Muslim intellectuals and a former MSAUD member.

²⁶ In the 1960s, Sheikh Hussein had been arrested for unknown reasons (Becker 2008: 234-235). His affiliation to the anti-Bakwata opposition shows that Tanzania’s historical intra-Muslim divides should not be simplistically reduced to a Sufi-Salafi antagonism.



Unsurprisingly, the unlawful occupation prompted a government intervention. Mediating between the old Bakwata leadership and its contenders, President Mwinyi managed to end the turmoil by initiating the creation of a ten-member committee – consisting of five members from each group – which was tasked with conducting all-encompassing intra-council leadership elections and preparing a new constitution (Said 2008: 6-7). However, during the following weeks, it rapidly became clear that the Bakwata establishment was not willing to implement the agreement. Backed by powerful forces within the government and the ruling party, it simply refused to allow for the holding of elections.

3.4.2 Establishment of an Ineffective Alternative Council

Against this background, the “rebels” eventually established a new organisation, the Baraza Kuu la Jumuiya na Taasisi za Kiislamu Tanzania (Supreme Council of Islamic Organisations and Institutions of Tanzania, Baraza Kuu), which was officially registered in November 1992 (Gilsaa 2012: 317-321). Moreover, in the wake of the abolition of the CCM’s constitutional single party monopoly, they also started to look for a Muslim political platform ahead of the 1995 general election. Initially, many Baraza Kuu leaders pinned their hopes on the National Reconstruction Alliance as the party’s presidential candidate was the former Minister of Education Kigoma Malima. Being the first Muslim in this position, Malima had openly decried the existence of religiously based educational disparities and advocated affirmative action for his co-religionists (Loimeier 2007: 147). While this audacity damaged his standing within the CCM, which he ultimately left in 1994, it made him highly popular among the urban Muslim intelligentsia. Yet, three months before the election, Malima died on a trip to London. Against this background, the Baraza Kuu activists decided to shift their political support to the Civic United Front (CUF), a pre-dominantly Muslim party formed at the initiative of a group of Zanzibari elite dissidents (Gilsaa 2012: 345-354). Headed by Zanzibar’s former Chief Minister Seif Sharif Hamad and by the mainland economist Ibrahim Lipumba, the CUF’s discourse revolved around a language of human rights and good governance (Edwald 2011: 352-353). Apart from the islands, where the party advanced a popular sub-nationalist agenda, this narrative proved insufficient to activate a substantial share of the Tanzanian electorate. While Lipumba only received 6% of the votes in the 1995 presidential contest, the CUF failed to win a single non-Zanzibari seat in the National Assembly election (African Elections Database 2011). These meagre results also put into question the new Baraza Kuu’s capacity to function as an effective Muslim interest organisation. In fact, Gilsaa (2012: 366) points out that “the vast majority of Muslims beyond the larger cities had never heard of the new council.”

Lacking financial resources and a social base in the rural and semi-urban areas, the Baraza Kuu leadership proved incapable of establishing a countrywide structure based on sound elections. For instance, the first vote of the council’s National Executive Committee was only held in 1995, three years after the Baraza Kuu’s establishment. Marred by administrative flaws, the election was boycotted by several member organisations and left the Baraza Kuu with a significant legitimacy deficit. It was also followed by the Ansaris’ decision to leave the new council and focus on their own umbrella organisation, the Jamaat wa Ansar al-



Sunna Tanzania (The Congregation of the Ansar al-Sunna in Tanzania, JASUTA) (Gilsaa 2012: 367-369).

3.4.3 Growing Hostilities Between the State and Muslim Activists

While the institutionalisation of the anti-Bakwata movement failed, tensions between the state and the activist Islamic milieu increased. Most crucially, in February 1998, the government's Field Force Unit stormed Dar es Salaam's Mwembechai mosque, an important centre of politically assertive preaching. Provoking intense street riots, the security forces killed five Muslims and arrested several hundred others (Njozi 2000: 15-21). In the light of these events, which have become a "historical marker" for many Muslim activists (Loimeier 2007: 146), a group of vocal clerics including MSAUD and Ansari-related figures set out to make up for the Baraza Kuu's ineffectiveness by forming an informal advocacy network called Shura ya Maimamu (Council of Imams/Mosque Leaders, Shura). Speaking out against the historical marginalisation of Muslims and the governmental violation of their basic human rights, the Shura's leaders maintained their support for the CUF and engaged in civic education campaigns dedicated to convincing their co-religionists of the need to participate in the electoral process (Gilsaa 2012: 395-495). However, within the increasingly fragmented Islamic civil society, the CUF's failure to turn into a serious political force on the mainland,²⁷ the CCM governments' growing hostility towards alleged "fundamentalists" and the rise of Jihadism in neighbouring Kenya also provided an environment conducive to the emergence and popularisation of radical voices.

Among the activists affiliated to the domestically educated intelligentsia violent resistance was most vigorously propagated by Sheikh Ilunga Hassan Kapungu. Having been sensitised to the Muslim grievance perspective by the former TANU politician Bilani Rehani Waikela,²⁸ Kapungu had become involved with the Warsha/MSAUD milieu in the 1980s. In the 1990s, he subsequently started to work as a preacher in Mwanza and became active in the local Bakwata and Baraza Kuu branches (Said 2014, An-Nuur 2000). While the details of Kapungu's radicalisation are hard to trace, it is beyond question that by 2011 he had adopted a militant ideology. That year, Kapungu went on a nationwide preaching tour, regularly calling upon his mostly young listeners to violently undermine what he labelled the "the Christian-controlled system" (*mfumo kristo*).²⁹ For instance, at a public lecture delivered in Ikwiriri in September 2011, Kapungu accused the CCM and the Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Party

²⁷ In the three presidential and parliamentary elections held between 2000 and 2010, the CUF never won more than 16 and 14% of the vote, respectively (African Elections Database 2011).

²⁸ Waikela was one of TANU's founding fathers in Tabora (western Tanzania). After independence, he was among the Muslim politicians falling out with Nyerere (Said 1998: 272-274).

²⁹ Several of Kapungu's speeches are accessible on Youtube, e.g.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3SpjABzgSY>.



for Democracy and Development), Tanzania's major opposition party, of having failed Muslims (Binm 2012: Min. 03:03-04:06). Denunciating the country's Christians as "infidels" (*makafiri*) and comparing them with recalcitrant cattle incapable of listening, he further announced that in order to liberate themselves, Tanzanian Muslims needed to abandon the path of dialogue (ibid.: Min. 24:36-27:13). One year later, Kapungu also intervened in the turmoil over the killing of Aboud Rogo and openly called on an audience in Mombasa to avenge the preacher's death by murdering Christian clerics (Mwanakijiji 2013; Sanga/Bwana 2013).³⁰

3.4.4 Expanding Jihadist Tendencies Within the Ansar al-Sunna Community

At the same time, radicalism also gained traction within the Ansar al-Sunna community. To begin with, the Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre (AMYC), a JASUTA member organisation based in the coastal Tanga region, appears to have forged substantial ties with Al-Shabaab. After having completed his religious studies in Saudi-Arabia in the 1980s, the AMYC's founder Sheikh Salim Abdulrahim Barahiyan had acquired the reputation of a strict purist. He refused, among other things, to publicly support the CUF due to the party's secular program (Gilsaa 2012: 485-486).³¹ According to the UN, several people from Barahiyan's personal environment engaged with international Jihadist networks from the early 2000s on and eventually became affiliated with Somalia's Islamist insurgents. Making use of the AMYC's mosques and educational facilities, these individuals seem to have embarked on recruiting Tanzanian Al-Shabaab fighters in close cooperation with Kenya's militant Islamists (UN Security Council 2012: 177-194).

The most serious Ansar-related security threat ultimately emerged in the Pwani Region's Kibiti and Rufiji Districts. Field interviews carried out by Walwa (2018) and Jingu (2018) indicate that in these localities the Salafi movement had undergone a thorough radicalisation process entailing an increasing rejection of the post-colonial state. For instance, it has been reported that in villages like Ikwiriri local Ansar members had started to declare secular education and other government services forbidden (Walwa 2018: 131-132). It also appears that revivalist mosques like Msikiti wa Mabanzi had become centres of Jihadist youth indoctrination and martial training (Jingu 2018: 96). Against this background, between January 2015 and May 2017, more than 30 local police officers, government officials and CCM cadres were murdered (Kolumbia 2017). The Tanzanian government responded to these killings by announcing the establishment of a special police zone in the affected area. Resorting to severe repression, the country's security forces arbitrarily arrested, mishandled and, in several cases, executed local Muslim residents (ICG 2018: 19-20).

³⁰ Kapungu died in 2014 due to illness. The extent to which he was involved in Al-Shabaab-related networks is still unclear.

³¹ Gilsaa (2012: 491) quotes one anonymous informant who accuses Barahiyan of inconsistency as he allegedly helped to build the CUF's headquarters in Tanga.



Overall, the extent to which the Jihadists operating in the Pwani Region are linked to wider national and Kenyan/Somali militant networks remains as unclear as their potential involvement with organised transnational crime.³² One thing that is certain is that the government's harsh response prompted several local radicals to withdraw to northern Mozambique, another region characterised by increasing Salafi militancy.

3.5 Mozambique: Intra-Salafi Conflicts, "Al-Shabaab" Radicalism and the Cabo Delgado Insurgency

Mozambique is the most under-researched case among the four countries studied in this report. What is known is that in 1998, a group of young northern Salafis left the Cislamo to establish a new organisation called Ahl al-Sunna. According to Bonate (2008: 649-650), this decision was motivated by a number of different factors including growing frustration with the council's Asian leadership which was increasingly perceived as racially biased against black Africans and as focussing on the acquisition of wealth rather than working towards the well-being of Muslims. Also, against the background of the failure of the Islamic holiday initiative, the Cislamo establishment's allegiance to the ruling party caused offence among many Muslim youth.

While the Ahl al-Sunna's formation as well as its interactions with the Cislamo and the state are yet to be systematically researched, it seems that the group was only officially registered in 2007. Its founders belong to a cohort of foreign-educated northern clerics who had studied in the Middle East in the 1980s and early 1990s with the help of scholarships distributed through the Cislamo and the Sufi-dominated Congresso Islâmico de Moçambique (Islamic Congress of Mozambique) (Bonate 2008: 646-649). Moreover, it appears that Ahl al-Sunna's members have either supported Renamo or completely turned away from party politics (Bonate 2019). It is also likely that due to Renamo's predominantly Christian outlook – the party officially opposed the recognition of the Id festivals as official national holidays (Morier-Genoud 2000: 413) – the country's major opposition force failed to turn into an effective intermediary between the state and the new Salafi organisation. Against this background, Ahl al-Sunna experienced the split-off of a youth sect notorious for its fierce anti-secularism in the 2000s (Morier-Genoud 2019). Field interviews conducted by Haysom (2018: 17) and Habibe et al. (2019: 13-15) suggest that this group came to be dominated by small and middle traders. While being locally referred to as "Al-Shabaab", the extent to which it has cultivated ties with Somalia's Jihadist insurgents remains unclear.

In the early 2010s, the Salafi youth sect increasingly quarrelled with local communities in northern Mozambique. For instance, in 2010, local residents

³² Jingu (2018: 97) links the recent murders to illegal poaching and logging activities. Moreover, according to the UN (2012: 186-193), there exists a Tanga-based drug-trafficking network that stretches from Somalia to Mozambique and cooperates with Al-Shabaab-related groups. Yet, as of now, it is impossible to establish whether this network has been involved in the escalations of violence in Rufiji/Kibiti and northern Mozambique (see also Haysom 2018). There is also the widespread, so far unsubstantiated claim that following Aboud Rogo's death, several of his followers settled in Kibiti.



destroyed a mosque frequented by “Al-Shabaab” members in Cabo Delgado’s Balama district, prompting several of them to flee to Mucojo in the district of Macomia (Morier-Genoud 2019). Similarly, in the small town of Mocimboa da Praia, the radicals were forced to erect new prayer sites after being expelled from local mosques (Habibe et al. 2019: 12-13). In Mucojo, they caused significant turmoil when they tried to forcefully ban the sale of alcohol in November 2015. After the police intervened and tried to arrest one of the group’s leaders, an angry crowd blocked its passage. In the ensuing confrontation, one officer was fatally wounded (Domingo 2015). Two years later, the security forces eventually launched more concerted efforts against the militants following persistent Muslim calls to do so. In Macomia and Quissanga, they detained several “Al-Shabaab” leaders accused of encouraging the local population to defy the state and become acquainted with the use of knives and other simple weapons (Pinto 2017). Tensions between the government and the Islamists also increased in Mocimboa da Praia. Here, Salafi youth had started to prohibit members of local communities from using public schools and medical services. In early 2017, three alleged militants were arrested for supposedly inciting unrest relating to a conflict over the control of a local mosque (AIM 2017).

According to Habibe et al. (2019: 34-35) the overall societal rejection of “Al-Shabaab’s” puritanical agenda triggered a process of militarisation which eventually culminated in a full-fledged insurgency troubling Cabo Delgado Province since 5 October 2017. That day, a group of 30 men attacked three police stations in Mocimboa da Praia (AIM 2017). In the following months, the violence expanded throughout the province, increasingly targeting civilians. Between 2018 and mid-2019, the insurgents became involved in more than 70 violent events including the looting and burning down of entire villages as well as clashes with the Mozambican military. Such incidents have so far resulted in more than 200 fatalities (Matfess 2019, 2018; Pinaud 2018).

In June 2019, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack on Metubi village (VOA 2019). Yet, rather than indicating real influence on the insurgency, this declaration, which has been refuted by the Mozambican police, most probably only represents an attempt to harness the conflict for propaganda purposes. By contrast, the involvement of Tanzanian Jihadists is obvious. In October 2018, 50 suspected Tanzanian militants were put on trial in Pemba, the provincial capital of Cabo Delgado, together with 139 Mozambican citizens (Reuters 2018).³³ In May 2019, the Mozambican security forces announced that a Tanzanian named Amisse Bacar was recruiting local youth for the insurgency (Club of Mozambique 2019). According to Habibe et al. (2019: 35), Tanzanian clerics are directly involved in “Al-Shabaab’s” leadership. They also stress the important role that recordings of Aboud Rogo’s lectures play in Jihadist recruitment and indoctrination in northern Mozambique. This underlines the existence of an entrenched Swahili-speaking transnational network whose genesis is yet to be comprehensively explored.

³³ In April 2019, 113 of the defendants were eventually acquitted due to a lack of evidence against them (AIM 2019).



4. Conclusion: Similarities and Differences in the Trajectories of Contentious Muslim Politics

This report has shown that the genesis and expansion of militant Islamist networks in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique is causally connected to the failure of largely non-Muslim post-colonial ruling elites to effectively regulate the Islamic sphere through national Muslim councils. Specifically, the analysis has demonstrated how the disintegration of Muslim contestation movements in the 1980s and 1990s created a political environment conducive to collective radicalisation. Yet, while the overarching trajectories of contentious Muslim politics that have unfolded in East Africa's religiously heterogeneous societies share crucial similarities, the exact timing and escalatory dynamics of Jihadist violence and radicalisation have depended on specific domestic context conditions.

To begin with, different social movement configurations appear to have played an important role. For instance, the comparatively rapid expansion of militant Islamist activity that occurred in Uganda in the early 1990s could be linked to the fact that in contrast to Kenya and Tanzania, the country's Muslim contestation movement did initially not include a substantial "professionalist" counterbalance to the confrontational leanings prevalent among parts of the Salafi clerical milieu. Tensions between the state and the Tablighis quickly culminated in a major triggering event that resulted in the breakaway and growth of a nascent Jihadist faction. The scarce literature on the Tablighis suggests that it was only after this split of the movement that Uganda's Muslim intelligentsia eventually became more influential in the urban Islamic civil society.

The Ugandan case also indicates that the evolution of Jihadist security threats has been crucially shaped by varying levels of state capacity. In the 1990s, the then still relatively weak rural presence of the Museveni government enabled the country's urban Salafi militants to relocate to the countryside and become part of a resilient rebel movement. In a similar vein, the Mozambican ruling elite's historical neglect of state-building in the peripheral Cabo Delgado province seems to have allowed for the development of a protracted insurgency (see Haysom 2018). By contrast, the comparatively strong operational capacities of the Tanzanian and – with the exception of the country's neglected north east (see ICG 2019) – Kenyan security apparatuses appear to have worked against the entrenchment of rural Islamist violence. At the same time, the two neighbouring countries differ with respect to the pace and scale of collective Jihadist radicalisation. In Kenya, the Moi government's concerted efforts to crush the IPK fostered the swift rise of popular militant clerics who subsequently managed to expand their appeal with the help of Al-Shabaab. In Tanzania, radicalisation followed a more gradual path. While relations between the CCM government and the country's Muslim contestation movement rapidly grew hostile, repression remained limited. Moreover, for geographical reasons, the destabilising effect of the transnationalisation of Somali Jihadism did not become

as strong as in Kenya. Against this background, militancy only gained traction in the early 2010s.

These cursory explanatory considerations represent a possible point of departure for future research on collective Jihadist radicalisation and violence in East Africa. They suggest that different degrees of state capacity, repression and exposure to external Islamist influence as well as divergent factional constellations within Muslim contestation movements are among the factors accounting for differences in the forms and dynamics of violent Islamist activity across the four countries studied in this report. Ultimately, the identification of precise causal relationships and mechanisms requires in-depth comparative case studies also investigating developments in religiously heterogeneous societies outside the region.



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6. List of abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AMYC	Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre
Bakwata	Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania (Supreme Council of Muslims Tanzania)
Baraza Kuu	Baraza Kuu la Jumuiya na Taasisi za Kiislamu Tanzania (Supreme Council of Islamic Organisations and Institutions of Tanzania)
CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution)
CIPK	Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya
Cislamo	Conselho Islâmico de Moçambique (Islamic Council of Mozambique)
CUF	Civic United Front
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAMWS	East African Muslim Welfare Society
FORD-K	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IPK	Islamic Party of Kenya
JASUTA	Jamaat wa Ansar al-Sunna Tanzania (The Congregation of the Ansar al-Sunna in Tanzania)
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
MSAUD	Muslim Student Association at the University of Dar es Salaam
NAAM	National Association for the Advancement of Muslims
NUKEM	National Union of Kenya Muslims
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
Shura	Shura ya Maimamu (Council of Imams/Mosque Leaders)
SUPKEM	Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims
UMA	United Muslims of Africa
UMLA	Uganda Muslim Liberation Army



UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council
URN	Uganda Radio Network
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
Warsha	Warsha ya Waandishi wa Kiislam (Workshop of Muslim Writers)

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