Challenges in understanding terrorism in Africa: A human security perspective

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Introduction

Terrorism is not a new threat or concept for communities and governments in Africa. However, what is worrying is that Africans often use Western models to categorise terrorism, the tactics used and its impact. The result has been the development of double standards which have a negative impact on the understanding of terrorism in Africa. In addition, African countries (as did other countries throughout the world) re-enforced a state-centric approach in understanding as well as preventing and combating terrorism after the events of 9/11. Questions such as should terrorism be described as an act of war or a criminal act not only determine if the military or the police should be the driving

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force; it also influences the priority to address the underlying causes, the role of ordinary citizens and the role of civil society.

Probably one of the most challenging aspects in encouraging a human security perspective in Africa is to emphasise the need for a focus on the underlying factors that are driving individuals to resort to terrorism as a tactic. Associated with this challenge is the need to develop and implement a counterterrorism strategy conducive to a human security perspective. At the heart of this debate is the concept of 'state' and the health of political systems in Africa – especially in view of the fact that in the developing world that includes Africa, domestic terrorism presents a more immediate threat to security than does the transnational terrorism which is experienced in the developed world.

Notwithstanding these and other challenges, African countries are gradually beginning to realise that the threat of and vulnerability to terrorism differ from one continent to another, one sub-region to another and one country to another. This implies that sub-regions and countries will react differently, based on their unique perception of the threat. It furthermore implies that the African interpretation of the reason, threat and impact of terrorism will differ from that of other parts of the world. On the other hand, Africa cannot isolate itself from developments relating to the threat of terrorism in other parts of the world because factors such as globalisation, the Internet and the impact of United States’ foreign policy in the Middle East directly influence perception formation and radicalisation that extend beyond national, or even continental, borders.

In this paper, the following aspects are dealt with briefly:

- What is understood by terrorism, security and human security

- The relationship between human security and terrorism. The focus is on domestic circumstances, for although international factors do impact on vulnerability, domestic circumstances have a greater impact on human security

This paper is in essence a summary of broader research.

**Concepts**

**Terrorism**

Because neither the international community (United Nations) nor scholars can decide on a single definition of terrorism, this discussion will be structured in terms of the mutual agreement or understanding that targeting civilians or non-combatants cannot
be accepted. Therefore, terrorism in a nutshell refers to ‘violent acts against a civilian population by state and non-state actors’.

This is in line with the definition by Boas Ganor (2008:18) that ‘terrorism] is a violent struggle in which violence is deliberately used against civilians in order to achieve a political goal’. Unlike other definitions, this one applies to governments and their agencies as well as non-governmental groups and individuals. It further encompasses a number of actions of insurgents, para-militaries and other groups who resorted to terrorism as a tactic to achieve their (mostly political) goals. In political conflicts or periods of instability in a country, both sides may at times resort to terror tactics to coerce the population into supporting their causes or to equalise the playing field. At the Convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) defined an act of terrorism as ‘any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage’.

In general an act of terrorism includes the following elements:

- **Intimidation** – put fear into, force, coerce or induce a government, body, institution, the general public or segment of the population to perform or abstain from performing any act / adapt or abandon a particular point of view / act according to or against certain principles

- **Disruption** – of any public service / the delivery of an essential service / creation of a public emergency

- **Creation of general insurrection in a state** – to cause feelings of insecurity among the public (or a segment) / to induce, cause or spread feelings of terror, fear or panic

Although disruption will definitely limit the possibility of legitimate political dissent, the other two elements include a number of activities that should be classified as acts of terrorism. Precisely because not all acts of violence can be classified as terrorism, it reinforces the need to focus attention on what the terrorism as a concept means in the context of Africa.

Above it was noted that civil war and actions by governments against their own citizens may be regarded as forms of terrorism. The argument for this inclusion is that when a group resorts to violence against a government or segment of society it is regarded as terrorism, but when a government or security forces use the same (and even worse) methods, this is done in the name of security – or rather regime security. In terms of
the above elements, however, state terrorism should not be disregarded in the broader debate on terrorism, although this is often the case. Therefore actions by the state and agents of the state that fulfil the above criteria must be regarded as acts of terrorism. According to Kushner (2003:345) state terrorism has one goal in mind: ‘Strengthening of government control by the complete intimidation of a population.’ In this view the actions of a number of governments on the continent throughout history can only be described as suspect.

Although governments will seldom agree that their actions should be included in a definition on terrorism it is essential that both to contextualise the concept and to enhance an understanding of the concept on the African continent, state actions be included. This is also done in an attempt to eradicate existing double standards. As yet the categorisation of state terrorism as acts of terrorism remains an open question, but it is a notion that is starting to attract the attention of policy makers.

A former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, recently stimulated debate on the matter with his definition of terrorism: ‘An action is terrorism if it is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a Government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act’ (Annan 2005:2). The deliberate use of weapons to kill innocent people must be condemned and eradicated, for it is as unworthy and inhuman as it is repulsive, like terrorism perpetrated in the past by oppressing states. But the right to resist cannot include the right to deliberately kill or maim civilians (Annan 2005). One might therefore argue that the definition of terrorism should be broadened to include aspects beyond those that were adequate to describe the concept in the 1960s and 1970s as threats to state security.

Security and human security

As with terrorism, it is easier to explain what the concept of human security entails than it is to provide one definition which is accepted by everyone. In essence human security can be described as a shift in focus from a state-centric framework based on a state’s ability to protect itself, to a focus on the security of ordinary people. Another view is that state or traditional security entails ‘hard’ security involving state security structures as the primary agencies for its delivery, while human security entails ‘soft’ security that extends beyond state structures that also involve civil society and other non-state actors in delivery. Finally, transnational security is generally a state-only matter which seldom involves non-state actors, as it is fairly easy to exclude the public from defending the state against foreign enemies, but attainment of human security by preventing and combating terrorism (often from within the country) without including non-state actors and the broader public can only be described as impossible. In summary it could be said that while traditional security is predominately concerned with protecting the state against
foreign and domestic enemies, human security focuses on the protection and well-being of ordinary people.

The difference between traditional (state) and human security can be summarised as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional security</th>
<th>Human security</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hard security</td>
<td>Soft security</td>
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<tr>
<td>State centric</td>
<td>Focus on individuals and communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of the state against foreign enemies</td>
<td>Protection of individuals against domestic challenges – often the state itself</td>
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<tr>
<td>The state is the primary role player</td>
<td>Non-state actors, such as civil society and the media, play major roles</td>
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The Human Development Report of the UN (1994) identified seven security areas:

1. Economic security or the ability of people to provide for themselves through securing a basic income. Population growth, unemployment and illiteracy to name but a few factors, can prevent people from having equal opportunities. In addition to contributing to community tension, these factors can play an important role in the radicalisation process, leading disenfranchised groups to resort to terrorism as a tactic.

2. Food security, which implies that all people have access to sufficient food.

3. Health security or the protection against disease which ultimately includes access to healthcare, clean water and protection against susceptibility to disease stemming from malnutrition.

4. Environmental security or the relationship between nature and human beings. This includes the threat of global warming and the prediction that, together with a lack of food security, a lack of environmental security will in the future result in conflicts based on changes in the environment.

5. Personal security or protection from crime and interpersonal violence.

6. Community security or the relationship between people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

7. Political security or the relationship between the state and its populace.
Four of above-mentioned factors have a direct or indirect relationship with the underlying causes or root causes of terrorism, namely political, community, personal and economic security. These factors will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Ultimately the question is why do we need to focus on a human security perspective when dealing with terrorism? In brief, the following three reasons provide insight into the need for an emphasis on human security in understanding and dealing with terrorism:

- Analysts need to understand why people resort to terrorism as a tactic, especially considering that a number of the factors which influence radicalisation does not take place overnight, in order to provide an accurate evaluation of terrorism and its causes.

- At the heart of this analysis is the realisation that domestic grievances play a crucial role in the radicalisation process. Although the war in Iraq, US foreign policy in the Middle East or the Palestinian question might make people susceptible to radical interpretations and ideals, people living in favourable domestic circumstances on whom these realities do not have a direct impact, might think twice before becoming directly involved.

- Vulnerability assessments, with the focus on early warning signals, are an essential element in the development of a proactive approach for the prevention and combating of terrorism.

**Underlying causes of terrorism in Africa**

Despite the focus of world attention on transnational acts of terrorism with their dramatic and devastating consequences, the underlying causes can always be traced back to domestic grievances or circumstances of individuals. Recognising that it is an individual who is committing an act of terrorism, is therefore essential to an understanding of this reality. Further realising that individuals are moved to action by their own reality, a domestic one, leads to an appreciation of the essential role of the root causes of terrorism. In the final analysis, even the grievances of Osama bin Laden and his ‘coalition’ (al-Qaeda) started with domestic grievances. So, too, the perception that Muslim leaders do not govern in accordance with the principles of Islam (which originated with organisations such as al-Ikwan al-Muslimin or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928), is directly related to the political realities in these countries. Unfortunately, the strategy against transnational terrorism focuses extensively on the manifestation of terrorism in its tactical form, and does not address the underlying domestic causes.
The only way to identify factors that contribute to a country’s vulnerability is to study conditions in countries in Africa that have been subject to terrorism. In other words, to explain acts of terrorism the causes that contributed to its manifestation need to be uncovered.

It is not denied that terrorism is caused by both internal and external factors. External factors that increase vulnerability to terrorism include the foreign policies of countries, in particular the US, as well as globalisation, especially in telecommunications, which have enabled like-minded individuals to unite and conspire against common enemies. Internal factors include domestic conditions that may lead to terrorist activities, for example economic deprivation, political oppression, government repression, and ethnic and religious persecution. However, the point is that the weight of the focus is on external factors, while internal factors are ignored or left out of the equation. The focus of this paper is on these often neglected domestic conditions.

In this paper, a paradigm shift is suggested in which terrorism is studied as a symptom and not merely a criminal act or an act of war. To use a metaphor, a fever is regarded as a symptom of an illness and is not treated in isolation. If it were, the body would find another way to manifest the illness. In addition, the sooner the illness can be diagnosed, the sooner it can be treated and the greater the possibility of recovery. Terrorism should be studied as a manifestation that ‘something’ in society, domestic or international, is ‘not in order’. Equally important, when one considers the extensive effect of an act of terrorism, one should approach it from the assumption that the illness had presented previously under a different manifestation, but had been misdiagnosed. Owing to a wrong or late diagnosis, the underlying cause was not identified and addressed. If terrorism is treated merely based on its symptoms with the primary focus on arresting and prosecuting the perpetrators and without addressing the underlying cause, it will remain a threat to human security.

Taking the metaphor further, the point of departure should be that prevention is better than cure, and that a vulnerability assessment approach should be adopted. In the medical profession, the latest approach is to conduct genetic analyses to determine the likelihood of an illness, in the hope that it may be prevented or detected earlier. Similarly, governments and the international community need to be more ‘in harmony’ with their citizens. In other words, to enhance their ability to implement a successful and effective strategy to prevent and combat terrorism (domestic and transnational), governments should consider a human security approach. They should not involve only traditional security agencies in addressing the immediate threat and/or impact of terrorism.

With regard to terrorism and human security, the following factors need to be attended to, to understand terrorism in Africa.
Political conditions

Political conditions to which particular attention must be given are, first, the ‘health’ of the state and political system and, second, the response and strategies to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa.

With regard to the ‘health’ of the state or the nature and health of the political system of states in Africa, a number of questions need to be asked: Does the relevant state or the ruling elite only govern for its own interests? Does the state protect its citizens and create a safe environment for its populace to prosper? Can countries in Africa really be considered to be democratic?

A state can broadly be categorised as ‘stable’ when there is a high degree of political continuity in a political system, which allows free political participation and dissent (within legal boundaries). In terms of this definition only a limited number of states on the African continent can be categorised as stable. The ‘state’, in the African context, differs dramatically from Western principles. Colonialism and its aftermath are often blamed for this development, since individuals were placed in power that had only their own interests at heart, so that political power became synonymous with a monopoly over natural resources in particular. Gaining and keeping political power became the ultimate goal, often at any cost, without recognising the responsibilities implicit in such a powerful position. As a result, corruption and nepotism became the order of the day.

To break this cycle African countries must govern democratically. However, although elections are being held regularly, adherence to democratic principles extends well beyond holding regular elections. The classic definition of democracy as ‘government of the people’ is associated with fundamental political equality and participation of individuals in the political process, and guaranteed individual freedom. From definitions it is clear that democracy is based on two principles, namely majority rule and rights of the citizens. Liberal democracies are furthermore characterised by rule of law, transparency and accountability of government, a relationship of trust between government and its population, and political participation, including the freedom to participate in legitimate political dissent (Crelinsten 1998:389). However, with regard to the latter the question is, when does legitimate dissent becomes illegitimate dissent?

Unfortunately many of these democratic principles have been and are still disregarded in some African states.

Draconian or closed political systems fail to establish institutions to mediate between state and society. Restrictions on basic human rights, including freedom of expression, speech and association, contribute to frustrations and deprive people of the opportunity to change their governments democratically. Repressive political regimes that totally
disregard their responsibilities cannot be expected to represent the interests of at least the majority. None of the organisations implicated in acts of terrorism in the past recognised their governments as legitimate.

In addition to the direct threat of the state against its populace, a number of African countries are also guilty of exercising control over information, particularly the media, in the name of security. Although unlimited access to information by the public is unrealistic, closing down public media outlets and targeting of journalists as witnessed in for example Somalia, Egypt and Zimbabwe, pose a direct threat to human security. Control over the media serves government interests by not allowing the true picture, especially the abuse of state power and human rights, to become known.

The relationship between the state, its security forces and the public is of great importance. Africa still has a great deal to learn about the relationship between those in power and the populace, particularly in countries where security forces are being used to ensure regime security. Because of the damage to the relationship between security forces and ordinary citizens, security forces (along with the governments they keep in power) are confronted with a legitimacy crisis which is at times used and manipulated by individuals and groups to justify their use of violence.

Because of these realities and challenges to the development of a constructive political culture in Africa, communities in Africa have come to believe that the only way to bring about change is to take matters into their own hands.

In the final analysis political marginalisation is one of the root causes of domestic terrorism in Africa. As a result of crises of legitimacy, governments often use security forces to stay in power, and thus misuse traditional security to ensure regime security. Weak, failed and collapsed states and their relationship with terrorism are a source of heated academic debate, with one of the possible links between the perception of repression and terrorism being that it brings into question to whom loyalty is owed and with whom the repressed should identify. Lack of support from local communities for grievances of some of their members can equally be ascribed to the relationship between corruption and population involvement in government at all levels. It is in other words an extension of the negative relationship between the state and its security forces and the public at the higher levels.

The second aspect of political security is the state’s response and strategies in preventing and combating terrorism. The first issue is that a number of states throughout the world, including Egypt and Zimbabwe in Africa, abused power in the name of preventing and combating terrorism often by targeting opposition groups or limiting political development. The second issue is that it is generally recognised that counter-terrorism measures could contribute to instability, and to terrorism. The correct counter-terrorism
strategy is of critical importance and should be carefully developed so as to prevent radicalisation, because strategies based on abuse of power, racial profiling and mass arrests could serve as push factors for terrorists.

It also reflects weaknesses, in that a campaign of mass arrests on the part of security forces, the aim generally being to collect information, reflects weaknesses in intelligence gathering strategies. Good human intelligence gathering is based on the ability of agents to infiltrate a cell or group or alternatively to recruit cell or organisation members to obtain information. Mass arrests as a means of information gathering thus serves to indicate failure by the intelligence community to succeed by means of less crude tactics.

Individuals who are jailed for lesser offences, sometimes not even associated with terrorism, could become radicalised in prisons. The background of individuals involved in suicide bombings in Morocco in March and April 2007 support this assessment. Abdelfattah Raydi, the suicide bomber on 11 March, had been jailed for five years for his association with the attackers, along with an estimated 3 000 people who had been arrested in Morocco since the 2003 attacks. This development is nothing new. Mass arrests to counter growing extremism in for example Algeria and Egypt during the late 1980s and early 1990s contributed to radicalisation, particularly amongst individuals who had played lesser roles in the terrorist movements. It is to be expected that such persons are likely to develop feelings of animosity towards their captors – driving those not formerly committed to the cause, to extremism and terrorism. Some countries have realised that such individuals might still consider, or come to consider, the use of violence as a viable strategy and have instituted religious education as a reform strategy. In this Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia are following the example of Egypt (in their agreement with al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya) to re-educate former terrorists in religion.

Forcing the public to provide the state with information (under normal circumstances considered to be a civic duty), is symptomatic of a poor relationship between the state and its security forces on the one hand, and the populace on the other. Because of the long history of a negative relationship between members of the security forces and the public, members of security forces are feared and regarded with suspicion. Obviously, a state needs information from its people to counter terrorism, and a lack in partnership will hinder cooperation. The only viable strategy is to build partnerships based on trust, by communicating through actions as well as words. For example, if countries with a Muslim minority use counterterrorism initiatives, such as counterterrorism legislation, exclusively or mainly against Muslim communities, it could lead to growing suspicion and isolation. It is therefore especially important to develop initiatives to build partnerships of trust by explaining that the strategies are not directed against all Muslims but only those who abuse Islam by using their personal interpretation to justify the use of violence in the name of religion.
Socio-economic conditions

Socio-economic conditions introduce the debate of whether there is a link between poverty and terrorism. Although this is an extremely sensitive matter, there are indications that when a number of factors such as poverty, unemployment and the large gap between the elite and majority exist, ordinary people may feel that they have nothing to lose. If found in combination with political factors, it could lead to alienation and radicalisation. However, it would seem as if poverty alone is not a sufficient reason to explain why individuals resort to terrorism.

In Morocco, for example, the backgrounds of individuals involved in the suicide attacks pointed to a combination of unemployment, poverty and social tensions, with the disillusionment and poverty in turn fuelling feelings of bitterness. Particularly persons involved in petty crime or drugs became the targets of Islamist extremist elements who used these conditions to their advantage to recruit foot soldiers who needed to redeem themselves and had nothing to lose. According to estimates, more than 35 per cent of Morocco’s 30 million people are poor and more than 40 per cent are illiterate, while the wealth gap reflects a grim social picture in which 10 per cent of the population owns 85 per cent of the wealth (Ghanmi 2007). Both the suicide bombers in the 2003 Casablanca attacks, and those involved in the March and April 2007 attacks, grew up in slums such as Sidi Moumen and Douar Sekouila. After the 2003 bombings the Moroccan government initiated a campaign to clear the slums and construct affordable housing, sport stadiums and community centres. However, the execution of this strategy is slow and according to individuals interviewed the public still need to pay for their housing. Although a step in the right direction, people forced to stay in the slums seldom can afford better housing, placing a question mark on the initial aim of the initiative.

Apart from poverty and poor socio-economic conditions, a lack in education which limits prospects for the future as well as limited access to information create fertile grounds for recruiting the disenchanted to the terrorist cause. University graduates who struggle to find jobs are equally vulnerable, which highlights the importance of youth employment programmes.

Communal security

Communal security relates to the fact that marginalisation is another leading contributing factor to terrorism. Religious, ethnic and cultural marginalisation has contributed to numerous conflicts in Africa. Feelings of marginalisation tend to exist in situations where a group has a specific geographic location but no or little government representation. This is often followed by actual isolation, again providing fertile conditions for radicalisation.

Currently the religious divide in Africa is being manipulated to drive people to extremism and in a number of cases to acts of terrorism. Originally religion provided a sense of
identity and feelings of community and belonging, thereby bridging national, racial and language differences. This would lead one to expect that divisions based on religion would be minimised. However, jihadists would benefit from a world divided between Christianity and Islam with the war against terrorism being synonymous with a war against Islam. To achieve such a situation and to minimise the voice of moderates, mass media and the Internet are being used within the framework of fourth generation warfare. Therefore African nationals and states find themselves in the midst of a war between extremists and moderates for the heart and spirit of Islam, in addition to a war against terrorism.

Religion has a particular impact on the threat of transnational terrorism, for it enables disenchanted persons to recruit members across borders to their extreme views and actions.

Although governance has a direct impact on domestic terrorism, it also influences transnational terrorism indirectly. A number of countries in Africa have used the global war on terror as an excuse to delay reforms and commit extensive human rights abuses. Such situations exacerbate the existing divisions between those in power and the disenfranchised, which gives extremist movements an entry into such a country. Muslim countries are especially vulnerable since domestic legitimacy conflicts can be incorporated into a jihadi worldview. When freedom of expression and other civil liberties are protected, it provides non-violent ways to express political and/or social frustrations.

If this theory is correct, terrorist attacks are likely to increase under a repressive regime. Unfortunately, civil liberty is often the first casualty in the fight against terrorism and it is ironic that a lack of civil liberties in turn seems to be a major cause of terrorism around the world. In Africa, Algeria and Egypt serve as good examples of the exportation of domestic terrorism into a transnational network.

**Human security perspective**

A human security approach focuses on vulnerability of the general population and aims to address the root causes so as to prevent radicalisation, while a state-centric approach is reactionary in nature. The most effective counter-terrorism strategy is one that maintains a balance between a human security (soft) and a state-centric (hard) approach. In such a strategy both elements are important, with either taking precedence or taking over the role of the other. Unfortunately till now a reactive or hard approach has been favoured, which attempts to use agents and even military forces to deal with the threat of terrorism. The role of the military in an essentially criminal justice jurisdiction has been neither effective nor acceptable, however. One might even argue that their use has acted as a push factor for terrorism, rather than preventing radicalisation. This is not to imply that the military should be excluded completely, but rather that the counterterrorist measures should be in keeping with a specific threat or situation. Using the military
to go after a handful of previously identified suspects, or using conventional warfare tactics against an enemy that uses tactics associated with asymmetric warfare, can only be counter-productive. On the African continent, Somalia is an excellent example which illustrates the negative impact of such an approach. Indiscriminate shooting of civilians while explaining that their presence is for the greater good of the country will not go down well or win the hearts and minds of the people.

Use of the military to deal with a civilian population has proven to be challenging if not problematic more than once. If the assistance of a military is requested, the better option is to use Special Forces, who apply counter-insurgency tactics. Reliance on conventional forces and tactics in an unconventional 'conflict' will only lead to massive casualties and low morale and neither is the strategic objective of effectively dealing with the immediate threat without creating sympathy for the ‘terrorists’ likely to be achieved. Sympathy can easily be converted to an environment favourable to the ‘enemy’, in the form of the provision of safe havens, actual support (money, weaponry and knowledge) and direct involvement. Revenge, too, for the use of force or disrespect for human rights and due process can be used to recruit new followers. This reinforces that the use of force should be commensurate with its suitability as a tactic within a broader strategy.

The UN global counterterrorism strategy (UN 2006) can be regarded as a human security sensitive approach for preventing and combating terrorism. With particular reference to ‘measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism’ which include ‘lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalisation and lack of good governance’, the UN and its members committed themselves to the following:

- With reference to community security:
  - ‘... initiatives and programmes to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilisations, cultures and peoples and religions, and to promote mutual respect for and prevent the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures’ (p 4)
  - ‘To promote a culture of peace, justice and human development, ethnic, national and religious tolerance and respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs or cultures by establishing and encouraging, as appropriate, education and public awareness programmes involving all sectors of society’ (p 4)

- With reference to economic security:
  - ‘Realisation of development goals and objectives’ (p 4)
  - ‘[addressing] youth unemployment could reduce marginalisation’ (p 4)

- With reference to political security: ‘Promotion and protection of human rights for all and the rule of law is essential to all components of the Strategy’ (p 9)
Although the adoption of the resolution is definitely a step in the right direction, one does hope that states will not leave it at principles only, but also implement it. If this could be realised, with the focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism, states and the international community might experience a positive impact on the medium- to long-term initiatives in preventing and combating terrorism. However, in the interim countries need to adopt a holistic approach, in which the role played by state security forces should be intelligently implemented.

Conclusion

Once an understanding of vulnerability and the root causes of terrorism has been gained, a proactive approach can be developed by addressing the underlying causes of terrorism. Even if the emphasis is on the interrelationship between state and human security, the state is still the primary actor in responding to an act of terrorism, while non-state actors such as civil society and ordinary people should act in partnership with the state to identify and monitor developments that could prevent acts of terrorism.

Because it could be so effective, a human security approach would entail a pro-active approach to the understanding of terrorism. Knowledge, too, is an essential element of an early warning system and understanding the driving factors behind terrorism would make it possible to develop and implement a preventive and inclusive strategy against terrorism. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism should be understood to include both aspects.

References


