

Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis (CPRA) –Pretoria



CPRA Daily Briefings

Week 34

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The **CPRA Daily Briefings** are held weekday mornings in the CPRA Pretoria's Situation Room and the Briefing Notes are the minutes of this meeting during which each regional expert of the Programme reports on the latest human security developments in his/her region, followed by general discussions around the table. An intern then compiles a summary of the meeting, which is reviewed by the respective researchers, and a senior researcher edits the report and provides quality control before returning it to the intern to prepare it for dispatch to the mailing list to which you have subscribed.

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**Today's Briefings
Compilation**
Ms Tarryn Warries

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Summary of Briefings

East and Horn of Africa

Kenya: killing of radical Muslim cleric sparks unrest in Mombasa

The Kenyan port city of Mombasa was rocked by two days of spontaneous violence last week following the killing of Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohammed. Sheikh Rogo was intercepted and fatally shot while driving his sick wife to hospital. The incident, which took place on 27 August 2012, occurred in the presence of the Sheikh's elderly father, wife, five-year-old daughter and an unnamed member of his family. According to his wife, while heading to the hospital the Sheikh had noticed a car following them but did not anticipate that he could be killed in the company of so many witnesses. Nevertheless, the van in, which they were travelling, was intercepted by the car on the Mombasa-Malindi highway and Sheikh Rogo was shot multiple times. He died instantly. Eyewitness reports corroborated by the police indicate that police officers, who appeared at the scene from a nearby Bamburi police station, were driven away by angry youths on the grounds that they (the police) could not be of any help. The crowd accused them of masterminding his killing. However, police sources indicate that the officers who were first on the scene were able to collect used ammunition cartridges, which have been useful in the investigation.

His killing subsequently triggered spontaneous violence over a period of two days in suburbs where the cleric had a massive following, including Majengo, Sabasaba, Kinglorani, Mwende Tayari and Makupa. The incidents of violence led to the death of three prison warders and the torching of two churches. Additionally, more than ten warders and about four police officers were reportedly injured in two separate grenade attacks targeting members of the security forces.

Sheikh Rogo had been placed on the United States (US) and the United Nations (UN) sanctions lists in July this year following his alleged links with terror networks in the Horn of Africa, including Al-Shabaab, and had been under a travel ban and asset freeze. He was accused of financing and recruiting non-Somalis to support Al-Shabaab and to fight in its ranks in Somalia. He was also believed to have contributed to the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned tourist hotel near Mombasa, which killed 12 people. However, he was acquitted of the murder charges in 2005. At the time of his death, he had a case pending in a Kenyan court for the unauthorised possession of firearms.

It is still not known who is responsible for the shooting. Supporters of the Sheikh accuse the government and security forces of his killing. Some Muslim human rights organisations have stated that the murder falls into a pattern of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances of suspected terrorists allegedly orchestrated by Kenyan forces. They refer to the abduction and subsequent killing of preacher Samir Hashim Khan and the disappearance of four other suspected Al-Shabaab supporters. The government and security agencies have denied any involvement in the brutal killing of the Sheikh and instead claim that the cartridges retrieved from the crime scene have no link to weapons used in the operations of the police or the government. Neither the timing nor sensitivities surrounding his radical nature point to government involvement, owing to the obvious consequences. Prime Minister Raila Odinga has blamed enemies of the country for the incident and called on the nation to come together to stop religious violence and not to allow outside forces to incite Kenyans to start a religious war.

Kenyan forces were swift in controlling the situation and since Wednesday Mombasa has been peaceful. There were fears that there would be increased violence during Friday prayers, but these proved to be unfounded. Although there has been no conclusive result yet from the on-

going police investigation, the killing and the nature of the resultant violence are early warning signs that all is not well in the run-up to the next elections, as important hotspots can become the centre stage of violence. Also, the accusations against non-Mombasa settlers and the emergence of land-grabbing issues as part of the explanatory rhetoric by protesters are another important warning to the government to address existing grievances. Prime Minister Odinga's concern that outside forces are exploiting discontent within the country may be of importance, as Al-Shabaab has condemned the killing of Sheikh Rogo and said Muslim Kenyans should boycott next year's presidential elections. Despite the legitimate concerns of the protestors, there is a growing trend of radicalising issues and clouding the ensuing debate in religious rhetoric.

The End