Inside this Issue:

News Briefs from Around the Continent
The Mogadishu Insurgency
The Effects of the Somali Crisis on Kenya Muslims

News Briefs from around the Continent

Clashes between Taliban Nigeria and the Nigerian Army in Kano
On April 17, unidentified gunmen from the Taliban Nigeria attacked the Panshekara police station in Kumbotso local government area killing the Divisional Police Officer in charge of the station, his wife and 11 other policemen and burning the station down. In reaction, at least 25 Talibans were killed and nine other arrested by soldiers on the same day at Panshekara, a suburb of Kano, during an operation to dislodge them from the area. This same group used to attack police stations in Yobe and Borno in 2004 and 2005 until the Nigerian army attacked them and supposedly destroyed them.

Nigerian residents in Kano urge the closing down of television viewing centers
Residents of Kano have urged the Kano state government to close down all television viewing centers within the Kano metropolis. They expressed dismay that the majority of these television viewing centers show pornographic movies, which, are against Islamic
injunctions. Apart from the problem of immorality, these television viewing centers contribute to criminal and violent tendencies of youths, who used to steal when they lack money to pay for the gate fee to enter those television centers.

**Sectarian Clash at Ejura, Ghana**
On April 8, members of the Salafi Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and the Tijaniyyah Sufi order clashed at Ejura, in the Ashanti region, over doctrinal differences. The clash left ten members of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah with various degrees of injury, while four were in critical conditions. The Tijaniyyah accused Ahl al-Sunnah of preaching against them. Therefore, they organized themselves and attacked the Ahl al-Sunnah members, who fought back. The leadership of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah has called on the government to institute full-scale investigations into the circumstances that led to the clashes. The two groups have not been on good terms due to doctrinal differences.

This clash is only one of a number of bloody confrontations that have been most recently between missionary minded Muslim groups, made up of graduates from Arab universities, and the majority traditional Ghanaian Muslim groups. The most notorious of these groups is known locally as Ahl al-Sunnah, a Saudi trained Wahhabi inspired group. Its members attack and publicly condemn traditional Muslim practices as un-Islamic.

**Rebel raid on a Chinese-run oil field in Ethiopia**
On April 24, 2007, Ethiopian rebels from the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), who have fought alongside Islamic militants in Somalia, raided a Chinese-run oil field, killing 74 people and destroying the exploration facility in the border region between Ethiopia and Somalia. It was the first such attack ever on a foreign company in Ethiopia. According to Chinese officials, nine Chinese oil workers and 65 Ethiopians died and seven Chinese were taken away by the rebels.

The raid by more than 200 gunmen lasted nearly an hour and followed a warning issued last year by the rebel ONLF against any investment in eastern Ethiopia's Ogaden area that could benefit the West. In August 2006, the ONLF issued an electronic threat against a Malaysian oil company that was contemplating drilling in Ethiopia. The ONLF was formed by the Somali minority in Ethiopia in 1984. Since the beginning of the 1990s, its members have fought for the secession of the Ogaden region from Ethiopia, though in recent years it mounted only occasional hit-and-run attacks on government troops. However, since the warfare in Somalia broke out last December, there is always the threat of its spillage into Somali-inhabited regions of Ethiopia, exactly what happened now.

It should be noted that attacking oil fields and foreign investments in the Arab world is a preferred target by Jihadi groups inspired by Al-Qaeda.

**Uweys appeals to Saudi King to intervene in the Somali Crisis**
On April 23, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Uweys, the former leader of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), appealed to King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia, to interfere and stop the bloodshed in Somalia in his capacity as chairman of the Arab Summit's current session and as Saudi Arabia has relations with Ethiopia. He also appealed to him to prevent the Ethiopian forces from committing "more barbaric massacres" against the civilians of Mogadishu, adding that
the situation there was deteriorating dangerously and threatening the outbreak of a regional war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. He welcomed the Saudi initiative to achieve Somali national reconciliation and said that accomplishing reconciliation between the Somali parties "is something very easy if the Ethiopian forces leave the Somali territories". As far as the expulsion of the Ethiopian forces is concerned, he called for establishing a political entity under which gather all the groups opposed to the Ethiopian military presence.

This appeal to Saudi Arabia might be a change in the policy of ICU, which until now was looking for the support of the Yemen authorities.

The Mogadishu Insurgency

On April 20, the Young Mujahidin Movement claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on an Ethiopian military base in Mogadishu, which was carried out on April 19 by one of its prominent members, 'Abd al-'Aziz Daud 'abd al-Qader. According to the message, which was circulated in the Jihadi forums, chemicals were also used in this attack. The attack came amid intense fighting between Ethiopian forces allied to the interim government on the one hand and insurgents—made up of Islamists and Hawiye clan's militia—on the other, which killed at least twelve citizens. If true, this is the first suicide bombing in the history of Somalia involving chemicals. This, more even the intense fighting that began in February 2007, in which hundreds of people were killed, thousands were wounded and more than 200,000 fled Mogadishu, symbols the transition of the insurgency from another common insurgency, where some Iraqi-style tactics are being emulated and used, to a really inspired Iraqi-style insurgency.¹

As from February, Mogadishu has been the scene of persistent violence, including mortar and rocket attacks on TFG and Ethiopian installations, and the city's airport and seaport; machine gun attacks on police stations and checkpoints; targeted assassinations of public officials, military and security personnel, nongovernmental activists, and their relatives; unexplained homicides; intra-clan gun fights; car hijackings; and the erection of road blocks by local militias to extol tolls from motorists. The fighting has escalated since the end of March, when the insurgents introduced new warfare tactics, that remind us more and more of the Iraqi scenes of war, such as: planes' downing; burning TFG's and Ethiopians soldiers and mutilating their bodies; open artillery duels instead of hit-and-run mobile mortar assaults; and the use of roadside bombs and other improvised explosive devices. And nowadays, it seems like the fighting is going to escalate yet again with the introduction of suicide bombing operations.²

Yet, the most significant component of the ever escalating violence is the presence of an insurgency against the TFG, Ethiopian occupiers and the AMISOM Ugandan peacekeepers, who have also been under attack. Although most of the incidents have not been claimed by any group, the Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations (PRM) – the reorganized military wing of the ICU – and now, the Youth Mujahidin Movement, have taken credit of some of them. A new insurgent movement – the Popular Defense Army, composed of Somali army veterans – announced its formation, stating: "We see that three enemies have made an alliance in humiliating our reputation and religion, and they are the United States, Ethiopia, and Kenya". In the insurgency are also involved regrouped militias of the warlords, especially Mohamed Dheere, Mohamed Qanyare Afrah and Abdi Nur Siyed, who had formed in February a covert alliance and bought weapons, as well as disaffected businessmen. To these elements, one has to introduce the Hawiye clan's militia.3

The most prominent groups among the insurgents are the Islamist ones. They claimed responsibility for most of the qualitative operations that were carried out, including the planes' downing and the suicide bombings. It seems like they have been responsible for the introducing of Iraqi-style tactics into the Somali scene. Thus, they seem to have a very prominent role within the insurgency movement.

At the beginning, the PRM was the most prominent group among the insurgents. The PRM was established on January 19, exactly the same day when the AMISOM mission was formally defined and approved by the African Union at the 69th meeting of the Peace and Security Council. On January 31, it released a video warning African Union peacekeepers to avoid coming to Somalia, claiming that "Somalia is not a place where you will earn a salary – it is a place where you will die". Already on February 11, the PRM posted a statement on the Islamic Courts' website, in which it warned it would shoot down planes using Mogadishu International Airport. It further claimed that "all the necessary equipment for carrying out this operation is in our hands". Then, on February 22, it issued another statement on the internet, in which it threatened to carry out suicide attacks against African Union peacekeepers. It said that "we promise we shall welcome them with bullets from heavy guns, exploding cars and young men eager to carry out martyrdom operations against these colonial forces". This was the first time the PRM had specified the type of attacks they would launch.4 A Month later, on March 24, the PRM created a "comprehensive plan to isolate the enemy that has come to Mogadishu" called "Operation Suffocate the Enemy". The group posted the operational plan on the website of http://www.m-shacabka.com. The plan included operational instructions for 29 "Squads of the Resistance" to be concentrated in Mogadishu.5

By this time, a new Islamist group, called the Battalions of Tawhid and Jihad in Somalia (Kata’ib al-Tawhid wal-Jihad fi al-Somal), circulated on March 16 a communiqué throughout the Jihadi forums, in which it enumerated its actions against the TFG and the African peacekeepers. Among other things, it claimed that it "welcomed the elected Somali president

---


[http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article20233](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article20233);

by the Ethiopians, Abdullah Yusuf, with [firing] mortar shells on his presidential palace". It further claimed that it "also welcomed the Ugandan peacekeepers with mortar shells in Mogadishu Airport". It further called on "the Somali people to join and support the insurgency in order to expel the Ethiopians from Somalia", and warned those who cooperate with the Ethiopians to stop doing so, unless they wish to be targeted by the insurgents. Yet, this was the first and the only mention of this Islamist group, which might be an off-shoot of the PRM or affiliated with it in some way.

Anyhow, nowadays, the most prominent Islamist group among the Insurgency is the Youth Mujahidin Movement (Harakat Shabab al-Mujahidin), which announced its establishment on March 26 in the form of a communique circulated throughout the Jihadi forums. It presented the Somali conflict as a link in the chain of the battles fought between the infidels and the Muslims. It presented itself as an Islamist Salafist movement, which goes by the ways of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and achieves its goals by Islamic legal means, including propagation (Da'wah) and Jihad. Amongst their operations against the TFG, the Ethiopians, and the Ugandan peacekeepers to which they claimed responsibility were: the suicide bombing in an Ethiopian army base; detonation of roadside bombs on Ethiopian army vehicles; shooting down an Ethiopian plane; Shooting down a Belarussian cargo plane near Mogadishu Airport; artillery shelling of the army airport in Mogadishu while the Ugandan peacekeepers arrived, etc. All their claims of responsibility have been circulated throughout the Jihadi Arab forums.

It should be noted in this connection that the Shabab was the name of the military arm of the ICU, which was under the command of Aden Hashi Ayro, who is still alive and hides somewhere in Somalia. Therefore, it is possible that some of its members might have been members of the former Shabab. Moreover, the appearance of the Youth Mujahidin Movement signaled the disappearance of the PRM. The reasons for this are unclear. One reason might be that the PRM changed its name to the Youth Mujahidin Movement. Another reason might be that the Youth Mujahidin Movement is affiliated with the PRM or took control of it. Whatever the reason might be, it seems like the leading role among the Islamist insurgent groups is now reserved to the Youth Mujahidin Movement, while the PRM disappeared completely from the scene.

On April 14, the Somali Muslim Religious Scholars issued a communiqué titled "A Communiqué from the Somali Religious Scholars on the Ethiopian Crusader Invasion", which was circulated throughout the Jihadi forums and in which they reasserted the

---

6 See on-line at: http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=910161665abb1ec5c026591098b7694c&threadid=49848
8 See the claims of responsibility of the Youth Mujahidin Movement on-line at:
   http://www.alfirdaws.org/vb/showthread.php?t=31448;
   http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=910161665abb1ec5c026591098b7694c&threadid=50241;
   http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=910161665abb1ec5c026591098b7694c&threadid=50466;
   http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=910161665abb1ec5c026591098b7694c&threadid=50081;
   http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=910161665abb1ec5c026591098b7694c&threadid=50052;
important role of Islam in the insurgency. Seventy religious scholars, who signed this
document and who seem to be affiliated with the ICU or Salafi Islam, called on the Somali
people "to fight the crusader occupation until Somalia is liberated". They forbad the Somali
people "from helping the infidels to occupy the country". Thus, "everyone who joins the
enemy will be considered a legal target for the insurgents". They further called on the Somali
people "to make a true reconciliation and to solve their problems by themselves without any
foreign involvement". Then, it stressed that "what is going on now in Mogadishu is a war
between the Ethiopians, the US, and Somali collaborators from all the clans and between the
Somali people, who defends his religion and country. Thus, no one should think that what is
going on is a civil war between two Somali clans, as the enemies wish us to believe". These
scholars adapt the general stand of global Jihad, by which whenever a Muslim country is
occupied by infidel forces, the Muslims must fight them until liberation is achieved.

Yet, despite the prominent role of the Islamist groups within the Mogadishu insurgency, the
leading role is still reserved to the Hawiye clan leaders. Thus, On March 21, when Ethiopian
and TFG troops started entering some neighborhoods in Mogadishu to disarm the residents
by force, the event triggered the most intense violence Mogadishu has seen in years.
Especially, since the Hawiye's senior tribal leaders declared war on Ethiopian troops and
called on all Somalis to join them. The violence then included the burning of two Ethiopian
and government soldiers, numerous mortar and rocket attacks, fierce street battles, and the
downing of a cargo plane at Mogadishu Airport. Hawiye clan leaders had a crucial role in
putting an end to that cycle of fighting. On March 23, Ethiopian commanders agreed to a
truce with Hawiye clan elders. According to this truce, the Ethiopians will refrain from any
further efforts to disarm the clan's fighters and will be confined to their barracks until they
can withdraw. In exchange, the Hawiye will permit the Ethiopians to leave peacefully. But
this truce did not hold much time. At the end of March, the Ethiopian troops used tanks and
helicopters in an offensive to crush the insurgents. But still, at the height of the fighting, the
Ugandans in the AU peacekeeping mission in Somalia have reached a non-aggression
agreement with the traditional elders of the Hawiye. The Hawiye's senior tribal leaders were
also those who on April 3, brokered a cease fire with the Ethiopians to put an end to the
hostilities.

The attempts of the Ethiopian and TFG forces to forcibly disarm the Hawiye clan's members
while giving key security posts to members of President Abdullah Yousef’s clan, the Darod,
have alarmed the Hawiye clan. Much more important than that, it seems like these moves
have brought the Hawiye sub-clans, who previously fought each other for the control of
Mogadishu, to unite their forces to oppose Ethiopia and the TFG. Since a large part of the
Islamists was always based on the Hawiye, they seem now to adhere to their clan identity and
affiliation, while still maintaining their Islamist teachings, and giving the insurgency a taste
of the Iraqi-style insurgency.

---

9 See on-line at:
http://www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?s=114095264c25e488ea78cdaa2ff56a34&threadid=50627

Thus, it is no surprise that Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the former Chairman of the Executive Council of the ICU, and Hussein Mohammed Farah Aideed, who still holds the posts of housing minister and deputy prime minister of the TFG, together with Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, the former Spokesman of the Somali Parliament held a week-long meeting in Asmara, Eritrea's capital, from April 10 to April 17 concerning the Somali crisis. It must be stressed that Sheikh Sharif and Hussein Aideed belong to different Hawiye sub-clans, while Sharif Hassan belongs to another major Somali clan called the Digil-Mirifle. On April 18, they jointly issued an ultimatum for Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia immediately and unconditionally, or else, the Somali people will rise up in unison to drive them out by force. They further asserted that the Somali people have the capacity and potential to resolve their crisis by themselves, without any external interference. So, they underlined that first and foremost the Ethiopian forces should withdraw in order to achieve a national reconciliation.  

This national reconciliation conference was announced by President Abdullah Yusuf on March 1, to be held in Mogadishu to reconcile differences among Somalis and to move Somalia toward a stable, democratic future. According to the announcement, the conference, scheduled to begin on April 16, would bring 3000 participants from throughout the country and the Diaspora together for two months of meetings and discussions. The basis of the talks would be "reconciliation among clans", which would leave unquestioned the TFG's clan-based constitution and would not allow the political opposition to negotiate in an organized manner, severely diminishing the prospect of power-sharing. Indeed, the announcement did not give specific details about who had been invited to attend the talks, both the President and the Prime minister have ruled out allowing anyone representing the Islamists to participate. However, due to the continuous fighting between the Somali insurgents and the Ethiopian troops, the Somali national reconciliation conference was postponed for the third time and will be held on July 14.

This announcement was met with immediate rejection from the opposition. Most importantly, major elements of the Hawiye clan held a meeting and issued a statement condemning the TFG for inviting Ethiopian troops into Somalia, declaring a state of emergency, infringing on the transitional constitution's formula for clan representation and making illegal appointments, and urging the TFG to hold an open reconciliation conference including the ICU as a political entity, and to request that the international community affect the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia and organize a "real national reconciliation meeting" based on political representation in a "neutral place". The ICU also responded to the TFG's reconciliation project with its moderate wing – based in Yemen – expressing willingness to negotiate, but only as political equals. On March 1, the ICU issued an official statement, in which it called for a reconciliation process that would include all sectors of Somali society in the political process, especially intellectuals, experts, traditional elders, members of civil society and civil servants. The militant wing of the ICU, led by Adan Hashi Ayro, released a tape in which Ayro declared that he would continue to fight troops who are

the "enemies of Islam", and called for Jihad against the foreign occupation, including AMISOM.¹³

Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, announced on March 13 that the remaining two-thirds of its occupying forces would withdraw in two phases, as AMISOM replaces them and the reconciliation process "quiets things down". When is this withdrawal supposed to take place is unclear. On March 15, Ethiopia's foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, announced that Ethiopia would help the TFG until it gained control "across Somalia". If the Ethiopians are going to remain in Somalia for an extended period of time, AMISOM will become identified with them and its credibility will be much more weakened than it is already now.¹⁴

To sum up, politically, Somalia has now been returned roughly to where it was when the TFG was formed in October 2004. The government is weak, unpopular and faction-ridden, and the power vacuum in southern Somalia is rapidly being filled by the same faction leaders and warlords the ICU overthrew less than a year ago. Many Mogadishu residents resent the ICU's defeat, feel threatened by the TFG and are dismayed by the presence of Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu. Ethiopia's military victory has dismantled only the most visible part of the ICU: the regional administrative authority in south-central Somalia, which essentially served as a political platform for Hawiye clan interests. Other elements, including the militant Shabab leadership, remain largely intact and have dispersed throughout the country, threatening to wage a prolonged war. The grassroots network of mosques, schools and private enterprises that has underpinned the spread of Salafi teachings and their extremist variants remains in place and continues to expand, thanks to generous contributions from Islamic charities and the private sector. Whether the Islamists, including their more extreme Jihadi element, can stage a comeback depends largely on whether the TFG can restore stability and win public support across southern Somalia, what seems to be very unlikely.

The Effects of the Somali Crisis on Kenya Muslims

On April 7, 2007, former Kenyan madrassa mayor, Taib Ali Taib, claimed that it is the turn now of madrassa teachers to be targeted in the fight against terror. Two days later, on April 9, 2007, Egypt issued a two-week notice asking its citizens working as madrassa teachers in Kenya to leave the country for fear of being targeted as suspected terrorists after Kenyan authorities and the FBI stepped up the war on terror. Several madrassas in Mombassa, and eight in Lamu and Malindi district, have been affected by this move. Sheikh Mohamed Dor, the secretary general of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) and one of the most outspoken critics of Kenya's treatment of its Muslim community, said he suspected the United States wanted to destabilize Islamic religious education in Kenya and that "Kenya is a terrorist-free zone and any such tricks to fight Islam will never succeed". It should be mentioned, that attempts to deport an Algerian madrassa teacher in 2005 failed when the courts ruled Sheikh Ahmed al-Haj was law-abiding, and had nothing to do with al-Qaeda.¹⁵

This stepping up of the war on terror in Kenya, which also involves violations of human rights, is tightly linked to the developments that have been taking place in the last six months in Somalia and to the wish of the Kenyan government to avert any spillage of radical Islamism prevalent in Somalia into Kenya, as happened in Ethiopia. Throughout this period, the Kenyan Muslims have criticized the policy of the Kenyan government in its dealing with the Somali crisis. Moreover, they have complained of existing government harassment towards them in the name of the war on terror. In this regard, it should be stressed that Kenya's Muslims have long complained of being marginalized by authorities, and feel they have been unfairly targeted, particularly since 1998 and 2002 attacks blamed on al-Qaeda-linked militants.

Thus, when on November 2, 2006, the US embassies in Nairobi and Addis Ababa warned of threats from extremists in Somalia for "the execution of suicide explosions in prominent landmarks within Kenya and Ethiopia" and urged extreme caution. Kenyan Muslims were concerned the US warning could spike what they complained was existing government harassment in the name of the war on terror. That is why on November 4, 2006, Kenyan Muslims accused the US of lying about plans by Somali Islamists to carry out suicide attacks in Kenya and Ethiopia, calling it "a larger plot to attack Somalia". The chairperson of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims, Abdulghafu l al-Busaidi, said that "Kenyan Muslims strongly condemn… the US [for] putting Somalia and the Union of Islamic Courts as another part in its axis of evil". Then, he urged the Kenyan government to continue efforts to mediate between the Islamists and the Somali government.16

However, in December 2006, after maintaining a neutral position on the Somalia crisis for two years, Kenya gave tacit approval to the invasion of that country by US-backed Ethiopian troops. Thus, as from December 2006, Kenya has strengthened security measures along its land border with neighboring Somalia and along its Indian Ocean coast as a result of the fighting in Somalia between Transitional Government forces and the Islamic Courts Union. As a matter of fact, Kenya sealed its border with Somalia to prevent Islamists fighters from escaping. In January 2007, more than forty Somali refugees were deported because of suspected connections to the ICU, and a number of Kenyans were detained over suspected terrorist links.

This, together with the possibility of the government hosting AFRICOM—the proposed US military command center that is intended to consolidate US military activities in Africa—has caused the intensification of the Kenyan Muslims' protests against what they claim to be a religious harassment in the guise of the "war on terror". On the background of the recent and frequent arrests made in Kenya in connection to the crisis in Somalia, Kenyan Muslims fear that with the establishment of the command center in Kenya, they will become targets. Furthermore, they allege that these arrests are being carried out under US instructions.17

On February 17, Kenyan Muslim leaders announced the start of the protests, during a peaceful demonstration in Mombassa. The Muslims demanded from the Kenyan government


to disband the government-funded Anti-Terror Police Unit, which was created in 2003 to monitor Kenya's Islamic militants; to recover weapons; and to establish links with other security forces. They demanded to put an end to the arrests of Muslims in the name of fighting terror; and, to pressure Somalia and Ethiopia to release all Muslims—whose number is estimated to be 70—who were deported to Somalia from Kenya in January and February 2007, because of their alleged connections to the ICU. Muslim leaders argue that 27 of those are Kenyans who should be returned to the country, while Kenyan security officials had previously argued that the deportees were Somali militia and sympathizers loyal to the ICU. Three days later, on February 20, the Muslims held another peaceful demonstration in Mombasa, in which they issued an ultimatum to the Kenyan government to release 23 Muslims held on suspicion of engaging in terrorism and those detained in Somalia and Ethiopia by March 23, otherwise they would disrupt the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) World Cross-Country Championships scheduled to March 24.18

Following this ultimatum, the US issued on March 6, a travel alert to its citizens warning them of a possible terrorist attack targeting the upcoming World Cross Country Championships to be staged in Mombasa later this month.19 However, on March 22, only two days before the sport event was supposed to take place, Kenyan Muslim leaders called off protests and demonstrations planned to disrupt it. The move followed lengthy meetings with Defense Minister, Nienga Karume, and other government officials held on April 21 amid fears by Muslim leaders that the demonstration would be used by some people to cause problems. Press statement by seven Muslim leaders said that a joint six-man team comprising their representatives and security agents will now verify the nationalities of those Muslims who were deported. They claimed the Kenyan government had confirmed that five names in the list of the deportees were actually Kenyans.20

But this is not the end of the story. A letter Human Rights Watch sent on March 22 to the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs exposed that at least 150 individuals from some 18 different nationalities, who succeeded to infiltrate into Kenya from December 2006 through January 2007, were arrested by Kenyan security forces at the Liboi and Kiunga border crossing points with Somalia. Then, Kenyan authorities transferred them to Nairobi, where they were detained incommunicado and without charge for weeks. While there, US and other national intelligence services interrogated several foreign nationals in detention in Nairobi. At least 85 people, who were of interest to the Somali, Ethiopian, or US governments, were then secretly deported from Kenya to Somalia. Many of them were later transferred from Somalia to Ethiopia, but their exact locations in Ethiopia are unknown.21


Confirmation of news that Kenya was involved in secret prisoner renditions, under pressure from the United States, has caused much uproar among Kenyan Muslims. An official of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), the umbrella body of Kenyan Muslims, has claimed that "there could be more Kenyans at the US' Guantanamo Bay jail in Cuba than officially acknowledged following revelations that Abdul Malik Muhammed, a Kenyan Muslim, was shipped there in March over claims that he is a dangerous terrorist". On March 29, Adan Wachu, SUPKEM's secretary-general, said "Muslims and the international community will hold the Kenya government, not Washington, responsible for Abdul Malik's deportation and the safety of 76 other Muslims from around the world, including 26 Kenyans arrested in Kenya and deported to Somalia and Ethiopia after the collapse of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union government early this year. He further said that "admission by the US authorities that Abdul Malik, arrested in Kenya on March 12, was in their custody in Cuba places the Kenyan government on the spot for its previous denial of his arrest". Abdul Malik is held on suspicion of being involved in the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel resort in Mombassa.

To sum up, Kenyan Muslims have been regarding themselves as being much more discriminated and harassed by the Kenyan government than before, especially since the outbreak of the Somali conflict in December 2006. Furthermore, they seem to perceive the Kenyan government as a collaborator with the US against Kenyan Muslims, all of whom it regards as potential terrorists. This sense of alienation, which is common nowadays to the vast majority of Kenyan Muslims, but especially to those inhabiting the coastal province and the North Eastern Province, might unite all of them against what they might regard as the Kenyan "government of evil". Thus, they might well try to topple it together with the opposition parties on the general elections that will be held in December 2007.

Worse still, the feeling of being targeted by the US as well as by the Kenyan government might cause among Kenyan Muslims a strong sense of solidarity with Somali Islamists, who are targeted too by the US and in a way, by the Kenyan government too. In the long run, it might radicalize the Kenyan Muslims and deepen the already strong sense of alienation and even hatred they feel toward the US and the Kenyan government. In turn, this sense of ever deepening alienation and hatred among Kenyan Muslims might serve as a fertile ground for al-Qaeda to seek support in.

***