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Tabliqi Groups in Uganda – the Allied Democratic Forces
On April 18, 2003, a cache of files recovered from the bombed-out headquarters of Iraq's intelligence agency showed that Saddam Hussein's regime had links to an Islamist terror group in Africa – and had corresponded about opening a Baghdad training camp for the group. In one document written in English, a terror leader in Uganda vowed to attack the United States and its allies without rest. Bekkah Abdul Nasser, self-described chief of diplomacy of the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) guerilla group, wrote to his Iraqi contacts that "we should deliberately drive panic into them, their bases, and their interests. We do this in Africa; you do this in the Middle East, the Gulf, and Asia".¹

In 2001, over a period of several months, a high-level ADF member outlined his group's progress to Fallah Hassan al-Rubdie, an Iraqi chargé d'affaires based in Nairobi, Kenya.

¹ See on-line at: http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0418/p01s04-woiq.html
Bekkah Abdul Nasser’s letters, each 10 to 15 pages long, were all written in English, and were then translated into Arabic. One of these letters reads "We in the ADF forces are ready to run the African mujahideen headquarters. We have already started and we are on the ground, operational." The letters chronicle the ADF efforts to obtain Iraqi funding for an "international mujahideen team whose special mission will be to smuggle arms on a global scale to holy warriors fighting against US, British, and Israeli influences in Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East", according to one. In a letter from April 2001, Nasser vows that his group will "vet, recruit, and send youth to train for the jihad" from a center in Baghdad, which he described as a "headquarters for the international Holy Warrior network". It is not clear from the correspondence whether such an international center for jihad was ever set up in Baghdad, or if the Iraqis ever sent direct funding to the ADF. But one other letter does discuss agreement on an "appropriate budget", implying either that money figures were indeed discussed at some point, or that ADF officials thought they soon would be. Cities mentioned as possible sites for ADF action in the documents include Nairobi and Mombassa in Kenya, Kampala in Uganda, Kinshasa in Congo, Harare in Zimbabwe, Lusaka in Zambia, and Pretoria, Durban, and Johannesburg in South Africa.²

The ADF is an alliance of at least three rebel groups, including the remnants of the secessionist Rwenzuru movement, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, and extremist elements from the Tabliqi Muslim community. The ADF, which decided to adopt radical Islam as its ideology, was born from a core group of puritanical Muslims from the Tabliqi sect, whose members portray themselves as "Muslim evangelists". In 1991, The Tabliqi Youth Movement, based in Kampala—Uganda's capital—opposed the restitution of the Aga Khan's wealth that had been nationalized by the then Ugandan president Idi Amin in 1972. Additionally, they did not recognize the authority of the newly elected mufti. This led to their persecution by the authorities. Several people were killed and numerous Tabliqis were arrested. Some fled and others went underground in the Rwenzori mountains after having undergone training in Afghan military camps.

² See on-line at:
http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0418/p01s04-woiq.html;
http://www.strategypage.com/qnd/uganda/articles/20030417.aspx;
http://www.arabworldanalysis.com/Iraq_AI%20Qaeda.htm
In Uganda, the Tabliqis claimed Muslims were being marginalized by the government. It must be noted that Uganda's population is approximately 24.6 million. Christianity is the majority religion, and its adherents constitute approximately 66 percent of the population. Muslims account for approximately just 16 percent of the population.

The Ugandan government had said Tabliqis within Uganda have trained at Osama bin Laden's camps and that some formed a part of the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) in western Uganda. On December 5, 2001, The United States added the ADF and the Lord's Resistance Army to its "Terrorist Exclusion List". In October 2001, Uganda's Tabliqi leader, Sheikh Suleiman Kakeeto, condemned the US air strikes on Afghanistan. Also in October, Sheikh Murtadha Bukenya, a Tabliqi leader who had been named one of Uganda's most wanted terrorist suspects, returned from exile.

Rohan Gunaratna, an international expert on terrorism, says that "members of the ADF came to both Sudan and later to Afghanistan to train, and the leader of this group, Sheikh Jamil [Mukulu], was close to Osama". He says further that "Osama's main purpose [at the time] was to create an Islamist network throughout Africa".

Throughout its campaign the ADF has been provided with weapons and funding by the Islamist government in Sudan. According to the Ugandan government and western intelligence sources, Sheikh Jamil Mukulu, a former Catholic, became friendly with Osama bin Laden in the early to mid-1990s, when they both were living in Khartoum. While the ADF had reportedly received help from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, one of its main supporters was Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the Sudan-based National Islamic Front, who wishes to see the Islamization of Sudan's neighbors including Uganda. Earlier in 2005, Jamil Mukulu, the ADF leader, began distributing tape recordings of religious sermons in which he incited members to attack the government of President Yoweri Museveni, and criticized ADF members who had surrendered to the army. The sermons preached that "Muslims should kill non-Muslims, and kill also Muslims who are not fighting for jihad". In another recording, Mukulu takes aim at the West, saying "Let curses be to Bush, Blair, the president of France – and more curse goes to Museveni and all those fighting Islam".

However, al-Qaeda's and the Sudanese assistance to the ADF were not exclusively direct. It was also provided via certain international Islamic NGOs operating in Uganda. Thus, the radical Islamists from Sudan infiltrated or tried to infiltrate in Uganda into such organizations as the Islamic African Relief Agency, The Islamic call Society, the International Islamic Relief Organization and Africa Charitable Society for Mother and Child Care.

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3 See on-line at: http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0418/p01s04-woiq.html

4 See on-line at: http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd%5B157%5D=x-157-249109
It is a very surprising phenomenon to find that the Tabliqis in Uganda are connected with terrorism. The question in this case is what is so weird about Tabliqis being connected to terrorism. Tablighi Jamaat—or Tabligh wa-Da’wah in Arabic—is a movement founded in the late 1920s by Mohammad Ilyas in the Mewat province of India. Tabligh in Arabic means "to deliver (the massage)" and Tablighi Jamaat claims to revive this duty, which they consider as a primary duty of the Muslims. The Tablighis follow strict codes of Islamic law. They are bound by the religious dogma, dressing patterns and detailed methods of religious practices. They usually limit their activities to within the Muslim community itself, their main aim being to bring spiritual awakening to the world's Muslims. The movement asks the Muslims at large to spend their time and money in spiritual journeys to seek religious knowledge and promote the faith. During these scheduled journeys—named Khurouj—(usually for a specified period of four months, forty days, ten days, or at least three days), members of each traveling group learn the basic tenets of Islam from each other. Apart from these, a list of desired qualities of the sahaba (companions of the Prophet Muhammad and his first adherents) are studied and practiced. These are: conviction of faith and belief in the oneness—Tawhid—of Allah, humility and devotion in prayers, acquiring knowledge and remembrance of God, good behavior towards Muslims and others, purity of intention and spending ones time and money in the "path of God".

Each Jama'ah is usually constituted in a village or town mosque. They decide upon a route and time period of the journey by group counseling. Each Jama'ah has five to twenty members with one leader or Amir who is usually chosen by the members themselves before the actual journey. They usually camp in mosques along the way, and preach to the people who attend the mosque. During the day, members of the Jama'ah visit Muslim houses door to door, and roam the markets of the town and village they have camped in and exhort Muslims to lead a pure religious life and invite them to attend a sermon in nearby mosque after certain prayers. Usually after the sermon, they encourage the attendees to come forward and join them on the spiritual journeys. Since they encourage other Muslims to join in their spiritual journeys, any Muslim can easily join them. There is no strict membership rule to be part of Tablighi Jamaat. The Tabligh Jamaat condemn terrorism and usually are strictly non-political.

The movement had also spread in the Arab world, primarily into Jordan, the Palestinian territories, and Egypt, through Indian and Pakistani pilgrims to Mecca and students in Al-Azhar in Cairo. In few cases Arab members of the group were involved in cases of terrorism, even though they violated the group’s policy. In other cases, members of the group moved to radical Islamist groups, after they were influenced by the dogmatic missionary nature of the Tabligh.

Since November 1996, the ADF have been engaged in a guerilla warfare against the Ugandan government in the Rwenzori mountains in Western Uganda. The ADF has few links with western Uganda – its leaders come from areas in central Uganda with strong Islamic communities such as Iganga, Masaka and Kampala itself. The group also includes some ex-commanders of former president Idi Amin's army. There were three main reasons why the rebels adopted western Uganda as their theater of operations: the mountainous terrain; the
proximity to Congo; and the ability to exploit an existing ethnic conflict in the area. The ADF problem exploded in 1997. Prior to that there had been sporadic attacks which did not appear to concern the government too much. But in 1997, the ADF launched a surprise attack on Ugandan soldiers at Mpondwe on the border with Congo in Kasese district. Attacks and atrocities escalated the following year with the army apparently unable to contain them.

The activities of the ADF have become increasingly focused on civilians. The ADF has abducted a large number of children and adults for the purpose of forced recruitment into their movement. The abductees are taken to remote training camps in the Rwenzori mountains or in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they receive rudimentary military training. Civilians are abducted from both Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Ugandan army has responded to the ADF guerilla campaign by arresting many civilians, mostly Muslims, on suspicion of collaborating with the rebels.

As of 2004, the ADF had been largely destroyed by the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF). The main figure of the group was Jamil Mukulu, a former Catholic. Its members portray themselves as religious crusaders. While fighting continued into 2000 and there have been sporadic attacks, the UPDF was largely successful in destroying the insurgency and securing the Ugandan conflict areas. A small ADF remnant remained in eastern Congo as of December 2004. In December 2005, UN and Congolese troops launched the Operation North Night Final, in order to destroy the rebel group and bring peace to the troubled Ituri district. On December 28, 2005, Lt-Col Frederic Medard, the military spokesperson for the UN mission, said that the UN operation had succeeded in dismantling all known ADF camps. It is not known, however, whether ADF remnants still exist in western Uganda or in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Besides the ADF, there are other Tabliqi movements still active in Uganda: the Uganda Liberation Tigers and Sheikh Abdul Kyesa's "Saved Group". All of this activity makes Uganda the country in East Africa where radical Islam seems to be most deep-rooted and most surprisingly preached by the Tabliqis.

**Uamsho – Radical Islam in Zanzibar**

On March 5, 2003, the Islamist group Jumuia ya Uamsho Na Mihadhara (The Association of Revival and Propagation of the Islamic Faith in Zanzibar – APRIF), popularly known as Uamsho, held an illegal demonstration in the streets of Zanzibar. They were demonstrating against the government's ban on their demonstrations. The ban against the group was in response to security concerns and to its refusal to seek a permit for its activity from the mufti's office as required by the Mufti Law 2001. In previous rallies and demonstrations, Uamsho has distributed Afghan jihad-training videos and literature, and advocated the killing of secular politicians who refuse to impose Shari'ah law. Thus, when Uamsho militants took to the streets after Friday prayers there was a confrontation with the police sent to enforce the ban. Order was not restored until later
that evening. Apart from expressing their grievances, the demonstrators were also protesting against the increasing Western influence on the island, coming primarily through tourism, and the government's appointment of Harith bin Khelef as Mufti. Not only was Khelef not Uamsho's choice, but Uamsho objects to the principle that the government should appoint the mufti. They believe the Mufti should be elected. Thirty-two people were arrested for staging an illegal demonstration and the subsequent riot.

Early on March 10, 2003, a Roman Catholic Church in central Zanzibar was set ablaze in an act of arson. One week later, on March 17, a petrol bomb destroyed a school bus belonging to the Catholic Church while it was parked in the school grounds. The following day five senior members of Uamsho were detained as suspects in the church attacks. On March 19, the home of Zanzibar's Mufti and top Islamic leader, Harith bin Khelef, was attacked with explosives. On March 20, a grenade lobbed over the fence of the home of Zubeir Ali Maulid, a cabinet minister in the Zanzibar government. Also on March 20, a grenade was thrown into a restaurant filled with foreign guests. It landed on the dinner table of a British diplomat but fortunately it failed to go off.

The 2001 Mufti law, which sparked these mass demonstrations, authorizes the President of Zanzibar to appoint an Islamic leader, or mufti. The mufti serves as a public employee of the Zanzibar government. The mufti possesses the authority to settle all religious disputes involving Muslims, to approve any Islamic activities or gatherings on Zanzibar, to supervise all Zanzibari mosques, and to approve religious lectures by foreign clergy or the importation of Islamic literature from outside Zanzibar. On the mainland, however, mosques belonging to the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA) elect a mufti of their own. BAKWATA serves as a non governmental organization, and the mainland mufti is not a public employee. However, when it was first established in 1968, BAKWATA was widely considered to be an unofficial arm of the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM); to date, public opinion still associates BAKWATA with the ruling CCM party.

Several Muslim organizations, among them Uamsho, continue to criticize both Zanzibar's Mufti law and the mainland's practice of selecting a mufti through BAKWATA, perceiving them as efforts by the union government to institutionalize government oversight of Islamic organizations. Many Muslim leaders, noting that there are no parallel structures for Christians, criticize the government for disparate treatment of the country's different religious countries. In response to this criticism, the Zanzibari Ministry of Good Governance established a Review Committee to consider possible revisions to the Mufti Law. The Committee has sought input from various Muslim NGOs, including some that have objected to the Mufti Law. In a departure from previous policy, the Office of the Mufti has also quietly engaged in a dialogue with Saudi-line Muslim groups, such as the NGO Uamsho.

Furthermore, Muslim groups have also been vocal in their opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which was signed into law in December 2002. This legislation does not mention any religious or ideological group; however, Muslim clerics, some local media, and the Legal and Human Rights Center, a local human rights NGO, have been highly critical of the broadly defined powers it gives police to conduct searches, arrests, and detentions and to
determine who is a terrorist. Some of the law's critics expressed fears that the legislation would be used to silence or intimidate the Muslim community.

In July 12, 2005, this law did not prevent Muslim activists in Zanzibar to call on the US government to stop what they described as torture of prisoners being held in Iraqi jails. They also wanted the prisoners in confinement on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, freed unconditionally. Leaders of Uamsho hit out at the US authorities during a demonstration ahead of visits by US First Lady, Laura Bush, and former US president, Bill Clinton.

As a result of this criticism, there have been signs of increasing tension between secular and radical Muslims, especially in Zanzibar, as the latter believed that the former had joined with the government for monetary and other benefits. The radical Muslims accused the government of being a Christian institution, and charged that Muslims in power were interested only in safeguarding their positions. Zanzibar, which accounts for 2.7 percent of Tanzanian population—which is approximately 36 million—i.e. approximately a million, is estimated to be 99 percent Muslim, with only very tiny Hindu and Christian minorities. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous archipelago that elects its own president to serve as the head of government for matters internal to Zanzibar and a parliament that can approve legislation pertaining to local affairs.

In November 2003, drivers of Zanzibar's "dala dala" minibuses went on strike over new safety regulations that they considered onerous. A radical Muslim leader was arrested after he publicly encouraged the strike, claiming that the new regulations oppressed Muslims. Radical Muslims, including those associated with the Zanzibari group Uamsho, continued to criticize secular Muslims who drank alcohol or married Christians. On Zanzibar, during Ramadan late in 2003, a group calling itself the "Lions of God" harassed women whom they considered to be dressed immodestly. Radical groups also have exhorted their followers to vote only for Muslim candidates, or to oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Law and Zanzibar's Mufti Law.

Islamist groups in Zanzibar are also worried by what they see as increasingly inappropriate behavior by Western tourists, saying their actions offend the Zanzibari conservative Muslim culture. These organizations are also concerned about the spread of bars on the islands off mainland Tanzania, whose beaches and coral reefs make it a haven for honeymooners. "Tourists should not indulge in sex acts or kiss openly, this is not something that people can accept", said Farid Hadi, chairman of the Zanzibar Imams' Association (Jumaza). "Every society has norms to be respected. We want a law that stipulates that while tourists are accepted, there are standards that forbid wearing very short dresses in public. In Islam non-Muslims can pursue their ways provided that, when doing so, they keep to themselves in a segregated manner." Abdallah Said Ali, secretary of Uamsho, says the courts tend to side with the tourist industry's argument that too strict an interpretation of laws controlling alcohol sales are bad for business. Tourism is the biggest foreign exchange earner for Zanzibar, but is

See on-line at: (http://www.ippmedia.com/ipp/guardian/2005/10/10/51532.html)
expected to increase in importance because of the collapse of the islands' clove export trade due to a fall in prices caused by global oversupply.

Moreover, during 2003, radical Muslim organizations engaged in increasingly confrontational proselytizing in Zanzibar, Morogoro, Mwanza, and Dar es Salaam. Anti-Christian slogans became more prevalent in newspapers and pamphlets, and on clothing. Muslims threatened tourist establishments in Zanzibar, warning proprietors who catered to Western customers that they risked retribution for serving alcohol or engaging in other perceived vices. On the mainland, Christian evangelical organizations also reportedly engaged in confrontational proselytizing, including the distribution of leaflets branding Muslims as "unbelievers" or "servants of Satan". In addition, Christian newspapers increasingly criticized Islamic practices and reprinted articles that were perceived to be anti-Muslim in spirit.

At the head of Uamsho stands Sheikh Azzani Khalid Hamdan, whose aim is to turn Zanzibar into a land ruled by Shari'ah law. As part of his plan, he wants all the non-Muslims residents of the island to convert to Islam. One of his methods, in addition to those mentioned above, is to abduct young Christian girls – though it is illegal under Zanzibari law to convert a Christian girl under the age of 18 – forced them to convert to Islam and, in some cases, ship them to parts of the Islamic world. Thus, several Christian girls have disappeared in recent years.

Uamsho and the other radical Islamist in Zanzibar won a great victory in their struggle for implementation of Shari'ah law when, on April 19, 2004, the Zanzibar government passed a law that outlaws gay and lesbian practices in the Isles, and imposes severe penalties for same sex cohabitation. Offenders face prison terms of up to seven years or a fine of $700 for lesbians, while male offenders face jail terms of up to 25 years. People found creating an enabling environment for the offences face a jail sentence of five years. Government officials say the law has been introduced to curb the increasing number of same-sex marriages in Zanzibar. But it is also seen as being the government reaction to increasing pressure from interest groups that have been lobbying behind the scenes to introduce a form of Islamic law in Zanzibar. The law seeks to amend the penal code of 1934 and to mete out severe penalties to gays and lesbians. In recent weeks Uamsho held several demonstrations in the Isles. Same sex unions have been increasing in the Isles and in April 2003 Zanzibaris for the first time witnessed a gay marriage that was conducted publicly. The government and the Office of the Mufti of Zanzibar condemned the marriage.

To conclude, the appearance of militant Islamist groups is a common phenomenon throughout East Africa and not only in Tanzania. It is, first and foremost, a symptom of the weaker position of Muslims in the economic, social, and political spheres and their strong sense of being discriminated against and humiliated. Muslim frustration, desperation, and indignation have been exploited by local religious and political leaders who were inspired by the triumph of the Islamic revolutions in Iran and Sudan and by the activities of militant Islamist groups in the Middle East. The more extremist among these groups believe that the redemption of the Muslims can come only by violent means to achieve the expansion of Dar al-Islam at the expense of Dar al-Harb.
Thus, the presence of Wahhabi missionaries and jihad recruiters, combined with Muslim anger over the War on Terror and the tensions in the Middle East, has led to an increase in Islamist zeal amongst some younger Zanzibari Muslims. Moderate Zanzibari Muslim leaders, Tanzania officials and foreign diplomats have all expressed concerns about rising Islamist extremism in Zanzibar.

Most attention has focused on Zanzibar, both on account of its overwhelmingly Muslim population and the fact that the semi-autonomous province has not (relatively speaking) enjoyed the same rate of economic growth and social development as has been evident on the mainland. In addition, at least two al-Qaeda operatives have been identified as originating from the island. One was Khalfan Khamis Muhammad, who was among those convicted in connection with the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. The other was Oaed Sanyan al-Harithi, a suspected East African point man for Bin Laden who was killed in Yemen in 2004.

Sheik Khalid Balala – Founder of the Islamic Party of Kenya

During the period when the radical Sheikh Khalid Balala became de facto head of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) in 1992, Sudanese and Iranian support reportedly helped the IPK to effectively mobilize a mass following in Coast Province. Sheikh Balala had cemented his relationship with the Sudanese regime during his several trips to Khartoum. However, Sheikh Balala's leadership of the IPK was short lived due to a power struggle within the organizations that resulted in a victory by moderate forces. Kenyan government actions that forced Sheikh Balala to live in exile for a number of years also undercut his political aspirations.

Sheikh Balala, who was a radical Muslim street preacher, rose to prominence during the waning years of the single party era as a result of his fiery religious sermons in Mombassa's Wembe Tavari marketplace. As an IPK leader, Sheikh Balala came to command a sizeable following among the youth in Coast Province, some of whom were known to have advocated the establishment of an Islamic state in Coast Province and the full application of Shari'ah.

It is no wonder, then, that the adherents of Sheikh Balala came especially from the coast Province, since Kenyan Muslims, who represent, according to various estimations, 8 to 20 percent of the country's total population, are mostly settled along the coast and in the country's northeast. These two regions expressed separatist aspirations already at the time of Independence. Since then, the Muslims are regarded with suspicion by the Christian authorities and have a widespread feeling of being excluded from the process of national development.

The Feeling of alienation is particularly strong among unemployed Muslims and non-Muslims youth at the coast, who see wealth and economic prosperity – whether of up-country Kenyans or tourists – all around them. It is not surprising therefore that the IPK appealed in particular to
this group and attracted its main support from them. Thus, the launching of the process of
democratization in the beginning of the 1990s gave a possibility to this community of
acquiring a means of political expression – the IPK which was founded in 1992 by a group of
Mombassa businessmen and intellectuals to articulate the grievances of the Muslim community
in the Coast Province. Initially this party was banned because of its religious tone, which
violated the secular principle of the constitution and which only strengthened the Muslims'
traditional feeling of exclusion from Kenyan political life. In July 1992, Sheikh Balala himself,
who was its spiritual leader, was arrested and charged with "imagining" the death of then
President Moi – a charge similar to treason, which carries the death sentence. He was held for
six months, but eventually released without being brought to trial, thus increasing his popular
standing in Mombassa.

Sheikh Balala was born in Mombassa in 1958 to a father originally from Yemen. As a boy,
Balala studied the Qur'an and Arabic in local schools. At the age of seventeen, he traveled to
Saudi Arabia to fulfill the Muslim duty of pilgrimage to Mecca, and he remained there for
more than ten years studying Islam at Medina University while making a living selling
religious books. He then visited various countries in Europe and Asia. In Britain he completed
a course in business management, and in India he studied Islam and comparative religion. He
claims he decided to combine the knowledge he had acquired of Islam and of business
management in order to "sell, that is, to disseminate, the Islamic religion". He actively
opposed government policies and threatened to unleash a holy war against it. During the period
when Sheikh Balala became de facto head of IPK, external support helped the IPK to
effectively mobilize a mass following.

Sheikh Balala cemented his relationship with Sudan's radical National Islamic Front regime
during his several trips to Khartoum. Sudan's support for the IPK was consistent with
Khartoum's policy of promoting an Islamist agenda in the region and as a means of
undermining Kenyan support for the then rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army.

The government denial of registration and the ability of the party to promote active
confrontation with the secular power of the state enhanced its standing and prestige. In Many
1993, the party called a one-day strike in Mombassa, which effectively paralyzed the town, to
protest the arrest of Sheikh Balala, and then in September 1993, more riots and anti-
government demonstrations were held in Malindi and Mombassa. In March 1994, several
skirmishes took place between the police and Muslim youths in Mombassa. At the same time,
IPK's members were politically active in parts of upcountry Kenya. But this kind of activity
has been sporadic and isolated, and is often undertaken by individuals rather than as an activity
sanctioned by the party. During 1995 and 1996, the tension in Mombassa continued off and on.
In August 1995, the police dispersed the annual Maulid gathering before the procession had

even started, and in April 1996, police arrested hundreds of Muslim youths as Muslims were preparing to celebrate the Idd festival.

Moreover, the ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU) politicians encouraged the establishment of an alternative "Black African" Muslim party, the United Muslims of Africa (UMA), to rival the IPK, which its opponents falsely characterized as an expression of Kenyan "Arabs", because much of the IPK's leadership, certainly with the exception of Sheikh Balala, could be described as African Muslims.

Although immensely popular in the Mombassa street, the inflammatory rhetoric of Sheikh Balala provoked a power struggle within the organization that resulted in his expulsion from the party and in a moderation of the Party's massage. But, still, the Kenyan government has not lifted the ban on the party. In 1994, the Kenyan government moved to repeal Sheikh Balala's citizenship while he was visiting Germany. As a result, he was unable to return to Kenya for several years. He finally returned to electoral politics in an unsuccessful 2002 parliamentary race, after being allowed to return to Kenya.