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Department of Security Studies

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Operations of African States Against Violent Non-State Actors in Somalia, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Master's thesis

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Declaration

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2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

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References

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Abstract

The thesis focuses on violent non-state actors (VNSAs) operating in Africa, and operations of African countries against them. Firstly, the thesis conceptualizes and categorizes both VNSAs and state military operations, which are generally labeled as counterinsurgency operations. Secondly, in addition to the theoretical framework, the thesis provides an analysis of the types, regional distribution and motives of African VNSAs, which have been active between 2010 and 2020. Thirdly, the thesis analyses three case studies, namely AMISOM missions in Somalia since 2007, counterinsurgency operations in Nigeria against Boko Haram since 2009, and military operations against M23 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Based on the comparison of these case studies, the thesis describes the common characteristics and features of military operations of African states against VNSAs.

Abstrakt

Tématem práce jsou nestátní násilní aktéři (NNA) působící v Africe a zásahy afrických zemí proti těmto aktérům. Teze konceptualizuje a kategorizuje jak NNA, tak státní vojenské operace proti těmto aktérům, které jsou jinak označovány za protipovstalecké operace. Kromě teoretického rámce práce poskytuje analýzu typů a regionálního působení afrických NNA mezi lety 2010 a 2020. V další části jsou analyzovány tři případové studie, konkrétně mise AMISOM v Somálsku od roku 2007, protipovstalecké operace v Nigérii proti Boko Haram od roku 2009 a vojenské operace proti skupině M23 v Demokratické republice Kongo. Na základě porovnání těchto případových studií jsou v práci popsány společné charakteristiky vojenských operací afrických států proti NNA.

Keywords

Violent non-state actor, Counterinsurgency, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia

Klíčová slova

Násilný nestátní aktér, protipovstalecká operace, Konžská demokratická republika, Nigérie, Somálsko

Title

Operations of African States Against Violent Non-State Actors in Somalia, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Název práce

Operace afrických států proti nestátním násilným aktérům v Somálsku, Nigérii a Konžské demokratické republice

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Lists of abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AIAI	Al-Itahaad al-Islamiya
AMISOM	The African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	The African Union
BRSC	Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council
CAR	Central African Republic
CFR	The Council on Foreign Relations
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CNDP	Congres National pour la Défense du People
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CW	Cold War
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Forces Armées de la Republique Démocratique du Congo
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FSI	Fragile State Index
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Regions
ICU	The Islamic Courts Union
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IGASOM	Intergovernmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission in Somalia
IS	Islamic State
ISWAP	Islamic State's West Africa Province
JTF	Joint Task Force
KDF	The Kenyan Defence Forces
LCBC	Lake Chad Basis Commission
M23	March 23 Movement
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MONUSCO	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo

MSMD/DPF	Derna Mujahideen Shura Council/Derna Protection Force
NA	The Nigerian Army
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NST	Nigeria Security Tracker
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PMC	Private Military Company
PSC	Private Security Company
SDB	Saraya Difaa al-Bengazhi
SNA	The Somali National Army
SSLM/A	South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	The United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSSC	United Nations System Staff College
UPC	Union pour la paix en Centrafrique
USDA	United State Department of Army
VNSA	Violent Non-State Actor
ZMC	The Zintan Military Council

Introduction

After the end of World War II, a potential nuclear conflict between the West and the East was widely considered as the greatest threat to global security. Although global powers brought the world several times on the edge of nuclear disaster, during the following decades, the gravity of the Cold War was shifted from potential large confrontation to smaller proxy conflicts. Since the end of the CW, the interstate armed conflicts have been firmly embedded in international relations, but new actors have emerged on the global theatre: violent non-state actors (VNSAs). While the probability of interstate conflict remains very low, the presence and activities of VNSAs pose a serious threat to the political and socio-economical security of many states, especially in the so-called the Third world.

The objective of the diploma thesis is to analyze military operation of African states against violent non-state actors, and subsequently to answer following research questions:

1) **What are the key strategic and tactical elements of counterinsurgency operations conducted by African states?**
2) **What are the main motives of African states to conduct counterinsurgency operations?**
3) **How do counterinsurgency operations conducted by African states evolve over the time?**

There are two key reasons for choosing the topic. First, the academic research is still primarily interested in COIN efforts of Western or developed countries, while comprehensive comparative analysis of COIN operations conducted by developing countries is not sufficient despite the scope and seriousness of impacts of VNSAs on the current political and security situation of many states, especially in Africa. The second reason is that I would like to build on my previous bachelor thesis, which analyzed military operations of NATO states in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Mali against VNSAs.

In the first chapter of the thesis, I will conceptualize and categorize heterogenous violent non-state actors into more homogenous subgroups of similar characteristics, which is essential for a better understanding of their behavior, motives, and goals. This step is crucial because the term VNSAs is very general and includes several types of groups with different motivations, orientations, and forms of organizations. In the second chapter, I will

apply the theoretical knowledge of individual VNSAs active in Africa since 2010 to analyze their regional and typological distribution. For that purpose, the thesis will include an extensive dataset providing key information about each of these regional actors. In chapter three, I will focus on a theoretical framework of operations against VNSAs, specifically on counterinsurgency operations, which will provide a solid background for further analysis of COIN operations of African states.

Chapter four will consist of the analysis of three case-studies of military operations against VNSAs conducted by African states: the African Union mission AMISOM against Harakat al-Shabaab in Somalia since 2007, the Nigerian operations against Boko Haram since 2009; and counterinsurgency against insurgency group M23 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2012 and 2013. These case studies are not selected randomly, but instead, they have been chosen according to three criteria: 1) selected case studies represent major armed conflicts with VNSAs in different regions of the continent, namely Eastern, Central, and West Africa; 2) the length of each COIN operation is sufficient for analysis of potential strategy evolution; 3) COIN actors differ case by case, from leading an international intervention in Somalia, through the Nigerian Army as primary COIN actor in Nigeria, to close cooperation between internal and external forces in case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the comparison of case-studies in chapter five will provide arguments necessary to answer the research questions. Therefore, the objective of the thesis is to contribute to the current academic research of activities of violent non-state actors in Africa, as well as to provide a comprehensive case-study analysis of military operations of regional states against these actors.

1. Conceptualization of Violent Non-State Actors

Many groups we now classify as violent non-state actors (VNSAs) have been an integral part of armed conflict for centuries, although they had not been considered as real independent actors of global theatre almost until the end of the Cold War. The main reason for this was that from the perspective of the realist theory of international relations, which was undoubtedly one of the leading theories of the 20th century, only states are actors in international affairs, while insurgent, terrorist, or criminal groups can only be considered an internal issue of a certain state. However, during past decades, the global security threats ceased to be a matter of state action alone, especially after the events of 9/11 (Ezrow, 2017, p. 3; Aydinli, 2016, p. 3). As Williams adds, particularly in the 21st century, VNSAs became a major challenger to the Westphalian states, largely due to the growing weakness and instability of many countries around the world (Williams, 2008, p. 5).

Today, a relatively large number of articles, papers, and studies focuses on violent non-state actors, as well as on social, political, security, or economic issues linked to them. This makes a clear conceptualization very important, as "*terminology is always a matter of agreement for purpose of common understanding* (Merari, 1993, p. 214)." However, like many other terms and phenomena of political science, there is no universal definition of VNSAs, but rather multiple approaches to conceptualize them promoted by different authors. Mulaj, for example, describes VNSAs generally as "*non-state private actors who use organized violence to achieve their goals* (Mulaj, 2010 as cited in Ludvík, 2016, p. 5)." A similar approach is shared by the United Nations, and UN System Staff College (UNSSC), which underlines the term non-state armed groups (used in place of violent non-state actors) should be a loose and broad category that "*can capture all different organizations that make use of violence in order to pursue goals as diverse as political power, economic return, social strife, religious mobilization, terrorism, etc.* (McQuinn; Oliva, 2014, p. 24)." On the other hand, Schneckener defines these actors more deeply as armed non-state actors, who „*are 1) willing and able to use violence for pursuing their objectives; and 2) not integrated into formalized state institutions such as regular armies, presidential guards, police or special forces* (Schneckener, 2006, p. 25)." However, he continues, "*they may be supported by state actors whether in an official or informal manner* (Ibid.)." Natasha Ezrow offers a different opinion arguing that the attempt to capture heterogeneous groups of actors by a single definition is misleading and inaccurate, and therefore such effort should be

abandoned. Instead, she writes, for a better understanding of the actors, academic studies need to divide these actors into several categories that would better describe their motives and behavior (Ezrow, 2017, p. 37).

1.1. Typology of Violent Non-State Actors

As mentioned above, VNSAs are an extremely heterogeneous set of actors that is difficult to define uniformly. Therefore, for academic research, it is crucial to divide them into several more homogeneous subgroups of similar characteristics as goals, motives, strategies, usage of violence, and relationship to the state. Some scholars like Duyvesteyn, Fumerton, and Zohar oppose the way to label non-state actors by referring to their strategies and methods of warfare because these strategies and methods could be deliberately switched over time by a VNSA. Instead, they prefer to categorize VNSAs according to their agenda (Zohar, 2016, p. 424 - 427). Although there are some other minor variances between individual authors on how to categorize VNSAs, the typologies are usually very similar to each other. In this diploma thesis, violent non-state actors will be divided into the following types: 1) *rebels, guerrilla fighters, and insurgencies*; 2) *militia, and vigilante groups*; 3) *paramilitary groups*; 4) *clan chiefs, and big men*; 5) *warlords*; 6) *marauders*, *and sobels*; 7) *terrorist groups*; 8) *criminal organizations, youth gangs, and pirates*; 9) *mercenaries, private security companies, and private military companies*. That division primarily draws from VNSA typologies of Phil Williams, Ulrich Schneckener, and UNSSC, but it also combines some of their original types by splitting or merging them, whenever a type definition from another resource seems to be more coherent, or uncluttered. For example, Williams excludes mercenaries from the VNSA typology, whereas Schneckener puts militias and paramilitary forces into one category, despite many differences between these actors.

Besides the typology, Schneckener argues these groups should be further analyzed according to four criteria. The first criterion is based on their approach to the existing order, dividing VNSAs into status-quo-keepers, or change-seekers. While the ultimate goal of the latters could be a change of government form, socio-economic reforms, a new political system, a state order, or even a change in the whole world order, the formers usually economically benefit from the current situation, or they are too weak to seek status quo change. The second criterion is linked with the existence or non-existence of territorial anchoring and aspirations. Obviously, every actor operates in a certain place over time,

however, only some are able to or try to control the area. Therefore, Schneckener distinguishes VNSAs as territorial, or non-territorial actors. The third criterion examines the use of physical or psychical violence, which means primary orientation on attacking, destroying, or weakening of enemy military forces to defeat them or force them to surrender, or a focus on undermining and breaking of the enemy morale by deploying psychological techniques. Deployment of psychological techniques is broadly understood as the usage of indiscriminate violence against enemy soft targets, widely called terrorist tactics. The fourth criterion analyzed a socio-political agenda, which oscillates between greed as economic motivation, and grievance, which is viewed as a political motive of VNSAs (Schneckener, 2006, p. 28-30). However, it should be mentioned all four criteria are considered by Schneckener as ideal-types and as he points "*in reality numerous grey zones exist, since groups sometimes undergo a transformation in the course of a conflict, […], nonetheless it does make sense to hold onto these distinctions because they allow us to make statements regarding the extent to which particular groups or individuals correspond to these ideal-type categories* (Ibid., p. 30-31)."

While Schneckener's criteria are intended for studying differences between particular types of violent non-state actors, Williams appoints the seven-dimensions framework for analyzing of concrete individual VNSA. These dimensions are 1) *motivation and purpose*; 2) *strength and scope*; 3) *the way in which they obtain funding or access to resources*; 4) *organizational structure*; 5) *the role of violence*; 6) *the relationship between VNSAs and state authorities*; 7) *the function VNSA fulfills for members and supporting constituencies* (Williams, 2008, p. 8-9). William's framework is a useful tool for deep analytical research of VNSA, and it will be used in the case-study chapter of this diploma thesis.

1.1.1. Rebels, Guerrilla Fighters, Insurgencies

Although some authors prefer one term over the others, generally speaking, rebels and insurgencies have the same meaning, therefore they are usually used interchangeably. On the other hand, the term '*guerrilla fighter*' is problematic to some extent, because it clearly refers to the guerrilla warfare tactic of fighting behind enemy lines, or to a strategy to "*avoid direct, decisive battles, to opt for a protracted struggle, which consists of many small clashes instead* (Merari, 1993, p. 222)." As Merari also argues, some military doctrines insist that "*the guerrilla is only an interim phase of the struggle, intended to enable the*

insurgents to build a regular army which will, eventually, win through conventional warfare (Ibid.)." For that reason, I view the term as a sub-group of violent actors of this category, therefore in this diploma thesis, I will primarily call these actors insurgents and their operation as insurgencies.

In its field manual, the United State Department of Army (USDA) defines an insurgency as "*an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict, and it is typically an internal struggle within a state, not between states* (USDA, 2009, p. 1-1)." It is undoubtedly a very vague and general definition requiring several add-ons. For example, according to Scheckener, insurgents not only fight for the governmental overthrow, but they could also seek their '*liberation'* from a government by the secession of a certain region or, as Williams argues, their efforts could be only limited to gaining autonomy on a central power (Schneckener, 2006, p. 25; Williams, 2008, p. 12). Nevertheless, what is the important point of the USDA definition is that it demonstrates that basically, the only common feature for all insurgencies is their ultimate goal. Apart from that, insurgent movements vary significantly, from their initial motives, using strategies and tactics, their level of military training and skills, or access to weaponry and the equipment needed. Moreover, gaining popular support is also a vital issue for all insurgents, and they have three possible approaches to the local population: 1) *persuasion*; 2) *subversion*; 3) *coercion* (U.S. Government, 2009 as cited in Muller, 2016, p. 18)

However, despite such heterogeneity, it is possible to make a general distinguishment of these actors according to their agenda leading them to uprise against state authorities. For this purpose, Zohar's types of rebellious non-state actors are usefull to be applied, despite the author's objections against conceptualizations and categorizations of VNSA, which are similar to the ones being used in this thesis. He divides insurgents as 1.) *secessionists* – seeking separation from the state, or to be a more autonomous part of the existing state; 2.) *social-revolutionary* – fighting for the regime and socio-economic changes within a country; 3.) *sectarian-revolutionary/ethnic-based* – seeking regime change to end sectarian marginalization; 4.) *global-revolutionary* – fighting for a change of the world order and system (Zohar, 2016, p. 427- 428). Analyzed by Schneckener criteria, insurgent movement should be generally considered territorially based change-seekers using physical violence, and driven by political motives.

1.1.2. Militia, Vigilante Groups

The category of militia, and vigilante groups could be generally defined as self-proclaimed defenders, whose creation came as a reaction to the absence, or weakness of the state apparatus, and its inability to provide at least a basic level of protection for part, or all of its population (Schneckener, 2006, p. 26). For that reason, these groups are active mainly in weak, or failed states, and unstable regions. From a state perspective, they are usually viewed as a threat, because, as Williams writes, "*if (militias) fill a functional hole left by the state, this in turn further challenges the legitimacy of the state* (Williams, 2008, p. 10)." On the other hand, pro-government militia (PGM) exist either, as "*a result of low state capacity or state collapse. These explanations contend that governments choose to delegate violence to supportive non-state actors either because they do not have the coercive capacity to stave off direct challenges by rebels or because they do not have the capacity to obtain private information about rebel constituencies* (Cunningham 2003; Davenport 2005 as cited in Magid; Schon 2018, p. 802)." Typically, militias are formed by specific ethnic, clan, tribal, or religious groups to protect their local political, social, and economic interests. However, besides these a priori self-defense purposes, these actors could also have an important offensive role in violent struggles between rival ethnic or religious groups, or worse, they could just take advantage of the security vacuum to exploit defenseless civilians. (Schneckener, 2006, p. 26, Williams, 2008, p. 10). As these actors benefit from the instability and state weakness, they should be considered as status quo keepers. Compared to non-state actors like warlords, clan chiefs, and big men, there is usually no charismatic leader, and their overall organizational structure is relatively poor. Furthermore, their typical characteristic is the low level of training and armament of their members. Nevertheless, similarly to insurgencies, these groups can vary greatly from region to region. From Schneckener's criteria perspective, militias could be considered both territorial and non-territorial status-quo-keepers, who are driven by political motives using physical, and psychological violence.

1.1.3. Paramilitary Groups

Similar to actors of the previous category, these groups operate in parallel with the official armed and security forces. What the key difference is that in this case, the state tolerates, or even initiates the creation of such groups, and uses them as auxiliary irregular units acting on behalf of the state in a certain situation, particularly in fighting rebel groups

(Schneckener, 2006, p. 25). There is an economical as well as a practical reason for the state to do so. Therefore, paramilitary groups are often used in counter-insurgencies, which makes them usually highly experienced in that types of warfare. First, paramilitary groups are a much cheaper alternative to costly deployment of an official armed force, especially in case of governments and leaders of weak or failed states with chronically undeveloped and insufficiently funded armies. From a practical perspective, the military capabilities and value of government forces are often undermined by the fact their primary purpose is to protect ruling elites from potential rivals by suppressing political opposition, but not to be deployed in regular or irregular warfare. Like the previous categories, the level of organization, training, and equipment of these groups varies greatly. However, paramilitary units could pose a double-edged sword for their creator, because once established, they "*often evade government control and, in the course of a conflict, developed their own agenda* (Ibid., p. 26)."

1.1.4. Clan Chiefs, Big Men

Clan chiefs and big men are traditional territorial actors representing social authorities in a certain area and for a certain group of inhabitants, who identifies themselves on tribal, clan, ethnic or religious basis (Schneckener, 2006, p. 25). The actors are able to form armed groups, in which members are almost exclusively recruited from their own ethnic or religious group. These groups then provide a defense, but sometimes also offensive power against their rivals or their main purpose is to deter potential enemies (Ibid.). Like militias, they coexist with the state armed forces and do not seek to change the status quo. Their relationship with the state can range from hostility to mutual tolerance. In some cases, the state apparatus could seek to cooperate with them, especially when there is an existence of a common enemy, external threats, and so on. However, similarly to militias, their real combat value is highly questionable, but they can play an important role as auxiliary forces. Analyzed by Schneckener criteria, big men and clan chiefs should be considered territorially based status-quo-keepers, who use physical violence to obtain political goals.

1.1.5. Warlords

Unlike traditional clan chief and big men, warlords are a typical product of a conflict or post-conflict environment, who mostly have no territorial, ethnic, or tribal ties (Schneckener, 2006, p. 26). Duffield defines them as "*leaders of an armed bands, possibly*

numbering up to several thousand fighters, who can hold territory locally and at the same time act financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state in which he is based (Duffield, 1998 as cited in Jackson, 2003, p. 132)." In other words, they are opportunistic actors, and their main goal is a personal gain and economic looting of an area from whose resources they finance their fighters. In certain cases, they are able to maintain some form of quasi-governance (Jackson, 2003, p. 139), or they can be paid by the local population and business owners to provide a degree of stability in conflict-torn areas (Williams, 2008, p. 10). Warlords are notoriously involved in criminal activities such as drug and arms smuggling and the plundering of natural wealth, but they can often seek political gain after the conflict ends (Schneckener, 2006, p. 26) Warlords should be analyzed as both territorial and non-territorial actors keeping the status quo, often willing to use both psychological, and physical violence to obtain economic gains.

1.1.6. Marauders, Sobels

Most authors do not distinguish this group as Schneckener does. Instead, they see it sufficient to consider marauders and sobels as militias or possibly warlords. However, several differences make it useful to distinguish them as a separate category of VNSAs. According to Schneckener, these actors could be defined as "*demobilized or scatted former combatants who engage in looting, pillaging, and terrorizing defenseless civilians during o rafter the end of a violent conflict* (Schneckener, 2006, p. 27)." Unlike militias, they cannot be viewed as self-proclaimed fighters as their sole goal is not a protection of the interests of a particular ethnic or religious group, but instead, it is to economic profit from exploitation of the civilian population in the area they are operating in. The term sobel is combination of words soldier and rebel, because these actors behave as "*soldiers by day, rebels by night* (Jackson, 2003, p. 141)." Sobels are not territorial, on the contrary, they move through the post-conflict area where the security vacuum occurs. Unlike warlords, they have a minimal organizational structure and combat value, but over time they can be transformed into a different kind of VNSA, or they can be used as auxiliary corps of pro-government paramilitary groups in the event of an ongoing intra-political conflict.

1.1.7. Terrorist groups

In political science, there is decades-lasting debate about how to define the nature of terrorism and how to label violent actors as terrorist groups. The fundamental problem is that there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism, and in different countries the concept of terrorism is perceived in different ways. Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this thesis to analyze the issue in depth, therefore, for VNSA categorization, it will be sufficient to draw on the University of Maryland and its Global Terrorism Database (GTD), and Alex Schmid's definitions of terrorism. According to the GTD, an act of terrorism is "*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation* (GTD, 2020)." In more detail, Schmid sees terrorism as "*an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by a (semi-) clandestine individual group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby, in contrast to the assassination, the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly from a target population and serve as message generators* (Schmid, 1988 as cited in Bakker, 2015, p. 40)." Although both provide clear definitions of what should be considered as an act of terror, there is still a question of whether the actor using terror should be automatically labeled as a terrorist. Williams argues only those actors for whom "*the use of indiscriminate violence against civilian targets is not only central to their strategies but it is also their defining characteristic* (Williams, 2008, p. 14)" should be considered as terrorist groups. Moreover, he adds most of these groups use a terrorist strategy simply because they "*do not have the capacity to mount an insurgency campaign, but seek to discredit the state and undermine its authority through provoking increasing repression in response to acts of violence* (Ibid., p. 15)." On the other hand, some authors oppose the very idea to identify violent non-state actors only by the usage of a certain strategy or tactic (Zohar, 2016). Others view terrorism as only one of the strategies used by insurgent movements (Merari, 1993) or consider it as a type of violence besides irregular conflict, or gang violence (Ezrow, 2017). Nevertheless, I still consider it as reasonable to keep terrorist groups as a separate category of VNSAs, as it is done in typologies of Williams, Schneckener, United Nations, European Union, and etc.

From an organizational perspective, there are two main ways how terrorist groups are organized: by decentralized clandestine cell system, also known as network structured, or by hierarchical command-cadre structure (Gunaratna; Oreg, 2010, p. 1045). By focusing

on its motivation and ideological agenda, Europol identifies five different types of terrorism: 1) *religiously-inspired*; 2) *ethno-nationalist and separatist*; 3) *left-wing and anarchist*; 4) *right-wing*; and 5) *single-issue terrorism* (Bakker, 2015, p. 33). Looking at these types, it is clear that a common feature for all terrorist organizations is that they are seeking a change of current order and status quo.

1.1.8. Criminal Organizations, Youth Gangs, Pirates

Due to the fact, that in many countries and regions of the world, these actors are able to limit the power of state apparatus, or even push it out from certain parts of a state, the criminal organizations are consensually considered by scholars as VNSAs. Once again, this type is a very diverse group, which includes narco-cartels and drug syndicates, smugglers of drugs, weapons, and other illegal or restricted commodities. It also includes so-called young gangs of usually poor young men excluded from society trying to find fortune and better social status in violent organizations. Young gangs largely present in Central America, but also in many African countries, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Describing their illicit activities, Williams paraphrases Clausewitz that for these actors "*crime is simply a continuation of business by other means* (Williams, 2008, p. 15)." As a consequence, their presence and activities may not always be automatically associated with significant numbers of human casualties as a lot of these actors seek to keep a low profile. On the other hand, in many cases, these organizations are showing extraordinary violence and brutality, both to their criminal competitors and to the state apparatus, and definitely to the civilian population. Although there are no doubts their violent activities undermine the role of the state and its institutions, it is important to mention that criminal organizations generally prefer to operate in weak states over failed ones, because the chaotic environment of a collapsed state could also jeopardize their own illicit activities. As James Forest argues, there is a high level of interaction between criminal and terrorist networks, as terrorists seek to "*raise funds for their group's operational needs* (Forest, 2019, p. 5). Analyzed by Schneckener criteria, criminal actors should be generally considered non-territorial status-quo-keepers using psychological violence, who are almost exclusively driven by economical motives.

1.1.9. Mercenaries, Private Security Companies, Private Military Companies

According to the Oxford definition, a mercenary is "*a soldier who will fight for any country or group that offers payment* (OLD, 2020)." Pattison adds that these fighters are "*motivated by profit alone, not driven by patriotism or the call of duty* (Pattison, 2014 as cited in FINABEL, 2019)." Historically, recruiting such professional fighters has played a significant, if not crucial role in several armed conflicts. However, their status today is highly contentious, and many states, politicians, and scholars completely reject the legality of their possible use in modern conflicts because of their parallel status to official state armed forces, and because of this disagreement of opinion, their legal status in international law remains very questionable and unclear, too. Yet, despite these differences of opinion and legal ambiguity, it is a fact that these actors are a part and parcel of modern conflicts, which can be proved by the fact that more than 160 000 contractors of private security companies (PSC) and private military companies (PMC) operated during the Second Gulf War in 2008, alone and also that 2020 annual volume of the PSC/PMC industry will likely exceed 240 billion dollars (FINABEL, 2019, p. 5, p. 12).

Gulam explains the different designations of PMC and PSC that "*the first provides military services and the other provides for the protection of individuals and property for private and humanitarian stakeholder*s (Gulam, 2005 as cited in FINABEL, 2019, p. 7)." In contrast to paramilitary forces, the PMC and PSC are coming from outside of certain conflict areas they are hired to operate in, while usually provide services of a high degree of professionalism. Moreover, as is routine, their deployment is limited to concrete tasks, and they "*act on a legalized and licensed basis, ..., and they are contracted by governments, companies or other non-state actors* (Schneckener, 2006, p. 27)." On the other hand, Williams argues that due to the existence of such official ties with governments, and due to some degree of legal regulation, mercenaries should not be considered as VNSA, especially because most of the VNSAs operate outside the law (Williams, 2008, p. 9). However, I disagree with this opinion as PMC and PSC show a high level of independence, and also, they clearly fit in Schneckener´s definition of VNSAs, therefore I subsumed them into the typology.

2. Violent Non-State Actors in Africa

In the previous theoretical section, the varied groups have been conceptualized as the violent non-state actors and then categorized, and divided into several types, but purposely with no further references to concrete actors of particular regions. Nevertheless, only the practical application of the theoretical framework could provide a colourful picture of VNSAs, as well as a better understanding of their role and influence on the global security environment. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will move from a general perspective of studying these actors to a regional one. More specifically, I will focus on violent non-state actors, who have operated in Africa since 2010.

2.1. The Dataset of African Violent Non-State Actors

To analyze the activities of non-state violent actors in Africa and their impact on individual regions and countries, it was essential to create a dataset providing the following key information about each actor: 1*) name; 2) acronym, 3) type, 4) active years; 5) size; 6) number of related deaths; 7) main actor´s enemy; and 8) region of its presence*. If the name of individual actors has changed, the original and new names are separated by the '/' sign, which is the same in the case of active years. Actors are divided according to the VNSA typology of the previous chapter. As was already mentioned, many VNSAs fall into several categories, which is also reflected in the Dataset. However, it is necessary to clarify that territorial actors identified as terrorists / religious militias usually have a large membership and also direct territorial aspirations. In contrast, those considered solely as terrorists operate in small cells, and they are not territorially based.

The reliability of estimates of the size of VNSA groups is extremely diverse. Information about some actors is extensive and credible, but in the case of others, it is very limited or questionable. For this reason, the credence of these numbers is highlighted in colour: green indicates trusted numbers, yellow probable, red unverifiable ones. Unfortunately, the size of some actors cannot be determined due to the lack of sources, which is mainly the case of ethnic militias, because it is not possible to automatically connect the size of an ethnic group with its armed forces.

The crucial source of numbers of related deaths was the Database of Uppsala University, which is called the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. The UCDP "*is the world's main provider of data on organized violence and the oldest ongoing data collection project*

for civil war, with a history of almost 40 years (UCDP, 2020a)." Based on the UCDP data, an individual VNSA was included in the Dataset if they met the condition of 50 related death per year. The purpose of the precondition is to separate non-state actors who have been associated only with low or isolated violence, thus making it possible to focus on relevant violent actors operating on the African continent since 2010. In addition to the number of related deaths, the UCDP also projects these numbers directly onto the world map. Therefore, the regions, federal states, or provinces of the individual countries in which VNSAs operate can be precisely identified.

As I mentioned above, the UCDP was a key, but not only resource in creating the Dataset, as in many cases the UCDP information about VNSAs is missing, outdated, or misleading. Moreover, the purpose of the UCDP is different, as the Dataset has been designed to allow comparison of individual VNSAs based on their typology, time, and site of action. Thanks to this, I was able to analyze the presence of these actors in individual regions of Africa, as will be demonstrated in the next paragraphs. In my analysis, I have drawn from the regional division of the African Union, which, in my opinion, better reflects regional ties of the individual states than the division of the United Nations. According to my findings, there are 25 African countries, where VNSAs related to more than 50 deaths per year have been present since 2010. Furthermore, I estimated that at least 140 000 individuals were killed during incidents related to activities of these actors between 2010 and 2020. The Dataset, and the map of territorial distribution of VNSA in Africa, which is based on the Datasets, are in the appendix part of this thesis as Appendix no.1, and Appendix no. 2, respectively.

2.2. North Africa

In North Africa, four out of seven countries have a significant presence of VNSAs on their territories. Namely, these countries are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. In Mauritania, Morocco, and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which is unrecognized but seen as a de facto state, activities of local organized violent groups are none or do not exceed 50 related deaths per year. Moreover, in the case of Tunisia, VNSA activities were occasional and a level of violence related to them is currently relatively low. On the other hand, the situation in Algeria and Libya is a completely different story. Both countries had been greatly destabilized during an anti-government uprising in 2011, also known as 'the Arab Spring', which was eventually followed by a prolonged civil war in the Libyan case.

Although Algeria was able to prevent a state collapse, its government and citizens suffered greatly during the last decade due to activities of terrorist groups, concretely of the *Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb*. In Libya, a complete state collapse and security vacuum allowed dozens of armed groups of different sizes to establish themselves since Muammar Gaddafi's regime failed. While the civil war had hit the entire country, the most affected areas of VNSA activities are around the cities of Benghazi and Derna in the Northern part of Cyrenaica province, and the cities of Tripoli, Misurata, and Syrta in the Northern part of Tripolitania province.

Due to the fact that there is more than one official government with some level of recognition or international support, the identification of some VNSAs is ambiguous as they could be viewed as insurgents from one perspective, or as state officials from another. This is the case of forces of the Government of National Accord, the Forces of the House of Representatives, and partly the Libyan National Army. The rest of the involved VNSAs varies from ethnic militias - Tuaregs, Toubou People; religious militias/terrorists - IS, *Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council* (BRSC), D*erna Mujahideen Shura Council/Derna Protection Force* (MSMD/DPF); to strongmen and insurgent movements - *The Zintan Military Council* (ZMC), and *Saraya Difaa al-Bengazhi* (SDB). Also, many of them have evolved, or fall into two or more types of VNSA. Besides Libya and Algeria, even Egypt has to manage the effects of the presence of VNSA on its territory, mostly religious militias and terrorist groups. While many non-state groups were active during the turbulent years of the Arab Spring, only two have reached the level of violence to be included in the Dataset of this thesis. Out of them, the most eminent and noteworthy is the Islamic State, which is present in the country since it merged with Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis in 2014. The group has perpetrated numerous terrorist attacks against civilians and military targets since 2014, like the bombing of a civilian airliner in 2015 (UCDP, 2020b). While the group has been under significant pressure since the launch of the 2019 Egyptian counter-terrorism offensive, it is still able to conduct its violent actions throughout the entire country (Ibid.).

Based on the Dataset, the most of VNSAs involved in the violence in the region falls into the terrorist group category, but various ethnic or religious militias and insurgent movements are present as well, especially in Libya. Drawing from UCDP data, the violent non-state actors active in North Africa could be related to the deaths of at least 20 000 individuals over the past decade, but due to missing information from certain areas such as Libya, it is more than likely these are only low-estimated numbers.

2.3. East Africa

According to the African Union regional division, East Africa consists of 14 countries. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that in reality, some of them barely exist in the first place. Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan are completely failed countries chronically affected by desperate internal socio-economic, political, and security situation. Others, such as Ethiopia and Uganda also struggle greatly from internal conflict and instability. For these reasons, it is not surprising the presence and activities of the VNSAs are on a very high level in East Africa. In addition, their presence consequently leads to a vicious cycle as the violent non-state actors further undermine and degrade the already miserable situation, which makes more space for the potential creation of another violent group.

Based on the Dataset, 47 violent non-state actors have operated for some period of time in six East African countries since 2010, namely in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda. These actors vary greatly, but it is possible to identify the most frequent types of VNSA in the regions, which are insurgency movements, ethnic militias, religious militias, and terrorist groups. The insurgents, or rebel groups, are mainly present in South Sudan and Sudan as a consequence of the civil war in former Sudan. Some of the ex-insurgent groups as *South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army* (SSLM/A) were integrated into newly formed government forces of both successor countries, but a lot of other groups remain active even after the secession, especially in border areas. In Sudan, a large number of non-state violent actors, mostly separatists and ethnic militias, are involved in a long-term conflict over the independence of Darfur province in the western part of the country. Besides Sudan, the Ethiopian government has to face insurgents, as well, concretely ONLF insurgents (*Ogaden National Liberation Front*) in the eastern region and, most currently, Tigray People's Liberation Front, which have launched an uprising in northern Tigray province in November 2020 (Bearak, 2020).

Ethnic militias are omnipresent in the region because of large ethnic diversity on one hand and as a response to an absence of state apparatus and security vacuum on the other. Moreover, because ethnicity does not always copy official borders, these actors overlap territories of individual states, which could further increase ethnic tensions, especially in border areas, for example as Somali region in Ethiopia, and West Pokot in Kenya. Similar to ethnic militias, even terrorist groups and religious militias often operate across borders. Particularly, that is the case of Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen, also known as Al-Shabaab,

which is undoubtedly the most lethal non-state actor in the region. Moreover, many smaller religious groups joined or merged with Al-Shabaab during the last years, which is a clear evidence of its leading role in the region. Because the group and its activities, as well as efforts to counter them, will be discussed in the following chapter, I would like to only mention that Al-Shabaab is related to more than 23 000 deaths since its establishment in 2006, and more than 19 000 since 2010. Any other actor included in the Dataset does not come even close to such numbers.

Based on UCDP, more than 50 000 individuals have been killed in the region during the last decade in conflicts related to the VNSAs, who fulfil 50 related deaths per year criteria to be included in the dataset of this thesis. Therefore, East Africa has the deadliest rate linked with activities of the VNSAs compared to other regions of the African continent.

2.4. Central Africa

From socio-economic, political, and security perspectives, the situation in most of the nine Central African countries is very similar to their East Africa counterparts. Concretely, Burundi, Cameroon, and the Congo Republic are listed by Fragile State Index between 25 of the most fragile and unstable countries in the world, while Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Central African Republic (CAR) are among the worst ten (FSI, 2020). Similar to Somalia, DRC and CAR could be rightfully considered as collapsed states suffering from a prolonged internal conflict and chronic instability. Each of the six fragile countries mentioned above faces a significant presence of VNSAs on its soil. That proves William's argument that "*although the patterns of causation are not always clear, there is a correlation between state weakness and the emergence of one or another kind of VNSA. States with low legitimacy are unable to create or maintain the loyalty and allegiance of their population* (Williams, 2008, p. 6)." In other words, the violent non-state actors are both causes, and also the symptoms of weak statehood and a conflict environment.

Focusing concretely on the Central Africa VNSAs, 31 violent non-state actors have operated for some period of time in the region since 2010, but 26 of them are active in only two countries, CAR and DRC. As mentioned above, both countries factually exist only on paper. The official CAR government forces are barely able to control areas around the capital and some prefectures in the west, while the rest of the country is a battlefield divided into zones of interests of dozens of armed groups of different sizes, motives, and goals. In 2013, the heterogeneous Muslim alliance called Séléka had overthrown president Francois Bozizé.

However, the presidential effort to partially integrate Séléka into official armed forces and disbandment of the rest of Séléka fighters failed in late 2013. This development motivated many former Séléka members to create a new rebel group, named *Front Populaire pour la renaissance de Centrafrique*, also known as ex-Séléka, which was later displaced by *Union pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC). Meanwhile, as a response to a deteriorating of a situation and religious violence between Christians and predominantly Muslim groups as Séléka and UPC, the Christian group anti-Balaka has been established in 2013 (UCPD, 2020c). Since then, insurgent groups UPC and anti-Balaka are in permanent violent conflict not only between each other, and also with the government forces (CFR, 2020).

The situation in the neighbouring DR the Congo is just as critical as in CAR. The country was devastated by two continental wars, a civil war, ethnic conflicts, and a long-running humanitarian crisis that resulted in famine and several epidemics. Over the last decade, the government forces have clashed with several rebel groups, such as M23 in 2013. However, the most critical situation is undoubtedly in the east of the country, especially in the provinces of North and South Kivu, where the military fights the rebel group called *Forces démocratiques de libértion du Rwanda* (FDLR), as well as fighters from the Ugandan group *Allied Democratic Forces* (ADF), who commit terrible atrocities on the local population. Furthermore, since 2016, the central government has faced a serious threat in the form of the Kamuina Nsapu uprising in the north-west of the country, led by a strongman Jean-Pierre Mpandi, which has already claimed more than 4 000 lives (UCDP, 2020d; Hoebeke, 2017). Besides rebel groups, several smaller ethnic militias operate in the DRC, which have armed clashes of various sizes with other groups. Unfortunately, it is not possible to find out the exact numbers of fighters who operate in these groups, yet the consequences of these clashes are very bloody, as evidenced by the high numbers of related deaths.

The overall situation in most regions of Central Africa remains alarming at best, as there are no reasons to believe the regional countries would be able to significantly change it in a foreseeable future. Focusing on the past decade, more than 30 000 deaths could be related to violence linked with the presence and activities of VNSAs, and it is very unfortunate that the number is certainly going to increase in the next years.

2.5. West Africa

West Africa is an extremely diverse region, both demographically, politically, and climatically, comprising of 15 states. While large countries in the north, such as Mali and

Niger are landlocked, and largely consist of uninhabitable deserts, the states of the south have access to the ocean, their population density is significantly higher and their territories are mainly covered by savannahs and tropical forests. The reason I mention these factors is that they have a significant impact on the character of VNSA and their activities in the area, as well as they affect the way operations against these actors have been conducted. In a deeper analysis of the activities of regional VNSAs, it is possible to clearly identify the 3 main types of areas where these actors operate.

First, there are the densely urbanized coastal areas of Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and partly Senegal. According to the typology, the most active VNSAs there are local gangs, as in the case of Nigeria, or rebel groups such as Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC) in Senegal and Forces de résistance du Grand Ouest (FRGO) in Côte d'Ivoire. The second type of areas with a high incidence of VNSAs are deserts, as in eastern Niger and northern Mali, where non-state violent actors are active mainly in desert cities. Despite their small size and population density, these urban areas are still of high strategic importance, both as potential targets and also for the possibility of infiltration and cover. The result of the country's collapse in 2012 and the ensuing civil war in 2013 has origin in areas of Mali's desert cities, where a large number of violent actors, including ethnic groups, former rebels, rebel groups, religious militias, and terrorist groups, had been created. The central government's inability to seize these areas under permanent and effective control is the main reason not only for the number but also for the size of local violent groups. Moreover, these actors have evolved significantly over the years, making it extremely difficult to accurately analyze them and identify their motives and objectives. In any case, religious militia and the terrorist group *Jama'a Nusrat*, also known as JNIM, operating in northern desert cities, is among the most prominent groups active in the country. This group probably has more than 2 000 members and it is responsible for more than 1 100 deaths during its existence. It was formed as an alliance of Islamist groups and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in 2017, and in addition to Mali, it also operates on the territory of neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger (ECFR, 2019). Another major Malian player is the rebel group *Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad*, shortly CMA, which sought independence from the central government in the northern part of the country. Besides these, there are pro-government groups, such as the *Plateforme coalition*, which includes several smaller groups supporting the central government in its struggles with insurgents and religious militias.

The third area type with a high presence of VNSAs are savannas and tropical forests, which are located mainly in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, namely in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. It is in these areas where two key non-state violent groups of the region operate. Particularly, these are *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*, also known as Boko Haram, and Islamic State's West Africa Province, shortly ISWAP. These groups fall clearly into the category of religious militias and terrorist groups. In 2018, Boko Haram announced its links to the international group Islamic State. For that reason, the UCDP argues that Boko Haram pledged allegiance to IS (UCDP, 2020e), but other authors point out that it was mainly a strategic statement and the group remained independent (HRW, 2020; Crisis Group, 2020a). By contrast, ISWAP was formed as a regional affiliate of IS, but over time has emerged from the Arab leadership of IS. Moreover, ISWAP is also considered, but not rightfully, as the Boko Haram splinter group, because there is some degree of cooperation and coordination between both groups (Crisis Group, 2020a). In any case, ISWAP and Boko Haram pose a long-term threat to both government forces and, more importantly, for the local population. Since 2010, Boko Haram and ISWAP have been responsible for the deaths of nearly 20 000 people, the unprecedented wave of terror against the civilian population, the migration crisis, and several kidnappings, for instance, the most well-known case of the kidnapping of almost 300 female students took place in 2014. In addition to religious groups, a large number of ethnic-based actors are active in Nigeria, as she is the most heterogeneous country in Africa. These actors are predominantly ethnic and tribal militias, and vigilantes operating mainly in the central and northern states of Nigeria. Armed clashes between these groups are frequent and violent, which has resulted in several thousands of deaths in the last decade. The high level of national instability could be seen as a clear evidence of the inability of Nigerian government forces to secure a monopoly of legitimate violence for themselves.

Compared to other regions of Africa, there is an exceptionally high portion of religious groups and terrorist groups, as well as ethnic and tribal militias between VNSAs in West Africa. The difference is that in contrast to Central and East Africa, there are weak states with territorially limited power rather than complete collapsed states in West Africa. This is likely to be due to the long-term presence of western countries’ armed forces, mainly French ones, which have prevented the collapse of Mali in recent years, for instance. Moreover, because of its regional military bases and colonial past, France could be seen as a guarantor for many West African countries preventing them from collapsing under

potential pressure from non-state violent actors. Nevertheless, according my dataset, the presence and activities of VNSA have been responsible for the deaths of nearly 50 000 individuals over the past decade, and they will likely continue to pose a major threat to the security situation in West Africa for the foreseeable future. Moreover, given the presence of internationally active terrorist groups, there is also a significant risk of negative impact on other African regions, or even for countries outside of the continent.

2.6. South Africa

In South African countries, there is almost a zero presence of VNSAs in the past ten years. By end of 2020, the only areas where these actors play a significant role are Mozambique and the Angolese enclave of Cabinda. In the former case, the echoes of the 1990's rebellion of an insurgent group called RENAMO (*Resistência nacional Moçambicana*) led to the new wave of violence between the rebel group and government in 2013. Almost 150 had been killed before the conflict ceased by a peace agreement in 2019. A more challenging issue for the Mozambique government are the activities of a terrorist group in the northern region of Cabo Delgado responsible for more than 700 deaths. The group was known as *Ansar al-Sunnah* before its most likely merge with IS in 2019. During the last two years, Ansar al-Sunnah, and eventually IS, has been reportedly able to increase the scale of its operations in the border area with Somalia. In the case of Angola, its government has to face the long-term separatist movement of FLEC-FAC-TN (*Frente da Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda - Forças Armadas de Cabinda - Tiago Nzita*) faction established in the early 1960's, which is seeking independence for the northern Angolese enclave of Cabinda. Although it is not possible to estimate the size of the rebel group, the number of related deaths in the last ten years is relatively low, around 90 victims.

3. Military Operations Against Violent Non-State Actors

As I have already mentioned VNSAs could have different ties and attitudes towards a state in whose territory they operate, but what is common for them is that due to their presence, these actors often undermine the internal integrity and sovereignty of the state. More specifically, if the government tolerates or directly supports VNSAs activities on its soil, para-state structures are created, whereas if the state violently challenges them, its very existence may be directly threatened (Schneckener, 2008, p. 36). Quoting Schneckener, "*generally speaking, armed non-state actors can be seen as classical spoilers of trouble-makers for state-building and peace-building efforts* (Ibid., p. 35)." For that reason, in the following chapter, I will focus on the question of what are possible approaches for a state to decrease activities and presence, or even eliminate these actors at all.

Schneckener identifies seven strategies of how governments deal with VNSAs. First is *negotiating a political settlement* with an ultimate goal to persuade non-state actors to abandon the use of violence in exchange for a political concession from the government. However, this approach is only possible in limited cases of certain VNSAs, mainly clan chiefs, big men, insurgence, or even religious militias, as these actors have clear political agenda to negotiate. The second one is usually a medium to a long-term strategy of *socialization of VNSAs* by institutional arrangements like the electoral system or power-sharing. Once again, this strategy is also primarily used in cases of politically oriented VNSAs. The third strategy is *bribery*, which could be effective mainly in dealing with profit-driven VNSAs as warlords, para-militias, criminal groups, or sobels. *Amnesty* is another option for the state, but similar to bribery, it could be negatively received by society, especially by individuals who suffered greatly during the conflict. Fifth, there is *containment and marginalization*, which is based on "*systematic isolation of (VNSA) from actual or potential followers and their constituencies as well as to marginalize them* (Schneckener, 2008, p. 37)." The next strategy is based on efforts to *split VNSA by enforcing internal rivalry*, for instance by proposing separate deals with individual leading figures. But, as Schneckener underlines, this could lead to the creation of a more radical and aggressive group wing with even more limited willingness for future peace talks and settlements with the government. The seventh is a *coercion strategy* linked with the use of force and economical instruments, typically economic sanctions, which could be particularly effective against VNSA such as para-militaries, rebel leaders, and warlords (Schneckener, 2008, p.

37). Although some strategies are suitable only in certain circumstances, state authorities usually have more than one approach available for their efforts to eliminate or to decrease the influence of VNSAs, but the use of force does not have to be the only option.

Nevertheless, the object of this thesis is to analyze cases in which states, for some reason, have utilized violent means against violent non-state actors by conducting military operations, specifically counterinsurgency operations. At this point, it is necessary to explain that, despite how they are labeled, these operations can be conducted not only against VNSAs, which fall into the category of insurgent groups but also against other types of these actors, such as militias, warlords, sobels, etc. Therefore, counterinsurgency could be more precisely described as an operation against those violent non-state actors which, either by their ultimate purpose, activities or even by their existence, threaten the stability or the very existence of the state to such an extent that the state is forced to use military means against them at a significant level. However, COINs cannot be automatically confused with any use of legitimate violence that the state applies against violent actors, such as criminal organizations or pirates, because these operations are usually conducted by other means and to a lesser extent. Moreover, they are usually managed by state or local security forces, usually under the ministry of interior.

Besides, in the last few decades with the rise of terrorist attacks, several states have been developing a new approach, known as counter-terrorism. Even though many current military interventions are labeled as such, Kilcullen and other authors draw attention to the issue of this term. For example, Fukuyama points out that "*the war on terrorism is a misnomer, …, terrorism is only a means to an end; in this regard, a war on terrorism makes no more sense than a war on submarines* (Fukuyama, 2003 as cited in Kilcullen, 2010, p. 165)." Kilcullen agrees with him while adding that since current "counterterrorism operations" are primarily conducted against globalized Islamic insurgency, therefore it is best to combat them by counterinsurgency approach (Ibid., p. 165 - 166).

I would like to disclose that in my 2017 bachelor thesis I distinguished COIN and CONT operations because I saw the difference between them (Müller, 2017, p. 19). Although I have drawn on many sources and authors, currently I consider the arguments of Kilcullen and others to be more accurate, mainly because the nature of many groups that are referred to as terrorist groups is very similar or even identical to the other actors against whom COIN operations are conducted.

3.1. Counterinsurgency Operations

In my bachelor thesis, I wrote that counterinsurgency operations can be evaluated from many perspectives. For example, from a military point of view "*counterinsurgency is simply a type of military operation, and it is conducted differently by different countries* (Watts et al., 2014, as cited in Müller, 2017, p. 16)." But the problem with such narrow understanding of the term is that it ignores the interconnectedness of many other aspects of these operations that are crucial for them. For that reason, a deeper and broad definition is definitely needed.

Scott Moore defines counterinsurgency operations (COINs) in more depth as "*an integrated set of political, economic, social, and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, create and maintain stable political, economic, and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions for necessary lasting stability* (Moore, 2011, p. 14)." According to Kilcullen, COIN is a very broad umbrella term, which includes all the range of measures the government is trying to defeat the insurgents. Nevertheless, he underlines each COIN always varies from another, and therefore, it is unrealistic to try to find panacea of single successful strategy. He continues that "*like cancer, insurgencies exist in thousands of forms, and there are dozens of techniques to treat them, hundreds of different populations in which they occur, and several major schools of thought on how best to deal with them* (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 1)."

Although every COIN is specific, each operation plan is based on these factors: *the characteristics of the environment* (physical, economic, political, and human) in which it takes place; *the nature of the insurgent* group (or groups); and *the nature of the counterinsurgent government* and its security forces (USG, 2009, p. 12). Galula focuses more deeply on the environment, describing the various effects of geographic and socio-economic factors that have to be taken into account, which are: 1) *locations* – deserts, hills, lakes, *forests*; 2) *size*; 3) configuration – archipelagos, mainland, etc.; 4) *borders* – length of the borders, political attitudes of neighborhood countries; 5) *terrain*; 6) *climate*; 7) *populations* – distribution, size, density; 8) *economy* (Galula, 1964, p. 23-24). Besides that, he distinguishes four types of areas according to who currently controls them: a) *regular bases* under full control of government and regular troops; b) *guerrilla bases* – under full and undisturbed control of insurgency forces; c) *guerrilla areas* of constant contending

between COIN and insurgency forces; d) *occupied areas* – under significant control of COIN forces, but with the underground presence of insurgents. (Ibid., p. 37-38)

Despite such diversity, Watts argues that there are three basic principles, and inclusion or absence of them is defining for a certain form of counterinsurgency strategy. These principles are 1) *political accommodation of reconcilable opposition*; 2) *discriminate use of violence against irreconcilable opposition*; 3) *public-good provision to disaffected communities* (Watts, 2014, p. 11). Based on the government's compliance with them, Watts distinguishes four forms of counterinsurgency. The first are classic COINs, which are distinguished by their emphasis on the implementation of the three principles. According to Watts, this form is most often associated with the UK, the US, and most of Western democracies, although it should be noted that other authors usually labeled this form of COIN not as classical, but as the current ones. The second form is the strong-states repression, during which the state is no longer willing to accept political accommodation, and applies indiscriminate violence in a wide range. On the other hand, as Watts points out, the regime often tries to provide sufficient services to the general population to ensure its loyalty, or at least its tolerance. Another form of COIN operation is the informal accommodation, which is usually used by weak states which are unable to provide sufficient services to their citizens, but, unlike repressive regimes, are willing to accept certain political compromises and political accommodation for the insurgents. The last form is containment when the state is unable to defeat the rebel groups but equally unwilling to reach a political accommodation. Thus, in such case, the government uses forces and indiscriminate violence against rebel groups only if those actors pose a significant threat to the regime (Ibid., p. 19-20).

Besides different forms of COIN, it is generally possible to distinguish strategic approaches of counterinsurgency operations. The first is the *enemy-centric* one, which directly targets rebel forces. As noted in the U.S. Counterinsurgency Manual, this approach varies at a tactical level, but in any case, all other activities of the counterinsurgency forces are supportive and subordinate to the main task: to defeat armed forces of the insurgency. By contrast, the *population-centric* approach includes a number of interconnected components with a complex objective to stabilize and gain the support of the population. In other words, "*first protect and support the population, and all else will follow. This approach also involves the necessary use of force, but it is not the primary instrument* (USG, 2009, p. 14)." Moore adds that this strategic approach has three basic objectives*: a) to bring violence*

and subversion to a level manageable by local security forces; b) to build political, economic, and social institutions for addressing many of the structural problems fomenting stability; and c) to transform the hatreds, mistrust, and prejudices fuelling the conflict (Moore, 2011, p.15).

The current COINs of predominantly Western democratic countries are clearly based on a population-centric approach, as mentioned above. For that reason, the main purpose of these operations is not only the physical elimination of the insurgents but first and foremost the overall stabilization of society during and just after the end of the conflict. It is based on the premise that only by this way it is possible to prevent a resurgence of conflict and insurgency, which is always rooted in states with fragile government and social instability. Therefore, quoting Kilcullen, counterinsurgency is a "*competition with the insurgent for the right and ability to win the hearts, minds, and acquiescence of the populations* (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 29)." That is similarly highlighted in the US Government guide, where the purpose of COIN operations is considered as efforts „*to build popular support for a government while suppressing or co-opting insurgent movements* (USG, 2009, p. 14)." Moore argues that it is essential for COINs success to carry out the tasks of six mutually inseparable categories: 1) *Establishing and Maintaining of Security*; 2) *Providing Humanitarian Relief and Essential Services*; 3) *Promotion of Effective Governance*; 4) *Sustaining of Economic Development*; 5) *Supporting of Reconciliation*; 6) *Fostering of Social Change* (Moore, 2011, p. 17-20). Nevertheless, David Kilcullen underlines that, in any case, each COIN must fulfill two principles: necessity to find out local solutions to end the conflict and the cycle of violence, and respect to local populations linked with extreme use of discriminate precise violence (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 3-5). Watts goes even further, arguing that there is clear evidence that only discriminate use of violence could lead to successful COIN operation (Watts, 2014, p. 15).

In order not only to fulfill these principles but also to give the COIN operation a chance to be successful, David Kilcullen formulated 28 articles "*fundamentals of company-level counterinsurgency* (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 29)." The importance of these instructions is enormous, as not only US Army draws from them. Their main contribution is that Kilcullen shifts the focus of COIN operations to smaller military units, highlighting their crucial role in the outcome of the entire operation. These articles are thus kind of a guide for the commanders of company-sized units to be able to carry out their designated tasks in COIN operations efficiently and sustainably. Kilcullen stresses that "*seatbacks are normal in*

counterinsurgency", therefore the articles are not meant as following stages, but more as interconnected steps and activities that are necessary for success (Ibid., p. 39). Yet they can be roughly divided into preparatory, combat, and maintenance phases, depending on the situation the unit has to face. Unfortunately, it is not possible to mention individual articles in detail here, instead, I will describe their overall purpose.

According to Kilcullen, the main purpose of counterinsurgency units is to create a clear picture of where they are supposed to operate, but also of the population, its problems, and the motivations of the enemy. Based on that, it is necessary to establish a clear '*game plan*' for the next steps, which, however, could be adapted whenever the situation changes. The essential task of the unit is always to earn not the love but the trust of the civilian population, to involve women in the reconstruction, and to work in the long term to consolidate the interconnections, which can be achieved mainly by a permanent presence, not just the "*driving around in an armored convoy and day-tripping like a tourist in hell* (Ibid., p. 36)." Further, it is very important to support the local security forces to mirror the rebels, but not to copy the counterinsurgency forces. What is the most crucial, however, is that units are able to respond adequately even to potential failures and partial defeats without ceasing to pursue their overall tasks and objectives.

Kilcullen points out that several metrics are commonly used to evaluate the progress and outcomes of COIN operations, but due to their complexity, these metrics often display a very distorted and misleading picture. Kilcullen illustrates this by the example of body count indicator, as he writes that "*if we are facing one hundred of the enemy, and we kill twenty, we can assume that eighty left. In counterinsurgency, the twenty killed may have forty relatives who are now in a blood feud with and are obligated to take revenge on the security forces who killed the twenty, so the new number of the enemy is not eighty but one hundred twenty* (Kilcullen, 2010, p. 57)." In the same logic, the number of clashes with an enemy also should not be viewed as a guaranteed indicator, since few clashes with an enemy may not only indicate a retreat but merely a change of insurgency tactics. On the contrary, an increase of violence reports could also be caused by more COIN forces, because the more boots on the ground, the more observers and incident reports.

For these reasons, Kilcullen determines different metrics, divided into population groups, the supported government, the Security forces, and the enemy. These groups then include many interconnected indicators that allow individual military units active in COIN operations, and of course their commanders, to assess the development of the conflict in the

first place. Unfortunately, due to their complexity and scope, it is not possible to mention them in more detail. To illustrate them, I could mention, for example, internal transportation prices, tax collection, rate of new business formation and urban construction, rate of assassinations and kidnappings, kill ratio, ration of wins and losses, durations of operation, or insurgent medical health. However, although they are based on personal experience and an extraordinary comprehensive analysis of counter-insurgency operations, predominantly US intervention in Afghanistan, Kilcullen's indicators are not suitable for the analysis of case studies of this work, as they are primarily directed mainly at counter-insurgency units at the company level.

3.2. Counterinsurgency Operations of Weak States

Nevertheless, some authors point out that many countries are capable of conducting successful counterinsurgency operations, even though their methods are completely at odds with the Western COIN approach and strategy. For example, Daniel Byman demonstrates that while autocratic counterinsurgency operations usually include brutal methods, which are considered by Kilcullen as counterproductive, a portion of successful outcomes of these military operations is roughly comparable with democratic COINs (Byman, 2015, p. 63). In addition, Christopher Day and William Reno argue that Africa's authoritarian and institutionally weak African states are surprisingly resistant to insurgent challenges, while only about ten percent of African insurgencies have successfully overthrown the government (Day; Reno, 2014, p. 106).

First, due to usually high degree of internal political and social stability, democratic Western countries mostly do not have to face VNSAs and insurgencies on their soil, but instead, their COIN operations are typically conducted on a territory of other states. Therefore, as Byman underlines, these operations are usually wars of choice, and their approaches vary significantly compared to those conducted by weak and autocratic states, which have to face violent non-state actors directly on their own territory. In addition, "*the insurgents live in the country and never plan to leave, whereas the intervening force must eventually plan on transition and departure* (USG, 2009, p. 13)." The local government is not willing to leave either, therefore "*the government conducting COIN in its own territory will generally have greater strategic patience to stay the course of a protracted struggle* (Ibid., p. 13)."

The second argument is COINS are only part of an overall strategy of weak or authoritarian regimes to keep power, which is also not only a political issue, but basically a real life-or-death question. Therefore, weak and authoritarian states usually ignore population-centric approaches, since their goal is not to gain '*hearts and minds*' of the population, but only to ensure the loyalty of those who are necessary for the survival of the regime, particularly security forces and repressive apparatus (Day; Reno, 2014, p. 110; Byman, 2016, p. 70). To prevent coup-scenario, these states often maintain parallel security and military forces, which makes a potential uprising more difficult and challenging. Nevertheless, if it takes place, the elimination of these actors is very costly for the state, since former friends are the worst enemies (Day; Reno, 2014, p. 111). Therefore, in such cases, it is common that such uprisings would be ended by a negotiation and a peace agreement. In other words, the COIN is not "*about military doctrine or wining wars in purely military campaigns. It is about bringing recalcitrant rebel leaders and non-combatants into the orbit of state control through co-optation, for example, by drawing specific groups back into political society through restoring linkages to local notables* (Ibid., p.111)." Nevertheless, the situation is different when insurgents come from outside regime structures, and therefore generally pose a less significant threat. For that reason, the government does not need to negotiate, and consequently, it responds frequently with efforts to eliminate the entire rebel group (Ibid., p. 106, 111). The third argument is, however, that for some countries, the existence of a rebel group could be a useful tool for consolidation of political power in the fight against a common enemy. Thus, as Byman mentions, the presence of VNSAs can be tolerated until it poses a real existential threat to the regime (Byman, 2016, p. 73).

Focusing on authoritarian states, Byman determines the basic principles and tools used during their COIN operations, such as intelligence penetration, ethnic cleansing, mass indoctrination, and limiting war-weariness. He also mentions the main weaknesses such as limited military power, military politicization, lack of learning, less willingness to negotiate. In any case, a key method of these operations is undoubtedly repression and brutality based on Stalin's logic of "*no man, no problem*' (Ibid., p. 62). Some authors argue that its application is a double-edged sword which could turn the population against the government, but on the other hand, it could also make people blame anti-government groups for not ensuring their security, or it could eventually strengthen the loyalty of the security forces (Ibid., p.74). Alexander Downes analyses the effectiveness of indiscriminate violence in-depth, and he underlines that despite the broad consensus of indiscriminate violence is

counterproductive, several cases demonstrate that, under certain circumstances, it is very effective in operations against violent non-state actors. Specifically, its effectiveness increases 1) *the smaller the population is*; 2) *the smaller the area with the ongoing uprising is, as there is no possibility to hide*; 3) *if this violence leads to the dismantling of the insurgents from material and human resources*; 4) *in the case of high devotion of the population to the rebels* (Downes, 2007, p. 438-439).

It is necessary to emphasize that these authors do not question the population-centric approach of current counter-insurgency operations conducted mainly by Western countries, nor the ideas of authors such as Kilcullen and Moore. Instead, their objective is to point out that many states take a completely different approach to violent actors, which in many cases leads to the defeat of these actors, which is the goal of COIN operations. Byman writes that Western democracies should not believe that only their model is necessary for success (Byman, 2016, p. 87). On the other hand, despite their relative resilience to the uprising, a large part of these states remains extremely weak and unstable, as they do not address the causes of the conflict, but only its symptoms. This is also the main weakness of rebel-centric COIN operations mentioned above.

4. Analysis of COIN Operation of African States

In this chapter, I will focus on the description and analysis of three case-studies counterinsurgency operations conducted by African states. The first one is international intervention AMISOM in Somalia against the al-Shabaab religious militia, which was established by the African Union in 2007. The second case-study Nigerian military operation against the Boko Haram religious militia since 2009, and the third is a COIN operation the Congolese army and international forces against the insurgency of M23, which was launched in April 2012.

4.1. African Union AMISOM Mission in Somalia

4.1.1. The origins of Harakat al-Shabaab

As Hansen argues the origins of *Harakat al-Shabaab*, a religious militia, have roots among several Somalis traveling to Afghanistan to participate in jihad against Soviet troops during the Afghan war of 1979-89 (Hansen, 2016, p. 20). After their return to Somalia, they mostly joined the radical Islamist organization *Al-Itahaad al-Islamiya* (AIAI), which was formed in 1980 and quickly became radicalized after the fall of said Barre's regime. Afghan veterans in the AIAI formed a radical wing that fought American-led UN stabilization missions in the 1990s. After the decline of AIAI in the 1990s, many of them had established contacts with al-Qaeda's affiliates, which had used Somalia as one of the transit countries and safe-haven for its regional activities. In the early 21st century, several Afghan veterans, AIAI members, and al-Qaeda sympathizers united themselves into a smaller group fighting in multipolar conflicts between armed groups and warlords in Mogadishu (Hansen, 2016, p. 27). Around 2005, the group became one of the factions of The Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Islamic courts were „*a loose association of Islamic courts in Somalia, which provided security and managed crime after the fall of Siad Barre's authoritarian regime in 1991. Around 2 000, the courts first united to form what would be called the ICU* (CISAC, 2019a)." Over the course of the year, this faction, called Harakat al-Shabaab (Youth), gained increasing influence within the ICU, leading to internal conflicts inside the organization. During 2006, the ICU had managed to take control over part of southern and central Somalia, but this provoked a reaction from the ONS and the Ethiopian troops. In December 2006, they pushed the ICU out of Mogadishu, which led to the break-up of the ICU in early 2007. Yet, ICU's strongest and most unified al-Shabaab faction remained active. Thanks to its

opposition to the Ethiopian invasion, the group quickly became a major rebel force in 2007, with thousands of more members joined the group.

4.1.2. Counterinsurgency Operation Against Harakat al-Shabaab

In 2007, the African Union (AU) established the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was later approved by the UN as a new peace support operation in the country. The main objective of this mission was to provide support to the new Somali *Transitional Federal Government* (TFG), which was created after years of international negotiation. Besides that, Hanses and Anderson argue that the deployment was partially the AU´s reaction to increasing Ethiopian intervention, which was carefully monitored not only by Western countries but also by the AU members because the presence of Somali archenemy Ethiopia was further radicalizing the Somali population (Hansen, 2016, p. 51; Anderson, 2014, p. 938). AMISOM replaced the previous AU operation called Intergovernmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM), which had failed to cope with the growing security threat from the ICU due to insufficient international involvement and a small number of deployed troops (Fejerskov, 2017, p. 27). The first part of the AMISOM contingent of 1 600 Ugandan troops had arrived in the country in March 2017, but despite its limited size, it was soon deployed in Mogadishu, where 5 000 Ethiopian troops and about 1 000 TFG combatants were fighting approximately 5 000 insurgents. Uganda units were initially organized in two battalions, and they mainly secured strategic objects such as a port and the presidential palace.

Like the previous mission, AMISOM had to face a number of serious obstacles from the very beginning. First of all, the mission mandate was not only ambitious, but above all extremely vague, and it lacked a clearly defined strategy for future activities. Furthermore, while Ethiopia began the gradual withdrawal of its troops, the deployment of AMISOM troops was considerably delayed. As Anderson writes, by the time Ethiopia's intervention ended in early 2009, the TFG forces had almost immediately collapsed, and "*undermanned and underfunded AMISOM forces suddenly found itself to be the last line of defense against al-Shabaab. The result was a rout: the insurgency rapidly captured territory and by June 2010 had seized the vast majority of south-central Somalia* (Anderson, 2014, p. 939). In early 2009, the intervention forces and remains of TFG were quickly dragged in heavy fighting with al-Shabab, although only 3 500 of almost 8 000 authorized AMISOM soldiers had been deployed in Somalia hitherto (Lotze; Williams, 2016, p. 3). Moreover,

combining conventional means, the insurgents adopted more asymmetric tactics, like the usage of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which weakened the already very limited capabilities of international counterinsurgency forces throughout 2009 and 2010. Nevertheless, the mandate of AMISOM was extended in 2010 as the number of deployed troops had been slightly increased, and COIN forces launched several small offensives against the expanding insurgents. The first major success came in August 2011, when AMISOM units in cooperation with the TFG successfully pushed the militants out of Mogadishu (Warner, 2012, p. 107). Yet, Anderson argues that al-Shabaab, facing a stronger challenger than years before, unilaterally withdrew from the city rather than be militarily defeated (Anderson, 2014, p. 938).

Despite the fact that there were more than 12 000 intervention troops in the country in 2011, the overall situation was extremely unstable and the country was in imminent danger of another collapse. Al-Shabaab was active in most of southern and central Somalia regions at the time, and its force was estimated at 5 000 and 10 000 combat-experienced fighters (Warner, 2012, p. 107; Fejerskov, 2017, p. 27). In addition, the country was hit by severe drought, and consequently by food shortages affecting hundreds of thousands of people. Further, more than 1 300 Somalis per day tried to flee to neighboring Kenya, as more and more unpopular TFG was not able to manage the crisis even with foreign assistance (Warner, 2012, p. 108). Therefore, Kenya monitored the situation in Somalia with increasing concern, which, from Nairobi's point of view, could directly threaten its own security in a case of further deterioration. For this reason, Kenya decided to launch Operation Linda Nchi in October 2011 to defeat al-Shabaab as fast as possible, without the need for the Kenyan army to remain permanently in Somalia. However, as Warner points out in 2012, this objective was at least problematic as "*Al-Shabaab was but one symptom of Somalia's enduring security, political, and humanitarian challenges; thus, it is doubtful that dismantling al-Shabaab alone would usher in an era of stability in Somalia that would, in turn, make Kenya more secure* (Ibid., p. 105)." Fejerskov argues that rather than COIN operation the goal of the intervention was to secure border areas and create a buffer zone in Somalia (Fejerskov, 2017, p. 36).

The invasion of the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) was soon followed by a new intervention of the Ethiopian army, which aimed to hit insurgents from the west. However, the Kenyan southern offensive in the Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba was interrupted in late 2011 by rains, which further deteriorated the poor infrastructure. Despite that, during

the combined offensives of Kenya and Ethiopia, several strategic cities were captured from al-Shabaab, which allowed AMISOM to move even outside of Mogadishu districts. In January 2014, Ethiopia also joined the AMISOM mission with around 4 000 troops (Warner, 2012, p. 108; Fejerskov, 2017, p. 28, p.35). Although al-Shabaab had lost most of its territory throughout 2011 and 2012, the group "*accelerated its high-profile attacks on civilians and security personnel both within Somalia and abroad* (CISAC, 2019b)." It should be mentioned that the AMISOM mission was originally constructed as a peace-keeping mission and not as a COIN operation. Nevertheless, as Fejerskov argues, despite claims of the AU and western diplomats, there was no peace to keep in Somalia. Instead, AMISOM forces had to de facto carry out COIN activities, pushing out insurgents from different parts of the country. Since 2011, the United States started to conducted limited airstrikes, typically by drone attacks, in order to improve the momentum of AMISOM ground operations (Jones et al., 2016, p. 41).

On 22 February 2012, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2036, which extended and authorized AMISOM mandate for "*all necessary measures … to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab* (Ibid., p. 43)." The very same day, Kanya had integrated its intervention forces into AMISOM structures. In September 2012, the KDF and SNA captured the strategic cities of Kismayo, Belet Weyne, and Baidoa, which allowed the mission commanders to reconsider and redeploy 18 000 troops stationed in Somalia into four newly established operational sectors in late 2012 (Lotze; Williams, 2016, p. 4; Fejerskov, 2017, p. 28; the map of AMISOM Sectors is Appendix no. 3). Sector 1 guarded by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) is centered on Mogadishu and includes Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions. The Kenyan Defence Forces have been deployed in Sector 2 in Lower and Middle Juba regions, which has headquarters in Kismayo. The Ethiopian forces secure Sector 3 including Bay, Bakool and Gedo region, and Baidoa as its center. Finally, the Burundi contingent has been stationed in the Middle Shabelle region as Sector 4 with headquarters in Belet Weyne (AU, 2020; Fejerskov, 2017, p. 28). However, Anderson underlines that despite the offensives and extension of AMISOM presence, al-Shabaab continued to control large territories and was able to conduct number of attacks against civilians and AMISOM (Anderson, 2014, p. 939). Moreover, due to limited capacities and increasing attacks of Boko Haram on vulnerable communication and supply routes, AMISOM commanders had been recommended "*that the mission should not undertake any*

further expansion operations, as it had reached its operational limits and its capacities were overstretched (Lotze; Williams, 2016, p. 8)."

The year 2014 was successful, when AMISOM forces, exceeding 22 000 troops by the time. Moreover, they seized several towns in southern regions of Bay, Bakool, Gedo, and Shabelle during Operation Eagle launched in January, followed by a capture of numerous strategic towns along the coast during Operation Indian Ocean in August. Moreover, the al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Godane was killed by a U.S. missile strike in September 2014, which significantly increased internal power struggles and disputes among al-Shabaab sub-groups (Jones et al., 2016, p. 49; CISAC, 2019b). However, the effectiveness of AMISOM was also undermined, particularly by the low cooperation between participating states and their military contingents involved in the mission. Besides, there was also a lack of sufficient cooperation between the AU, the United Nations, and the NGOs operating in the country, therefore, many stabilization efforts had limited scale and only a small chance to succeed. Yet, the crucial obstacle was the complete absence of a joint strategy and clear mission chain of command, which was confirmed by the bloody events of 2015 and 2016. In 2015, al-Shabaab Al Shabaab continued to launch high-profile surprise attacks and conducted at least two large-scale attacks on AMISOM bases, namely on Leego on June 26, and Janaale on September 1 (CISAC, 2019b; Williams, 2014, p. 3). During these attacks, the insurgents were able to outnumber and encircle local AMISOM forces, concretely Burundian troops, which suffered heavy casualties while al-Shabaab militants managed to capture a number of vehicles, weapons, and material during the attacks. These incidents were a critical warning and a raised finger for AMISOM commanders that remote bases without air and ground support are extremely vulnerable to further potential attacks, but almost no action had been undertaken to eliminate this risk.

On 15 January 2016, AMISOM forces suffered the biggest defeat and one-incident loss since the beginning of the mission. Soon after dawn, the El Adde base in the Gedo region, garrisoned by KDF riffle battalion of approximately 160 men, had been attacked by al-Shabaab militants (Ibid., p. 3). During the surprise attack, Al-Shabaab was able to use several explosive vehicles to overcome the outer perimeter of base defense, and later to kill or capture its defenders during heavy battle. While the accurate number of casualties is not known due to lack of Kenyan official information, most likely more than 100 Kenyan soldiers were killed or captured during the ambush, and apparently, only a few individuals managed to escape from the base (Ibid.). The attack deeply affected further AMISOM

operation as it very clearly demonstrated the military shortcomings of the mission. First, despite the scale of the attack, intelligence, and surveillance units had completely failed to gather intel about the potential risk of the al-Shabaab planned operation. Secondly, due to the absence of solid communication systems not only between the national AMISOM sectors but also between the individual bases since the initial phase of the AMISOM mission, reinforcements and rescue units could not be deployed soon enough to reverse the situation. Thirdly, AMISOM at that time completely lacked rapid reaction units, and above all air support, that could eventually interrupt the insurgents' attack. Fourthly, the whole incident revealed a troubled relationship with newly formed units of the Somali National Army (SNA). Although 300 SNA soldiers had been trained and stationed at the base in El Adde in 2011, the vast majority of them later left the base, some of them even days before the attack. Fifth, the fall of El Adde proved the vulnerability of isolated bases in conflict zones and remote areas, because they constitute perfect targets for local al-Shabaab units (Williams, 2014, p. 6 - 9).

According to CISAC, "*in 2016 and 2017, Al Shabaab continued to launch high-profile surprise attacks with the goal of forcing foreign troops out of Somalia, especially those of the Kenyan armed forces and the African Union Mission to Somalia* (CISAC, 2019b)." Yet, the al-Shabaab '*opus magnum*' took a place on 14 October 2017, when more than 500 people were killed by an explosion of two trucks in Mogadishu (Reuters, 2017). Despite the growing activities of al-Shabaab in recent years, in 2017 AMISOM announced a gradual withdrawal of its forces from the country which started in October 2018. This decision was mainly caused by a lack of funding, but also due to increasing domestic security concerns of the AMISOM member countries (CISAC, 2019b). Most of the intervention forces are planned to withdraw from the country in 2021, and the transfer of security responsibility to the Somali Security Forces is planned as well. The CRF stresses that, according to many experts, the Somali government and its very limited security forces will collapse rapidly without AMISOM assistance (Fejerskov, 2017, p. 31). If this scenario occurs, the developments of 2012 and 2013, when al-Shabaab was able to get part of the country out of control, will be completely lost.

4.1.3. Evaluation of COIN against al-Shabaab

Somalia is a geographical term rather than a state. The county has been convulsed by several armed conflicts and chronic instability since its total political collapse in the early

1990s. In 2007, almost all of central and southern Somalia was under the control of al-Shabaab and other violent non-state actors. The country has been in a never-ending conflict for nearly two decades, and it was clear stabilization would not be possible without external intervention, as there was no internal actor that could change the situation. Despite a number of serious obstacles mentioned above, the international AMISOM mission ground offensive in 2011 and 2014 did indeed displace militants, mostly al-Shabaab, from most parts of the country, and after many years, a number of strategic coastal areas had been brought under the control of TFG and AMISOM forces. However, despite territorial gains and relatively successful ground operations, AMISOM failed to stabilize the country. Because of many AMISOM weaknesses, al-Shabaab not only employed asymmetric tactics against both hard and soft targets over the next years but was also able to carry out large-scale conventional operations, such as successful attacks on military bases in 2015 and 2016. Counterinsurgency forces lacking a clear strategy and broader cooperation were unable to respond effectively to these developments. Moreover, al-Shabaab was able to carry out a series of violent attacks outside Somalia despite internal tensions inside the group, further undermining the AMISOM international reputation. Besides, since its establishment, the mission has had to face underfunding, slow deployment of approved forces, and increasing domestic problems of member countries. For this reason, AMISOM has started to withdraw its forces from Somalia in 2018, which poses an extraordinary risk of reversing the progress of previous years, as Somalia's weak security forces will be unable to counter any large-scale attacks of armed groups, particularly of al-Shabaab. It is estimated that more than 1 800 AMISOM troops have been killed since 2007, while the overall number of deaths related to al-Shabaab exceeds 23 400 (Williams, 2019; UCDP, 2020f).

The counter-insurgency operation in Somalia, involving 22 000 AMISOM soldiers and 20 000 SNA and allied militia militants, has a clear enemy-centric approach (Anderson, 2014, p. 937). The African Union admits that the mission does not have the capacity to carry out humanitarian and reconstructive assistance, so it focuses only on security stabilization (AU, 2020). Despite the fact that there have been some cases of human rights violations, no evidence of widespread repression or use of indiscriminate violence is traceable. The COIN operation is primarily led by external actors for whom the violent actor poses a significant security risk, which is a likely reason for the absence of significant attempts at negotiation and political inclusion of the insurgents.

4.2.Nigerian COIN Against Boko Haram

4.2.1. Insurgency of Boko Haram

Most scholars and observers agree that *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati w'al Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad - JALWJ), notoriously known as Boko Haram, was established likely in 2002 by the preacher Mohammed Yusuf. However, as Virginia Comolli argues "*the true origin of JALWJ can be traced back to 1995 at the University of Maiduguri in Borno state, when the Muslim Youth Organisation sect was set up by Abubakar Lawan. In its early years, the sect could be described as a conservative non-violent Islamic movement* (Comolli, 2017, p. 46)." Before Lawan left Nigeria for Hajj in 2012, he had appointed Yusuf as a new group leader. Under Yusuf´s leadership, the group quickly started to use violent means, particularly during the sect violence at Christmas 2003 and in early 2004, when hostilities among militants, locals, and police in the Yobe state increased significantly (Comolli, 2017, p. 46; Weeraratne, 2017, p. 611) Yet, despite periodical attacks against police stations and sect clashes, the period since 2004 was relatively calm compared to what would come in 2009.

The unprecedented wave of violence erupted in July 2009, after Mohammed Yusuf was murdered under suspicious circumstances in police custody by angry officers. This incident was most likely the consequence of already high-level tensions and confrontations between policemen and Boko Haram members in Borno state caused by previous oppressive state efforts to tackle local instability and robberies. Nevertheless, the killing of Yusuf infuriated the group. On 26 July, dozens of Boko Haram members attacked police in Bauchi state and at least 50 individuals were killed in the process (Comolli, 2017, p. 54). During counter-attacks of both sides, hundreds of Boko Haram members, but even civilians and law enforcement officers were killed as the conflict escalated quickly in the next days and spread also to Borno, Kano, Katsina, and Yobe (the map of North-Eastern Nigeria is Appendix no.4). Moreover, thousands of locals had been forced to leave their homes (Solomon, 2012; Weeraratne, 2017, p. 612). Comolli writes that the death of Yusuf had two long-term impacts because his murder "*not only left the group thirsty for revenge but also paved the way for a change in leadership, embodied by second-in-command turned supreme leader Abubakar Shekau. The latter altered the nature of the movement which, from this point on, took a more radical and violent turn becoming the fully-fledged insurgency Boko Haram has become known as* (Comolli, 2017, p. 53)." It should be mentioned, that around that time, the group had started to be commonly labeled as Boko Haram. While it is usually translated as

‘*Western education is sinful*’, Shekau dismissed this by his claim that it really means ‘*Western civilization is forbidden*’, because of the group´s beliefs of the supremacy of Islamic culture. Moreover, that name is not used by group members, who prefer to call themselves JALWJ (Ibid., p. 50).

Weeraratne argues, “*the initial phase of the militancy was directed at various elements of the Nigerian security forces. Subsequently, the group has broadened its range of targets to include educational establishments, religious entities, politicians and traditional leaders, government infrastructure, and the broader Nigerian public in general* (Weeraratne, 2017, p. 616).” The golden hour of Boko Haram came with its campaign of land seizures during 2014. The group was able to successfully perform a territory-seeking strategy by formation and deployment of battalion-level units. These units were typically composed of light infantry, but Boko Haram quickly improved its military capabilities with creation of motorized units backed by supporting units. Moreover, due to arms influx to the country combined with the seizure of certain number of heavy weapons from the Nigerian army, the group started to use more sophisticated weaponry like anti-aircraft guns and missiles, heavy artillery, and later even armored fighting vehicles and few battle tanks (Omeni, 2018, p. 886-889).

4.2.2. Counterinsurgency Operation Against Boko Haram

In spite of the overall deteriorated situation in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, the government implemented only limited stabilization efforts until summer 2011. As a reaction to further growth of insecurity, Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order was launched on 15 June 2011 (Banini, 2020, p. 141). The task force of total strength of 3 800 personnel was composed of Nigerian Air Force Group, Defence Intelligence Agency, Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service, and mainly of the Army 21st Armoured Brigade. The ultimate goal of JTF was to restore the law and order in Borno state, (Comolli, 2017, p. 111), however, from the very beginning, JTF faced several serious obstacles, as lack of intelligence, poor equipment and training, and also an influx of arms and ammunition to Nigeria through extensive and almost unprotectable borders. JTF responded by increasing its military activities and with the launch of Operation Restore Order II and III in Bauchi and Yobe states in late 2011 (Omenma et al., 2020, p. 17). Comolli argues that armed forces particularly focused on house-to-house search, which led to the relocation of Boko Haram members to Yobe state (Comolli, 2017, p. 111). However, the

presence of Nigerian COIN forces in the region was linked to an extreme level of violence, as JTF mostly favored repression over deradicalization. The level of brutality had grown to such an extent that in many areas, and the Nigerian Armed Forces horrified locals more than Boko Haram due to abuse and thousands of cases of extrajudicial executions. These incidents heavily undermined not only the trust and credibility of JTF but also future efficiency (Banini, 2020, p, 142; De Montclos, 2018, p. 874).

Despite the alarming death toll and increase in violent incidents, the government, and especially President Goodluck Jonathan, initially neglected, and later underestimated the Boko Haram as a threat. Bappah writes that "*he and his aides downplayed the seriousness of the crisis while the insurgency continued to gain ground. When around 270 Chibok girls were abducted by Boko Haram (in 2014), Jonathan refused to acknowledge the event until three weeks after the incident. His aides tried to deny the abduction* (Bappah, 2016, p. 8)." Besides the lack of government leadership, military efforts against Boko Haram were significantly undermined by omnipresent corruption.

In 2013, as a reaction to indiscriminate violence of COIN forces, local young men started to set up vigilante groups, called '*Civilian JTFs*'. Their purpose was to protect civilians by "*identification of the real Boko Haram and pointing them out to the JTF* (Comolli, 2017, p. 123)." As Comolli underlines, the unauthorized activities of CJTF were extremely controversial for at least two reasons. First, their activities were not effectively supervised and often turned to abuse. This consequently increased already high numbers of arrests and detention of innocent people. Second, Boko Haram quickly answered by launching a manhunt campaign on the youths, which further worsened the security situation (Ibid., p. 124)

With many cases of human rights abuse, Operation Restore Order achieved only a limited progress in tackling Boko Haram. On the contrary, the insurgents were able to significantly extend their territory over almost the entire Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, and also to construct the basis of an alternative state inside Nigeria (Omenma, 2020, p. 18; Mickler, 2019, p. 280). For that reason, Admiral Ibrahim, who was Chief of Defence Staff, launched the new JTF operation BOYONA in May 2013, following another declaration of a state of emergency. While the name of the operation was an acronym of Borno, Yobe, Nasarawa, and Adamawa states, its operational goal was to "*secure the nation´s borders and assert the territorial integrity of the nation* (Osakwe; Audu, 2017, p. 3)." Similar to previous operation, BOYONA was only partially successful in recapturing several villages and

locations, while it failed to protect civilians and separate them from Boko Haram. For that reason, in August 2013, Joint Task Force had been concluded and replaced by the Nigerian Army (NA), particularly the 7th Infantry Division, which became a sole actor of further counterinsurgency efforts (Comolli, 2017, p. 127). It is worth mentioning that the government briefly discussed a possibility to negotiate with Boko Haram, as the group had shown willingness to talk in early 2013. Nevertheless, these efforts were quickly dismissed not only by Boko Haram leader Shekau but also by president Goodluck Jonathan (Banini, 2020, p. 141; Comolli, 2017, p. 116). De Montclos argues that even the Army hardliners opposed negotiation, mainly for the risk of losing personal financial revenues coming from "*very juicy war on terror* (De Montclos, 2018, p. 876)."

Although the army had improved its position in the region through increasing of both ground and air forces to more than 30 thousand security personnel in late 2013, its combat-readiness was at least problematic due to omnipresent corruption, low morale, and inadequately trained and equipped soldiers (Comolli, 2017, p. 113). Brechenmacher writes that despite intensive military campaign and use of indiscriminate violence, the army failed to considerably degrade Boko Haram capacity. She continues that "*despite these warnings, Jonathan pushed for more security assistance while downplaying the degree of dysfunction within the Nigerian military and the worsening humanitarian crisis. As a result, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Nigeria deteriorated* (Brechenmacher, 2019, p. 4)."

In March 2014, Boko Haram managed to capture not only several villages and small cities, but also a military base and the headquarters of the 5th Brigade in Monguno (Omeni, 2017, p. 892). Four months later, in July 2014, insurgents launched a new territorially motivated campaign by seizing the city of Damboa in Borno state (Weeraratne, 2017, p. 616). As Omeni reports, the Nigerian army was unable to counter the 'swarming tactic' that Boko Haram largely used at the time. The tactic was based on mobile, lightly armed units which were able to surprise and in large numbers attack the selected target and thus completely outnumber its defenders (Omeni, 2017, p. 892). The size of Boho Haram had been estimated 15 000 to 20 000 fighters in 2014 (CTC, 2018).

Yet, by no means can Boko Haram be considered militarily superior to the Nigerian Army. Although the group had a number of heavily armored vehicles and even a few tanks in its arsenal, their deployment was very rare due to the risk of airstrikes (Omeni, 2017, p. 889). Although Boko Haram was able to deploy anti-aircraft weapons during the conflict,

the coalition's airstrikes caused heavy casualties. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why, the group significantly reduced its ground orientation and began increasingly using guerrilla bombing tactics, in 2015 instead. According to Omeni, the Nigerian Air Forces (NAF) has "*conducted thousands of sorties against Boko Haram positions, and has reorganized its forward presence in the north-east of Nigeria on an unprecedented scale, as part of its contribution to COIN join efforts* (Omeni, 2017, p. 896)." However, corruption affected even NAF, as the Nigerian government had bought some 'non-airworthy' helicopters, which later crashed and killed their crew (Banini, 2020, p. 142).

Niger, Cameroon, and Chad, also known as the Lake Chad Countries, had observed Boko Haram offensive and territorial gains with serious concerns. Therefore, they started to intensively negotiate the possibility of joint intervention in late 2014, leading to the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in early 2015, which was finally authorized by the African Union, on 2 March. The mission, conducted by Lake Chad Countries and Benin, was divided into 4 sectors and its headquarters were located in N'Djamena, Chad. Major-General Lucky Irabor has been appointed as the MNJTF commander, while the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) provided civilian oversight.

While most of north-east territory is covered by shorth grass savannahs, there are also several woodland areas, especially in Borno state. This terrain provided valuable protection against COIN air forces, and Boko Haram used them as shelter zones, strongholds, and supply and training centres, particularly in notorious Sambisa forest near Cameroon borders (CFR, 2016). In 2016, the international coalition was able to retake most of the areas which were under the control of Boko Haram since its offensive during the previous year. The MNJTF offensive was relatively successful in military terms, as the insurgents managed to push toward the border. In the long run, however, the MTJTF and specifically the Nigerian security forces failed to gain control of rural areas. Brechenmacher also underlines two imminent consequences of the MTJTF operations: a regionalization and new wave of refugee crisis. Since 2016, the MNJT has conducted at least 4 large-scale military operations in the areas around Kumshe, Djibrili, Zamga, and Madawya forest, during which they occupied over 30 training camps, freed more than 4 500 prisoners and neutralized over 1 000 Boko Haram fighters. However, Iwuoha stresses that the MNJTF, which were composed of 2 600 Cameroon troops, 3 000 from Chad, 1 000 from Niger, 750 from Benin, and 3750 Nigeria, suffered greatly from a high level of mutual distrust, and also a lack of solidarity and coordination. Moreover, like the previous Nigerian COIN efforts, the

coalition was undermined by a corruption, low levels of surveillance, and a lack of support units, utility vehicles, and high-tech IT equipment (Iwuoha, 2019, p. 45). On the other hand, thanks to the improvement of relations with the US caused by inauguration of new President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria was allowed to start buying more combat equipment, mostly light helicopters. Yet, the continued distrust between the countries resulted in US agencies unwilling to share their intelligence with Nigeria, fearing the risk of potential infiltration and leaks. This had a very negative impact, as COIN units often missed the proper intelligence and were thus blind to Boko Haram activities (Ibid.).

After the MNTJF had managed to significantly restrict Boko Haram's territory, and the security situation was stabilized locally, Nigeria launched the so-called Buhari Plan, which included emergency assistance, stabilization, and restoration assistance (Brechenmacher, 2019, p. 6). However, according to humanitarian organizations, these programs were launched too early in many cases, when the security situation did not allow for their full deployment or the Nigerian authorities implemented them too aggressively, for example by the rapid forced return of refugees. Moreover, many observers repeatedly warned that "*donor priorities may lead to aid being allocated based on the Nigerian government´s political priorities rather than civilian needs, thereby leaving vulnerable groups without assistance* (Ibid., p. 7)."

Another vital danger is posed by the increasing presence of Boko Haram splinter group, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which was created by Mamman Nur and Yusuf´s son Abou Moussab al-Barnawi in 2016, and later pledged its loyalty to the Islamic State. It should be mentioned that rather than successor organization of Boko Haram, as ISWAP is often falsely described, this group was established due to internal tensions between Nur´s and Barnawi wing on the one side, and Abubakar Shekau´s wing on the other, because of increased disagreement over Shekau military strategy and violent activities even against local Muslim population. While Shekau wing has been consolidated inside the Sambisa forest, Crisis Group claims that located primarily along the Komadougou River, the ISWAP "*adopted a more accommodating approach than its progenitor, aimed at winning support among civilians, and it has subsequently consolidated its presence among communities in Borno state, particularly on Lake Chad's islands and shores* (Crisis Group, 2020, p. 9)." The group was able to attack and briefly capture the headquarters of MNJTF Sector 3 in Baga in December 2018 and conducted several ambushes and attacks in the Borno state throughout the late 2018 and 2019 (Ibid.). In late 2018, the size of ISWAP was

estimated 3 500 thousand combatants, and approximately 1 500 thousand in case of Boko Haram (CTC, 2018).

4.2.3. Evaluation of the COIN Operation Against Boko Haram

Although the group has suffered substantial human, material, and territorial losses, Boko Haram is not defeated at all and still poses a great threat not only to Nigeria but also to the entire region. Moreover, since the outburst of the violence and de facto beginning of the insurgency in 2009, the group was able to successfully adapt its strategy and tactics, and mirror the COIN efforts. In late 2013 and particularly in 2014, the group started to use IED broadly and since 2015, its strategy has been more focused on guerrilla and terror tactics. Despite a significant decrease of causalities related to Boko Haram since the peak of violence in 2014 and 2015, the level of violence and numbers of incidents remains alarming. According to the Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) of the Council of Foreign Relations, almost 40 thousand people have been killed from May 2011 to December 2020. It is also underlined in CFR analysis, that "*although the Nigerian military—with assistance from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger—has pushed Boko Haram out of several provinces in north-eastern Nigeria, the group retains control over some villages and pockets of territory and continues to launch deadly suicide attacks and abduct civilians, mostly women and children* (CFR, 2020)." Moreover, the Nigerian army is in a similar American situation in Afghanistan, where they managed to control population centers but not the rural areas (Campbell, 2017). Also, the conflict-stricken states are still among the least developed areas of the country, and they are affected by a large-scale refugee crisis lasting more than a decade. With the government's long-term failure to integrate and rebuild these states, the risk of another Boko Haram offensive is high. Despite the group controlling only a number of pocket areas, Boko Haram is related to more than 3 000 dead for the period between December 2019 and December 2020 alone.

Since the outburst of the violence in 2009, the Nigerian government and its armed forces often showed a dyadic approach towards the Boko Haram insurgency. While the local security forces were facing an increase in attacks and were involved in numerous high-intensity clashes, the government marginalized the situation in its north-eastern states for a long time. This ambiguity combined with a high level of indiscriminate violence and brutality employed by COIN forces not only caused a humanitarian crisis of immense scale

but also undermined the effectiveness of a military response and affected negatively its future actions.

In the period from 2009 to late 2016, the Nigerian COIN approach was clearly enemy-centric, especially since August 2013, when the multi-agency Joint Task Forces had been replaced by the Nigerian Army, and later by MNJTF. Even during the successful retaking of former Boko Haram strongholds and territory, COIN forces repeatedly applied indiscriminate violence. Since 2016, the MNJFT has also faced an increasing threat from ISWAP, which, unlike Boko Haram, is trying to gain popularity and legitimacy with the local government in the fight. By the end of 2018, there have been a number of heavy clashes between COIN units and militants of both ISWAP and Boko Haram. In response to heavy losses, Chad unilaterally announced the withdrawal of its troops from Borno state in January 2020, which other countries had not been warned about in advance. As a response, a series of ISWAP attacks on Nigerian bases in that state started immediately.

Hundreds of fighters were killed during Chadian unilateral operations against ISWAP and Boko Haram outside of the MNJTF framework in 2020, but the failure to act collectively within the MNJTF, as well as the growing presence of armed groups in the region indicate a high risk of further escalation of violence. Future development in north-eastern Nigeria is therefore highly uncertain, as the government does not provide basic services to the local population and also it fails to maintain security in most parts of the northern states despite the partial successes of 2016 and 2017 military operations. Although the COIN operation is ongoing and it is therefore not possible to assess its final outcome, without improved international cooperation and more effective and sustainable recovery programmes, stabilisation efforts of the foreseeable future will have only limited effects.

4.3.COIN in Democratic Republic of the Congo

4.3.1 Mouvement du 23-Mars Insurgency

The 2012 insurgency of Tutsi group *Mouvement 23* (M23), which lasted almost 20 months, may seem episodic compared to decades of instability, two civil wars, and the presence of at least 30 non-state violent groups. Yet its importance is considerable, for several reasons. First, the case clearly demonstrates the pitfalls of weak states and authoritarian approaches to conducting counterinsurgency operations, mentioned in the previous chapter. Second, the Congolese army was significantly supported during the COIN operation by an international intervention force that was the first in history to have a mandate

within the UN to use both defensive and offensive means. Third, the outcome of the COIN operation against M23 confirmed that military victory over insurgents, their marginalization, or even elimination, is no guarantee of stabilization of the internal political situation unless it is accompanied by deeper political and socio-economic reforms.

As mentioned previously in this thesis, the North Kivu region is one of the most unstable regions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the map of North Kivu is Appendix no. 5). The government has only limited control over the eastern part of the country, and its armed forces here almost constantly face attacks from a range of armed groups. One of these groups was the Tutsi-based CNDP (*Congres National pour la Défense du People*), which had conflicts with the Congolese army, officially called the FARDC (*Forces Armées de la Republique Démocratique du Congo*) since 2006. The establishment of the group was mainly motivated by regional political and ethnic struggles with the government. According to UCDP "*the group had organized a state-like apparatus in the areas of control with a flag, a national anthem, administrators, taxes, a radio station and a military hospital. CNDP was mainly financed by Congolese and Rwandans in the diaspora and through businessmen in Goma* (UCDP, 2020g)." The conflict was ceased by a truce in 2009, but the group rejected to sign a peace agreement blaming the Congolese government for ignoring CNDP terms. Despite this, some former CNDP fighters and commanders were integrated into FARDC structures as part of efforts to stabilize the region, but their integration had a very formal character, as these fighters remained in the North Kivu region, moreover, inside CNDP structures. Therefore, there were almost zero obstacles to potential conflict re-escalation.

The security situation in the area remained critical due to the growing frustration of former CNDP members, and it finally erupted into violent conflict again in April 2012, when 300 of former CNDP fighters, as well as a number of their Tutsi sympathizers, defected the Congolese army. These rebels, led by former FARDC General Bosco Ntaganda, subsequently formed a new group called the Mouvement du 23-Mars (M23). The name refers to the failed peace negotiations in 2009, which shows clear M23 relation to the CNDP's legacy (Shepherd, 2018, p. 8). The formation of M23 and its insurgency immediately led to a decrease of already limited government control of the eastern part of the country. Furthermore, it also led to a demoralization of state underfunded and under-equipped armed forces, which were practically unable to respond in the early months of the insurgency. During the summer of 2012, numerous armed clashes between M23 and FARDC

took place, whereas the M23 was able to consolidate its position in the region and capture several smaller towns in North Kivu, such as Bunagana, and also occupy the FARDC military base in Rumangabo (Stearns, 2012). Moreover, the group committed a series of crimes and brutalities against the local population, including murder, execution, rape, and robbery (HRW, 2013). Despite these crimes, the M23 has been able to further increase its numbers, usually by a forced recruitment, and in late August 2012, its size was estimated around 1 500 fighters (Stearns, 2012). It should also be mentioned that Rwanda, the archenemy of DRC, provided a significant support of weaponry, material, and manpower to M23 viewing the Tutsi insurgency as a useful proxy-actor (HWR, 2017).

While some Congolese army commanders insisted on a military solution, the conflict was interrupted several times by temporary truce and negotiation attempts during 2012 (Stearns, 2012). Nevertheless, due to their future activities, it is very likely that the main motivation of insurgents to negotiate was simply to buy time to consolidate their forces for a future offensive. By the end of November 2012, the strength and self-confidence of the group were sufficient enough to attack and very quickly seized the regional capital Goma with more than one million inhabitants (McCartney, 2013). Although the local FARDC garrison had been supposed to defend the city, its resistance was very small, and most of the troops left the theatre before Goma was captured by M23 on November 20. Besides, more than three thousand Congolese army and police forces personnel defected and joined the rebels, which further demoralized the rest of FARDC in the region (Gouby, 2012). In December 2012, M23 left Goma in exchange for a promise of further negotiations with the government. Even though the M23 withdrew from the city, the occupation of Goma posed a great disaster for the local population, which was attacked not only by insurgents but also by retreating and demoralized FARDC units. According to Human Rights Watch, FARDC soldiers committed at least 76 cases of rape against women and girls, as well as several murders between November 2012 and February 2013 (HRW, 2013). These incidents not only consequently undermined a perception of FARDC by locals, but also increased international concerns, due to the fact that even the presence of MONUSCO peace-keeping units in the region did not prevent the escalation of the conflict, the capture of Goma, and the wave of such violence. Nevertheless, it is fair to note that more than 1 800 troops of MONUSCO did not actively oppose M23, except in self-defense cases, due to the lack of mandate to doing so, and because they were not supposed to substitute for FARDC by

fighting insurgents. It was estimated that 300 to 400 combatants and about 200 civilians were killed during clashes between FARDC and M23 in 2012.

4.3.2. Counterinsurgency Operation against M23

In late 2012, the conflict was in a stalemate, and it was clear that some kind of the international intervention would be necessary because the DRC and its armed forces would not be able to defeat the insurgency on their own. For that reasons, after months of negotiations, the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo was adopted on February 24, 2013 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). Even Rwanda had signed the agreement after increasing criticism and international pressure due to its support for M23 insurgents. The signatories agreed "*not to interfere in the internal affair of neighboring countries; not to tolerate or provide support of any kind to armed groups; neither to harbor nor provide protection of any kind to anyone accused of a war crime, crimes against humanity, an act of genocide or crimes of aggression, or anyone falling under the UN sanctions regime; and to cooperate with regional justice initiatives* (HRW, 2017, p. 31)." In addition, it was important that the role of MONUSCO in conflict resolution was confirmed by the agreement, which gave the UN Security Council a regional political approval to extend MONUSCO mandate, and for the first time in the history of UN peacekeeping missions, to authorized explicitly the use of offensive means. For that purpose, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) has been established by UNSC Resolution 2098 in March 2013 (UNSCR, 2020). The new FIB consisted of three battalions, one artillery battalion, and one reconnaissance company of a total force of 3 000 troops from South Africa, Tanzania, and Malawi (Kets, Vries, p. 9-10). The creation of this unit was crucial to the next phase of the counter-insurgency operation against M23.

Although the Congolese army was in a deep crisis throughout the spring of 2013, its positions in North Kivu started to slowly improve after a change of commanders. President Joseph Kabila had appointed the new commander of North Kivu Military Region, Major general Bahuma Ambamba, who initiated a reorganization of regional troops by moving units from predominantly western parts of the country to North Kivu to reduce local ties between M23 and FARDC (Wondo, 2013). Moreover, Ambamba cooperated with the FARDC Commander-in-Chief to improve the armaments and supply of troops in this

conflict zone, and to repair relations with the civilian population. Because of this, as many authors claims, he was able to gain considerable respect and popularity among locals (Ibid.). Contrary to FARDC improvement and redeployment, M23 suffered from significant internal tensions in early 2013, which had been primarily caused by a disagreement about future attitudes toward peace talks with the DRC government. Gberie writes that the group was finally split at the end of February 2013, "*leading to serious fighting between the main faction, led by Sultani Makenga, and a smaller faction led by M23 founder Bosco Ntaganda* (Gberie, 2013)." A month later, Ntaganda had been defeated, fled to Rwanda, and just a day after the adoption of the resolution in March 2013, he surrendered in the US Embassy (HWR, 2017; Raghavan, 2013). Despite M23 internal struggles, violent clashes of varying intensity, mostly in the Goma area, continued between FARDC and M23 from March to early July 2013. Both rebels and government forces were able to deploy heavy artillery and mortars, but FARDC could also deploy armored vehicles and tanks, and it was support MONUSCO air force, particularly to the deployment of battlefield helicopters (Gberie, 2013; Maseraka, 2013).

The first ground troops of the Intervention Brigade arrived in the region at the beginning of May, but according to its commander Gen. Aloizi Mwakibolwa, the FIB was not yet fully operational even in late July (MONUSCO, 2013a). As a result, its activities were largely limited to intensive military training, securing communication and supply routes around the city of Goma, and establishing a sufficient logistical background. Maseraka argues that these activities were vital to avoid a "*typical problem of Congolese operations where poor roads make operations riskier the further, they move away from main logistics bases* (Maseraka, 2013).". Also, Adam Day quotes one of the MONUSCO mission representatives who justified these activities: "*it [FIB] saw Goma as a domino that could fall and cause all of Congo to collapse, so its overriding concern was to get MONUSCO into top gear on the military force. Everything was focused on the force* (Day et al., 2020, p. 31)." Concerns that Goma would be again the target of M23 offensive were confirmed soon, when heavy clashes between government forces and rebels took place nearby the city in July 2013. Although it is difficult to describe these clashes in more detail because of a limited amount of often contradictory information, it can be argued that counter-insurgency forces began to take the initiative, and pushed insurgents out from several smaller towns they occupied in the previous months. Maseraka and McCartney emphasize that, despite very limited capacities, FARDC's combat capability and morale improved significantly since 2012

(Maseraka, 2013; McCartney, 2013). In August, the rebels were forced out more than 30 km from their original positions north of Goma. FARDC continued the battles and heavy fighting around Goma and Kibati in late August, during which even civilians and MONUSCO and FIB troops came under indiscriminate fire (RW, 2013).

However, the main phase of the counterinsurgency operation was deployed in October 2013, after the rest of the FIB units arrived in the area (MONUSCO, 2013b). On October 25, FARDC launched an offensive on fortified rebel positions in the hills south of the town of Kibuna, while FIB units were divided into three task forces to support the wings in the north at Rutshuru and Rumangabo (Maseraka, 2013; the map of COIN operation is Appendix no. 6). With the support of artillery and airstrikes, FARDC was able to seize rebel positions around Kibun in late October, which were necessary to secure the road from Goma to Rutshuru and Rumangabo in north (Ibid.). M23 was forced to withdraw near borders with Rwanda to its strongholds in Virunga and Bunagana, where forests could be more effectively defended as they provide a better protection against COIN airstrikes (Olivier, 2013; Maseraka, 2013). Maseraka writes that, despite the speed of the offensive, FARDC and FIB have met with a strong resistance with losses of dozens of combatants on both sides (Maseraka, 2013). Meanwhile, FARDC also created three task forces, which purpose was to divide rebels defending themselves in Virunga National Park by the combined offensive (Ibid.). Thanks to this tactic, many M23 were arrested or fled to neighboring Rwanda. In the following days, the remains of the rebel forces collapsed under the pressure of advancing FIB and FARDC. The insurgency was officially defeated when M23 commander Makenga declared the group's abandonment of violent methods and called for its fighters to be demobilized after the last insurgent stronghold was capture on November 5, 2013 (MONUSCO, 2013c).

It is difficult to estimate an overall number of M23 insurgency casualties due to a lack of relevant sources. Nevertheless, UCDP estimates 1977 related deaths to the conflict (UCDP, 2020h). According to The War Report, "*a total of 571 killings related to the M23 conflict in 2013 were recorded from the media and UN sources. A senior commander was reported to have said that in North Kivu, 201 FARDC soldiers were killed and 680 injured. Three MONUSCO peacekeepers were killed, and on the M23 side, there were 721 killed on 20 May through 5 November 2013* (Oxford, 2014, p. 135-136)."

4.3.3. Evaluation of the COIN Operation against M23

Although counterinsurgency efforts against M23 were theoretically comprehensive, the COIN evolved over the time to such extent that it would be more accurate to distinguish its two phases, and then evaluate them separately rather than the operation as a whole. The first phase lasted throughout 2012 until early 2013, when FARDC, as an only COIN actor, suffered a series of defeats and was unable to effectively resist the rebels. At that time, the demoralized army also used a significant level of indiscriminate violence against local population and committed several crimes and atrocities. Due to its weakness and limited capabilities of armed forces, the government displayed its willingness to negotiate with insurgency group. According to Kets and Vries, this was a common solution for the DRC, because of the extraordinary fragmentation of society, ethnic ties, and the 'neo-patrimonial' nature of the Congolese state and society, where "*each member of society, from high to low, belongs to mutually obliging social networks, which are usually formed around ethnic, geographical, professional or socio-economic ties* (Kets, Vries, 2014, p. 2)." This is entirely consistent with the informal accommodation form of COIN typical for weak states, which was mentioned in the previous chapter.

During the second phase from February 2013 onwards, the character of the COIN operation evolved with the increasing involvement of external actors. After extension of MONUSCO mandate and the creation of the Intervention Brigade, the COIN approach was changed to more population-centric one. MONUSCO commanders were aware of that not only a defeat of the insurgents, but also the fulfilment of the political, social, and security vacuum would be necessary for the stabilization North Kivu, and for bringing the region under the control of the central government. For this reason, the FIB was initially based on so called 'islands of stability principle'. Concretely, FIB and FARDC goals were "*driving armed groups from key areas, holding territory against incursions, and helping to create the conditions for the establishment of viable State institutions* (Day et al., 2020, p. 31)." Combined with the capability of improvement of FARDC, this approach was at least temporarily successful in putting down the M23 insurgency.

Nevertheless, despite being militarily defeated in November 2013, FARDC and MONUSCO forces managed to disarm, demobilize or repatriate only some of former M23 combatants, while hundreds remained in Rwanda and Uganda. Many of them later re-engaged in other armed conflicts in the DRC in 2016 and 2017. Moreover, FIB had to face significant resistance of Congolese commanders and members of the government, who

rejected the mass reintegration of former rebels into FARDC (Ibid.). This refusal consequently undermined one of the few integration tools of the weak Congolese government, although, as McCartney points out, under certain conditions like deployment outside the region of origin, reintegration into armed forces may not pose a greater security risk for the state (McCartney, 2013). However, the main problem with the counterinsurgency operation was that FIB and FARDC were not allowed to continue fighting other VNSAs in the region such as *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) and *Allied Democratic Forces* (ADF), mainly due to President Kabila´s reluctance caused by weak position of the government, but also by power and political ties with some members of these groups. Not only has this hesitation wasted momentum and disrupted the FIB's stabilization objectives, but mainly the vacuum following the defeat of the M23 has been filled by the non-state violent actors instead of state apparatus. In other words, despite the short-term effects of COIN military success against M23, the operation's long-term goal of stabilizing and establishing government control in the region has not been achieved.

5. Comparison of COIN Operation of African States

5.1. The Strategic and Tactical Elements of the COIN Operations

Based on the fact that the analyzed insurgency movements were able to capture areas of significant size, the ultimate strategic goal of each counterinsurgency operation was to recapture territories occupied by rebels. In the case of Somalia, the AMISOM mission had been launched when most of the country was completely outside the control of the government and counterinsurgency forces. Thus, the primary strategic goal of the early years of the COIN operation was to take the strategic locations under control such as coastal towns and their ports, as well as populated urban centers lying on vital infrastructure.

While this objective was relatively successfully achieved, the military and material capabilities of the mission were limited, and apart from territorial expansion, COIN forces were unable to significantly reduce the insurgent forces and capacities (Lotze; Williams, 2016, p. 17). For the same reasons, COIN troops were later mainly focused on establishment and improvement of bases in remote areas, but due to a lack of sufficient logistic and military support, and coordination among different parts of the continent, these outposts were extremely vulnerable to potential insurgent attacks. Moreover, besides only a limited assistance from the United States, missions completely lacked not only the air forces but also the rapid response units, which would be ready to be deployed immediately in vulnerable sectors. Because of these problems, counterinsurgency units suffered heavy casualties in 2015 and 2016. Moreover, due to a lack of material and financial resources, AMISOM focuses only on enemy-centric COIN and military actions and on attempts for security stabilization, while it does not provide any humanitarian or development programs.

Compared to Somalia, Nigeria is not a collapsed state, but a very important economic and military actor of West Africa. Still, the government and its armed forces temporarily lost control over most of the north-eastern states in favor of the Boko Haram insurgency. Therefore, the main strategic goal of the early phase of the Nigerian COIN operation was also to recapture territory under Boho Haram control. This goal was partially achieved, as counterinsurgency units captured crucial urban centers, but failed to gain control of rural areas. COIN troops in Nigeria also adopted enemy-centric tactics, but contrary to the AMISOM mission, they also used a high level of indiscriminate violence against the civilian population. Even before the outburst of the violence, the security forces had reacted to the

deteriorating security situation with a brutality, and they again preferred repression rather than de-radicalization during the conflict.

In DRC, on the other hand, the M23 was limited by its size and also relatively small area of North Kivu state as the insurgents did not aspirate for further territorial expansion. Therefore, from a tactical perspective, the Congolese counter-insurgency forces could focus on the so-called 'islands of stability principle', particularly on pushing insurgents systematically out of even small towns and villages and on controlling supply and communication routes, and on immediate securing of post-conflict areas. Despite later adoption of some level of population-centric approach, the COIN forces had failed to protect and provide a public-good to the local population, especially during the early months of the operation. Therefore, based on the analysis of case studies, it could be argued that the size of the conflict area and the size of the rebel movement is a determining factor of COIN tactics.

5.2. The Motivations of the COIN Actors

Key COIN actors of the AMISOM mission were foreign states, whose involvement was primarily motivated by their own security and geopolitical interests. For instance, Kenya mainly focused on the control of strategic areas such as the port city of Kismayo, and also on the creation of some kind of a buffer zone to protect the country from a potential escalation of violence in Somalia. Besides, through its intervention, Ethiopia did not seek to assist the creation of a functional Somali government due to the conflict history of Somali-Ethiopian relations but rather to reduce al-Shabaab's regional influence. In other words, individual countries were driven by different, and sometimes even contradicting motives, which was one of the reasons for the low cooperation within AMISOM. Similarly, this could be argued about the Nigerian and the DRC cases. While the conflict in the north-eastern parts of the country undoubtedly negatively affects the overall political and socio-economic situation in Nigeria, the main motivation for the international counter-insurgency operation, however, has been the increasing cross-border activities of Boko Haram and other

international violent organizations, which endangered to the stability of other states regional states.

5.3. The Evolution of the COIN Operations

All of the analyzed case-studies could be similarly characterized by a slow reaction and poor initial military response of governments or intervention forces to the large territorial gains of rebel groups. Moreover, for a long time, both the Nigerian and the Congolese governments marginalized and underestimated the threat posed by the insurgencies. In Nigeria's case, it took almost two years before the first comprehensive counter-insurgency efforts were undertaken. In the DRC, the Congolese army was unable to respond to the M23 offensive for nearly 10 months, while in Somalia, the deployment of AMISOM troops was delayed despite the al-Shabaab ground offensives. A common feature of COIN operations in Nigeria and the DRC is that they are seriously undermined by an extreme level of corruption, low morale, lack of equipment, and insufficient funding. Also, during the operations in Nigeria and Somalia, the lack of communication and cooperation between the intervening national contingents increased the conduction of military operations outside the framework of the international mission in the later stages of the conflict.

In each country, after extensive military COIN operations had been finally launched, the territories of the rebel movements were reduced significantly within a few months, however, insurgents quickly responded by a change of tactic. Although several conventional military clashes had taken place in both Nigeria and Somalia, during which COIN forces have suffered high casualties, in all three case-studies, rebel groups had adopted asymmetric tactics including the usage of IEDs and hit-and-run ambushes, which COIN troops were not able to adequately react to. Despite military superiority and territorial gains, counter-insurgency groups failed to stabilize conflict zones in the long term. Moreover, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram, and ISWAP in Nigeria have adopted a new modus operandi and consolidated, or even strengthened, their position in recent years. Only M23 was officially militarily defeated, although many of its former members were later involved in other conflicts in the DRC.

Counter-insurgency operations in the DRC fully correspond with the way how counter-insurgency operations were conducted by weak-states, which was mentioned in the theoretical section. President Kabila and parts of the Congolese government, as well as the rebels, showed a willingness to discuss possible political accommodation as a conflict

solution. Although negotiations with M23 were later concluded, due to political ties, the weak Congolese government maintained the approach even toward other violent actors, particularly *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), and rejected the extension of counterinsurgency operations against these groups (Day et al., 2020, p. 32). By contrast, the COIN operation in Nigeria is characterized by an extraordinary level of indiscriminate violence against both real and potential insurgents and also civilians, which is another approach of weak states against insurgent groups. As mentioned previously, this approach is predominantly used if these groups originate outside the structures of the regime and do not present an immediate danger to political elites. Unlike counterinsurgency operations in DRC and Nigeria, it is very difficult to categorize AMISOM mission. The mission did not provide basic needs to the local population, nor did it seek political inclusion of the insurgents. Due to enemy-centric approach and absence of the significant level of indiscriminate violence, AMISOM could be described as a classic military COIN operation without population-centric efforts.

Conclusion

In this diploma thesis, I have analyzed operations of African countries against violent non-state actors, because these actors pose a great political, security, and a socio-economic threat not only to many countries around the world, but particularly to African states. However, due to the fact that violent non-state actors can be characterized as an extremely heterogeneous group of actors, in the first part of the thesis, I focused on their conceptualization and typology, drawing mainly from the researches of Phil Williams and Ulrich Schneckener. I distinguished the following types of VNSAs: *1) rebels, guerrilla fighters, and insurgencies; 2) militia, and vigilante groups; 3) paramilitary groups; 4) clan chiefs, and big men; 5) warlords; 6) marauders, and sobels; 7) terrorist groups; 8) criminal organizations, youth gangs, and pirates; 9) mercenaries, private security companies, and private military companies*. Subsequently, I applied this theoretical conceptualization to VNSAs present in Africa from 2010 to 2020, whose activities are related to more than 50 deaths, and analyzed their regional presence. For that purpose, I created the Dataset, which presents key information about each actor: *1) related country; 2) name; 3) acronym; 4) type; 5) active years; 6) size; 7) number of related deaths; 8) the main enemy; 9) region of its presence*. Its primary source was the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.

According to the dataset, I estimated that more than 140 000 were killed in 25 African countries by VNSAs, or during conflicts with these actors since 2010. Also, I identified the deadliest VNSA and the most affected region in Africa, which is Harakat al-Shabaab related to more than 19 000 deaths, and the region of East Africa with more than 50 000 deaths. However, due to the fact that even highly relevant and trustworthy open sources as UCDP often suffer from a lack of data and information, especially from the conflict areas, I have to admit that these numbers have a high level of approximation. For this reason, I propose a further research into casualty numbers related to individual VNSAs.

In the next part, I focused on the question of what are possible counterinsurgency approaches for a state to decrease activities and the presence of VNSAs. First, I conceptualized these approaches in general, to be able to analyze and compare them individually. For such purpose, I examined three case-studies: the African Union mission

AMISOM in Somalia, the Nigerian operation against Boko Haram; and counterinsurgency in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Based on my findings, I argue that the common feature of analyzed case-studies is that each of them could be characterized not only by a slow and poor initial military response but also by government marginalization of the threat posed by the VNSA. It seems that the size of the country, its military capacities, the involvement of intervention forces, or the strength of insurgency do not affect the speed of the reaction, which is proved by significant delay to undertake sustainable counterinsurgency efforts in the case of Somalia, Nigeria, and the DR of the Congo. On the contrary, the omnipresent corruption, lack of proper equipment, and low level of training and morale are the main common spoilers during conduction of COIN operations, which was confirmed by Nigerian and Congolese cases, but also partly in the Somali one. Besides this, countries involved in these COIN operations had been driven by different, and often contradicting motives, which further undermined already weak cooperation and coordination of counterinsurgency efforts.

Despite these obstacles, when COIN forces had been finally deployed, they relatively quickly and successfully reduced the size of insurgency territories. However, I argue that African countries did not manage to maintain momentum to stabilize recaptured areas, as well as to decrease the material and human capacities of insurgency movements and violent non-state actors. Moreover, after territorial losses, these actors had adopted new modus operandi and asymmetrical tactics, which COIN forces failed to adequately react to. From a tactic points of view, COIN forces had started to concentrate their activities on protecting their bases and main urban centers but consequently lost the ground in rural areas. Nevertheless, the size of the conflict area and the size of the rebel movements seem to be a determining factor of COIN tactics, because the Congolese COIN forces were, at least temporarily, able to control even rural areas of North Kivu, which is a much smaller territory compared conflict areas in Nigeria and Somalia. However, further research would be needed to confirm or disprove this argument, because three case-studies could not provide enough evidence of such claim.

Based on the case study analysis, I argue that military operations against violent non-state actors in Nigeria and the DRC correspond with how counterinsurgency operations were conducted by weak-states, which was described in the chapter three. Concretely, they are characterized by a high level of indiscriminate violence in the Nigerian case, or by the significant willingness of potential political accommodation of insurgents in the Congolese

case. On the other hand, AMISOM fits into a category of classic enemy-centric COIN operation with an absence of the use of indiscriminative violence against local, but without population-centric efforts to provide public good on the other.

Master's Thesis Summary

In this diploma thesis, I focused on violent non-state actors (VNSAs) operating in Africa. According to the dataset used in the thesis, which primarily draws from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, there are 25 African countries, where VNSAs related to more than 50 deaths per year have been present since 2010. Furthermore, I estimated that at least 140 000 individuals were killed during incidents related to activities of these actors between 2010 and 2020. Particularly, more than 50 000 individuals in the East Africa region. Therefore, it is apparent VNSAs pose an extraordinary political, security, and the socio-economic threat to many states and to people in Africa. For this reason, in this thesis I also analyzed the operations of African countries against these actors. Based on the comparison of three case studies of Somalia, Nigeria and the DR of the Congo, I found that the common feature of these operations is the very slow and inadequate initial response of state actors, which allowed VNSAs to temporarily gain substantial territorial control. Furthermore, these military operations were notoriously affected by corruption, inadequate equipment, and low levels of training and morale of individual counterinsurgency forces. Even though the territories of violent actors had been significantly reduced, or even eliminated over time, the analyzed COIN operations failed to respond effectively to the new asymmetric tactics conducted by insurgents. Besides, these operations provided none, or very only limited population-centric activities, which further reduced the chance of stabilizing and rebuilding conflict zones. Therefore, I argue that due to the lack of post-conflict stabilization efforts and the inability to degrade VNSAs´ capabilities to conduct asymmetric tactics, VNSAs will continue to pose an extraordinary security threat to many African countries in the foreseeable future, even if these countries successfully reduce territories of these actors. For these reasons, further extensive research of African violent non-state actors, as well as lesson-learning from previous counterinsurgency operations would be required for more effective and successful future military operations against these actors.

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Appendix no. 1: The Dataset of Violent Non-State Actors in Africa

Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
Algeria	Al-Qaida al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami	AQIM	Terrorists	2007 - Active	Up to 500	1260	Government	Entire Country	x	Non-Official Ceasefire (2019)
Algeria	Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2014 - Active	Dozens	50	Government	North	Alger	
Angola	Frente da Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda - Forças Armadas de Cabinda - Tiago Nzita faction	FLEC-FAC-TN	Insurgents	1963 - Active	Uknown	85	Government	North	Cabinda	
Burkina Faso	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara	ISGS	Terrorists	2015 - Active	Up to 200	100	Government/ JNIM	North-East	Sahel, East	
Burkina Faso	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb /Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin	JNIM	Terrorists/Religious militia	2007 - 2017/ 2017 - Active	Up to 2000	375	Islamists/Ethnic clashes	Entire Country	x	
Burkina Faso	Koglweogo	x	Vigilantes/ Paramilitary forces	2009 - Active	Several thousands	330	Government/ ISGS	North-East	Sahel, East	
Burundi	Forces populaires du Burundi	FPB	Insurgents	2015 - 2017	300 - 500	95	Government	North-West	Bujumbura	
Burundi	Résistance pour un Etat de Droit au Burundi	RED-TABARA	Insurgents	2011 - Active	2000	110	Government	North-West	Bujumbura	
Cameroon	Ambazonia Defense Forces	ADF	Insurgents	2016 - Active	500 - 1000	1300	Government	West	South West, North West, West	
Cameroon	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad	Boko Haram	Terrorists/Religious militia	2015 - Active	Thousands	850	Government	North	Extreme North	
Cameroon	Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2015 - Active	Hundreds	650	Government	North	North, Extreme North	
Cameroon	Comités locaux de vigilance	x	Paramilitary forces	Active	Uknown	75	Rebels, Local Clashes	North	North, Extreme North	
CAR	Retour, Réclamation, Réhabilitation	3R	Militia/Insurgents	2015 - Active	Few hundreds	290	Government	North	Bamingui-Bangoran, Vakaga	
CAR	Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace	CPJP	Insurgents	2009 - 2013	Uknown	150	FPRC/UPC/ Bandits	North-East	Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Mambéré	Merged with Séléka
CAR	Front populaire pour le redressement	FPR	Insurgents	2012 - 2014 (in CAR)	100 - 500	120	Chadian and CAR governments	North-West	Ouham-Pendé	Dissolved in CAR in 2014
CAR	Front populaire pour la renaissance de centrafrique (ex-Seleka)	FPRC	Insurgents	2013 - Active	Uknown	2900	Government, UPC, anti-Balaka	Entire Country	x	
CAR	Lord's Resistance Army	LRA	Insurgents/Bigmen/ Sobels	1988 - Active	100 - 150	440	Government	East	Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou	
CAR	Mouvement des Libérateurs Centrafricains pour la Justice	MLCJ	Insurgents/Militia	2008 - Active	Uknown	220	FPRC	North	Vakaga	
CAR	Mouvement national pour la libération de la Centrafrique	MNLC	Insurgents	2017 - Active		120	Anti-Balaka/FPRC	North-West	Ouham-Pemdé	Member of MPC
CAR	Mouvement Patriotique de Centrafrique	MPC	Insurgents	2015 - Active	Few hundreds	175	Government, UPC	North-West	Ouham-Pemdé, Ouham	
CAR	Revolution and Justice	RJ	Insurgents/Sobels	Active	Uknown	75	Government/ Local clashes	North	Ouham	
CAR	Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique	UPC	Insurgents/Militia	2014 - Active	Uknown	2120	Government/ Local militias	Center, South	Ouaka, Mbomou, Basse-Kotto, Kémo	Splitted from FPR
CAR	anti-Balaka	x	Insurgents/Militia/ Sobels	2013 - Active	More than 20000	4500	Religious clashes/Power Struggles	Entire Country (except North)	x	
CAR	Muslims/Christians	x	Religious group	Active	Uknown	730	Government	North-East	Kémo, Ouaka, Basse-Kotto	

Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
CAR	Séléka	x	Insurgents	2006 - 2013	Up to 3500	260	Government	Entire Country	x	Overthrow of government in 2013
Congo	Ntsiloulous	x	Insurgents/Criminals	1998 - 2002 2016 - 2018	Hundreds	70	Government/ Local clashes	South-West	Kongo-Central	
DR Congo	Allied Democratic Forces	ADF	Insurgents/Militia/ Criminals/Terrorists	1990´s - Active	450	3800	Ethnic clashes	Center-South	South Kivu, Tanganika	
DR Congo	Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain	APCLS	Ethnic militia/ Insurgents	2008 - 2018	500 - 4500	440	Rwanda Gov./ Ethnic clashes	East	North Kivu	Splitted
DR Congo	Collectif des Mouvements pour le Changement/ Forces de Défense du Peuple	CMC-FDP	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	2016 - Active	Uknown	380	Rwanda Gov.	East	Kivu regions, Ituri	
DR Congo	Coalition nationale du peuple pour la souveraineté du Congo	CNPSC	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	2013/17 - Active	200 - 500	950	Government	East	Kivu regions	
DR Congo	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda	FDLR	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	1999 - Active	1500 - 2000 in 2012	1300	Government	South	Tanganika, Haut-Lomami, Haut-Katanga	
DR Congo	Lord's Resistance Army	LRA	Insurgents/Bigmen/ Sobels	1988 - Active	100 - 150	750	Government/ Local militias	North	Bas-Uele, Haut-Uele, Tshopo	
DR Congo	Mouvement du 23-Mars	M23	Insurgents	2012 - 2013	2500 - 3000	2000	Government	East	North Kivu	Peace agreement in 12/2013
DR Congo	Nduma Défense du Congo	NDC-R	Paramilitary forces	2008 - 2014	150 - 180	630	Government	East	North Kivu	Dissolved
DR Congo	Union of Revolutionaries for the Defense of the Congolese People/Cooperative for the Development of the Congo	URDPC/CODECO	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	Active	Hundreds	200	Government/ Local clashes	Center-South	Kasai Regions	
DR Congo	Baluba people	x	Ethnic group	Active	Hundreds	880	Kamuina Nsapu	Center-South	Kasai Regions	
DR Congo	Bana Mura	x	Paramilitary forces	2016 - Active	Hundreds	350	Government	North	North Kivu/South Kivu	
DR Congo	Kamuina Nsapu	x	Tribal/Ethnic militia	2016 - Active	More than 2000	4200	FDLR	East	North Kivu, South Kivu	Merged with APCLS-R
DR Congo	Kata Katanga	x	Insurgents	2011 - Active	2000 - 3000	400	Government/ Ethnic clashes	North-East	Ituri	Ceasefire in 2020
Egypt	Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis/Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2011- 2014 2014 - Active	Hundreds	2600	Government	Entire Country	x	
Egypt	Harakit Sawa'id Misr	x	Terrorists	2016 - ?	Less than 100	140	Government	West	Lac, Hadjer-Lamis	Related to IS
Ethiopia	Oromo Liberation Front	OLF	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	1974 - 2018	Less than 5000	180	Government	Center	Oromiya	Ceasefire 2018
Ethiopia	Ogaden National Liberation Front	ONLF	Insurgents/Militia	1994 - 2018	Up to 3000	310	Government/ Ethnic clashes	East	Somali	Ceasefire 2018
Ethiopia	Tigray People's Liberation Front	TPLF	Insurgents	1975-Active	Uknown	Dozens	Government	North	Tigray	(Conflict started in 11/2020)
Ethiopia	Amhara People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	250	Ethnic clashes	Entire Country	Oromiya, Dire Dawa, Amhara	
Ethiopia	Oromo People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	550	Government/ Opposition parties	Entire country	x	Moderate Islamist agenda
Guinea	Konianke People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	100	Ethnic clashes	South	Nzerekore	
Guinea	Kpelle people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	120	Ethnic clashes	South	Nzerekore	
Chad	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad/Islamic State West Africa Province	Boko Haram ISWAP	Terrorists/Religious militia/Criminals	2015 - Active	3500 - 5000	More than 150	Ethnic clashes	Center-North	Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya	
Ivory Coast	Alliance des jeunes patriotes pour le sursaut national	AJPSN	Paramilitary forces/Gangs	2002 - 2011	Uknown	210	Opposition	South	Abidjan Department	Defeated

Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
CAR	Séléka	x	Insurgents	2006 - 2013	Up to 3500	260	Government	Entire Country	x	Overthrow of government in 2013
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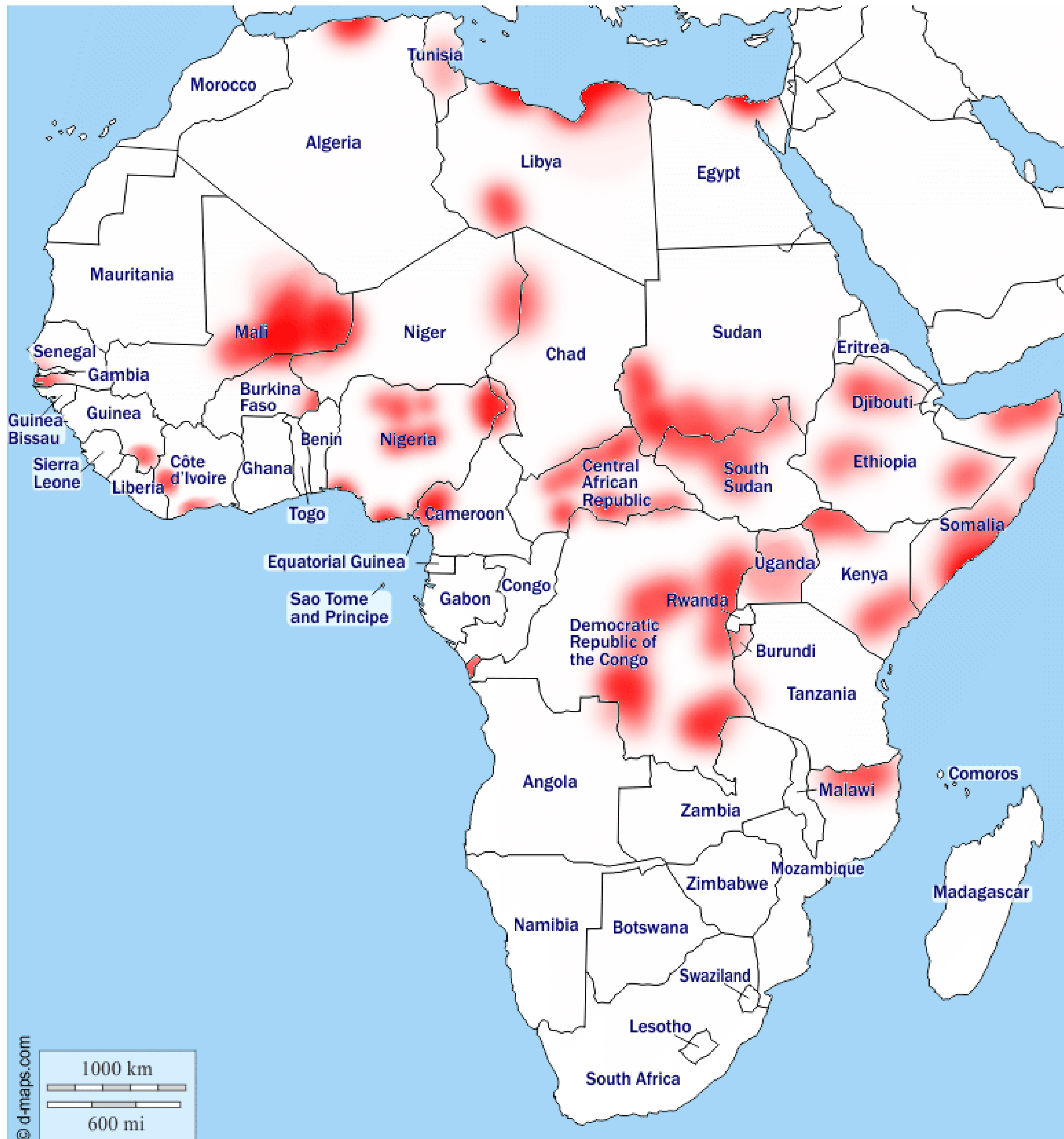
DR Congo	Collectif des Mouvements pour le Changement/ Forces de Défense du Peuple	CMC-FDP	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	2016 - Active	Uknown	380	Rwanda Gov.	East	Kivu regions, Ituri	
DR Congo	Coalition nationale du peuple pour la souveraineté du Congo	CNPSC	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	2013/17 - Active	200 - 500	950	Government	East	Kivu regions	
DR Congo	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda	FDLR	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	1999 - Active	1500 - 2000 in 2012	1300	Government	South	Tanganika, Haut-Lomami, Haut-Katanga	
DR Congo	Lord's Resistance Army	LRA	Insurgents/Bigmen/ Sobels	1988 - Active	100 - 150	750	Government/ Local militias	North	Bas-Uele, Haut-Uele, Tshopo	
DR Congo	Mouvement du 23-Mars	M23	Insurgents	2012 - 2013	2500 - 3000	2000	Government	East	North Kivu	Peace agreement in 12/2013
DR Congo	Nduma Défense du Congo	NDC-R	Paramilitary forces	2008 - 2014	150 - 180	630	Government	East	North Kivu	Dissolved
DR Congo	Union of Revolutionaries for the Defense of the Congolese People/Cooperative for the Development of the Congo	URDPC/CODECO	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	Active	Hundreds	200	Government/ Local clashes	Center-South	Kasai Regions	
DR Congo	Baluba people	x	Ethnic group	Active	Hundreds	880	Kamuina Nsapu	Center-South	Kasai Regions	
DR Congo	Bana Mura	x	Paramilitary forces	2016 - Active	Hundreds	350	Government	North	North Kivu/South Kivu	
DR Congo	Kamuina Nsapu	x	Tribal/Ethnic militia	2016 - Active	More than 2000	4200	FDLR	East	North Kivu, South Kivu	Merged with APCLS-R
DR Congo	Kata Katanga	x	Insurgents	2011 - Active	2000 - 3000	400	Government/ Ethnic clashes	North-East	Ituri	Ceasefire in 2020
Egypt	Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis/Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2011- 2014 2014 - Active	Hundreds	2600	Government	Entire Country	x	
Egypt	Harakit Sawa'id Misr	x	Terrorists	2016 - ?	Less than 100	140	Government	West	Lac, Hadjer-Lamis	Related to IS
Ethiopia	Oromo Liberation Front	OLF	Insurgents/Ethnic militia	1974 - 2018	Less than 5000	180	Government	Center	Oromiya	Ceasefire 2018
Ethiopia	Ogaden National Liberation Front	ONLF	Insurgents/Militia	1994 - 2018	Up to 3000	310	Government/ Ethnic clashes	East	Somali	Ceasefire 2018
Ethiopia	Tigray People's Liberation Front	TPLF	Insurgents	1975-Active	Uknown	Dozens	Government	North	Tigray	(Conflict started in 11/2020)
Ethiopia	Amhara People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	250	Ethnic clashes	Entire Country	Oromiya, Dire Dawa, Amhara	
Ethiopia	Oromo People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	550	Government/ Opposition parties	Entire country	x	Moderate Islamist agenda
Guinea	Konianke People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	100	Ethnic clashes	South	Nzerekore	
Guinea	Kpelle people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	120	Ethnic clashes	South	Nzerekore	
Chad	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad/Islamic State West Africa Province	Boko Haram ISWAP	Terrorists/Religious militia/Criminals	2015 - Active	3500 - 5000	More than 150	Ethnic clashes	Center-North	Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya	
Ivory Coast	Alliance des jeunes patriotes pour le sursaut national	AJPSN	Paramilitary forces/Gangs	2002 - 2011	Uknown	210	Opposition	South	Abidjan Department	Defeated

Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
Libya	The Forces of Muammar Gaddafi	x	Insurgents	2011	Less then 76000	720	Rebels, Government	North	Tripolitania, Cyrenaica	Former Gaddafi regime forces
Libya	Toubou People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	660	Ethnic clashes/ Zawaya	Center/South	Cyrenaica, Fezzan	
Libya	Tuareg People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	116	Power Struggles	South-West	Fezzan	
Libya	Zuwaya People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	230	Ethnic clashes/ Toubou	South-East	Cyrenaica	
Libya	The Zintan Military Council	ZMC	Insurgents/Militia	2014 - 2017	3000 - 5000	340	Islamists	North-West	Tripolitania	Supported Government of National Accord
Mali	Al-Qaida al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami	AQIM	Terrorists/Religious militia	2007 - 2017	500 - 1500	500	Government/ Ethnic groups	Entire Country	x	
Mali	Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad	CMA	Insurgents	2012 - Deactive	Upto 2000	680	CMA/Islamists	North	Tombouctou, Gao	
Mali	The Macina Liberation Front	FLM	Terrorists	2015 - Active	Uknown	Uknown, more than several hundreds	Government	Center	Mopti	
Mali	Groupe autodéfense Touareg Imghad et alliés/Plateforme	GATIA	Ethnic/Pro-Gov. militia	2014 - Active	Up to 1000	90	Terrorists, CMA	North	Kidal Region	
Mali	Haut conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad	HCUA	Insurgents	2013	Uknown	Uknown, probably dozens	Government	North	Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal	Joined CMA
Mali	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara/Islamic State´s West Africa Province	ISGS/ISWAP	Terrorists/Religious militia	2015 - 2019 2019 - Active	Uknown	350	Government	North	Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal	
Mali	Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin	JNIM	Terrorists/Religious militia	2017 - Active	Up to 2000	1100	Government/ Rebels	North	Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal	
Mali	Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad	MNLA	Ex-Insurgents/Ethnic militia	2011 - 2015	2000 - 3000	420	Government	North	Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal	Merged with CMA
Mali	Mouvement du Salut de l'Azawad	MSA	Ethnic group/Militia	2016 - 2019	3000	105	Islamists/Ethnic clashes	North	Gao	
Mali	Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest	MUJAO	Terrorists/ Insurgents	2011 - 2013	500	340	Government/ Ethnic groups	Entire Country	x	
Mali	Al-Murabitun	x	Religious militia	2013 - 2015	600	65	Government	North	Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal	Merged with IS
Mali	Dan na Amassagou	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	350	Ethnic clashes	Center	Mopti	
Mali	Dogon	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	160	Ethnic clashes	Center	Mopti	
Mali	Fulani people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	220	CMA/Islamists	North	Gao	
Mozambique	Ansar al-Sunnah, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamma'ah	ASWJ	Insurgents/Religious militia/Terrorists	2015 - 2019	200 - 1500	700	Government	North	Cabo Delgado	Merged with IS
Mozambique	Resistência nacional Moçambicana	Renamo	Insurgents	1976 - Active	700 - 2500	140	Government	Entire country	x	Peace agreement in 2019
Niger	Groupe autodéfense Touareg Imghad et alliés	GATIA	Ethnic/Pro-Malian militia	2014 - Active	Up to 1000	80	Terrorists, CMA	West	Tillabéri	
Niger	Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2015 - Active	Uknown	1030	Government	South-East	Diffa, Tillabéri	
Nigeria	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad	Boko Haram	Terrorists/Religious militia	2002 - 2015 2016 - Active	1500	12140	Government/Ethnic groups	North/East	Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Adamawa	
Nigeria	Yan Gora	CJF	Militia	Active	Uknown	950	Government	North/Center	Borno, Kaduna	
Nigeria	Islamic State/Islamic State´s West Africa Province	IS/ISWAP	Terrorists/Religious militia	2015/2015 - Active	3500 - 5000	6900	Government/Ethnic groups	North/East	Borno, Adamawa	

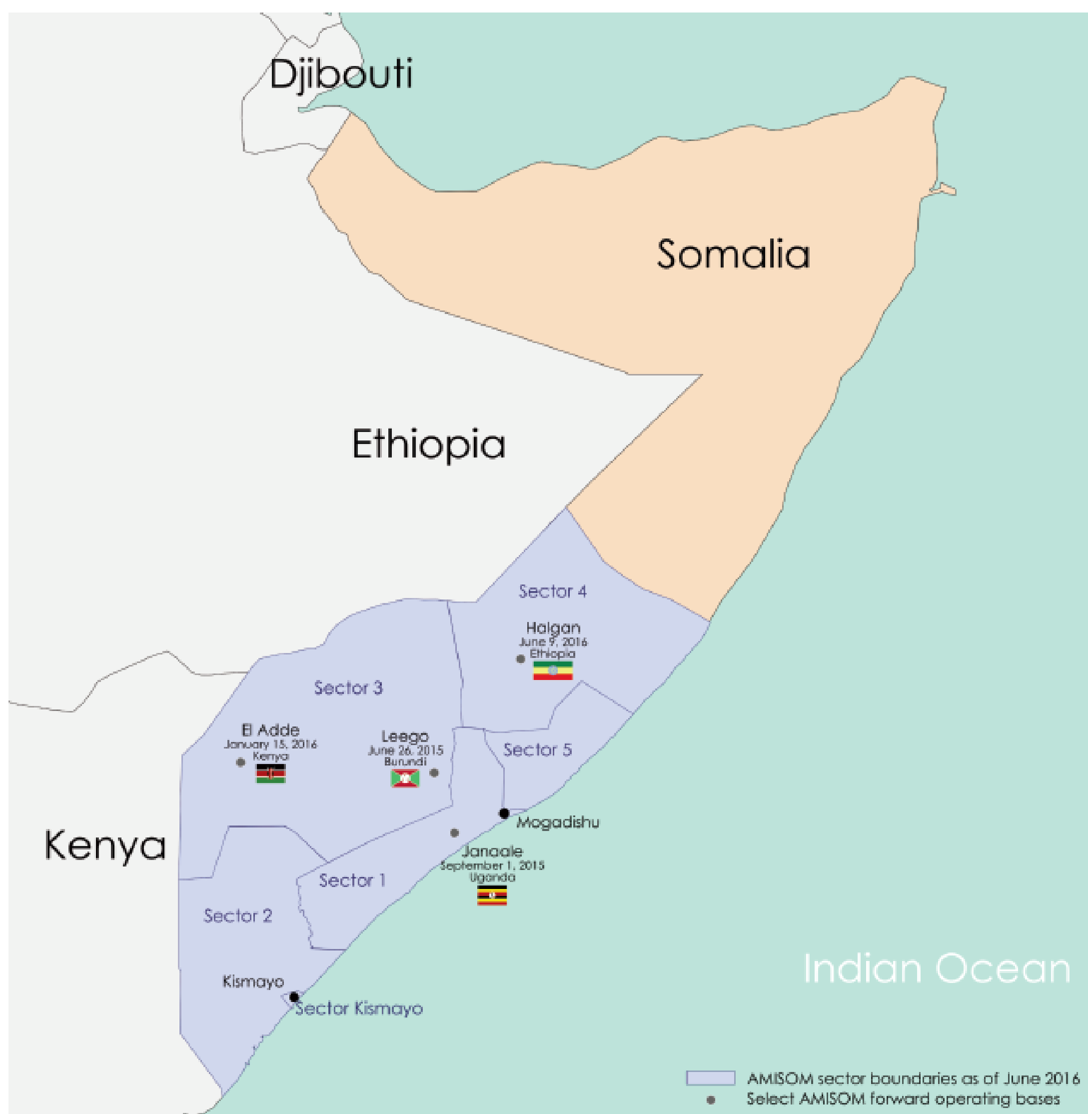
Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
Nigeria	Niger Delta Vigilantes	NDV	Bigmen/Criminal group/Gangs	1990´s - Active	Uknown	280	Power struggles	South	Rivers	
Nigeria	Agatu	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	550	Power struggles/Ethnic clashes	Center	Benue	
Nigeria	Birom people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	1400	Other gangs	Center	Kaduna	
Nigeria	Black Axe	x	Bigmen/Criminal group/Gangs	Active	Uknown	500	Ethnic clashes	South	Edo, Delta, Lagos	
Nigeria	Bwatiye people	x	Ethnic group	Active	Uknown	350	Power struggles	East	Adamawa	
Nigeria	Deebam	x	Bigmen/Criminal group/Gangs	1991 - Uknown	Hundreds	170	Other Gangs	South	Rivers	
Nigeria	Eggon People	x	Ethnic group	Active	Hundreds	370		Center/North	Nassarawa	
Nigeria	Fulani People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	4600	Ethnic clashes	Center/South	Nassarawa, Plateau	
Nigeria	Greenlanders	x	Bigmen/Criminal groups	2003 - Active	Uknown	160	NDV, Other Gangs	South	Rivers	
Nigeria	Irigwe people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	240	Power struggles	Center	Kaduna, Plateau	
Nigeria	Jukun people	x	Ethnic group	Active	Uknown	380	Other gangs	South	Rivers	
Nigeria	Kadara people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	270	Ethnic clashes	South-East	Benue, Taraba	
Nigeria	Tiv	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	1800	Government	South	Tabara	
Senegal	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance	MFDC	Insurgents	1983 - Active	Hundreds to 2000	85	Government	West	Casamance	
Somalia	Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen	Al-Shabaab	Terrorists/Religious militia	2006 - Active	7000 - 9000	19600	Govenrment/ Opposition clans	Entire country	x	
Somalia	Ahlu Sunna Waljamaca	x	Islamists/Militia	1991 - 2010	2000	260	Government/ Al-Shabaab	Center	Central State of Somalia	Partial agreement with Transitional Federal Government
Somalia	Hizbul Islam	x	Terrorists/Religious militia	2009 - 2010	Hundreds	215	Al-Shabaab	Center	Central State of Somalia	Partly merged with Al-Shabaab
Somalia	Mujahideen in the Golis Mountains	x	Terrorists/Religious militia	2010 - 2012	Uknown	200	Govenrment/ Opposition clans	North	Puntland	Partly merged with Al-Shabaab
Somalia	Puntland State of Somalia	x	Insurgents	1998 - 2012	Uknown	200	Government	North	Puntland	Member state of Federal Republic of Somalia (since 2012)
Somalia	Republic of Somaliland	x	Insurgence/ Separatists	1991 - Active	Thousands	300	Government/ Puntland	North	Somaliland	
Somalia	Suleiman - Habar Gidir Clan	x	Sub-Clan Militia	Active	Uknown	190	Government/Clans	Center	Mudug	
South Sudan	National Salvation Front	NAS	Insurgents	2017 - Active	Uknown	200	Power struggles	South	Central Equatoria	
South Sudan	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition	SPLM/A - IO	Insurgents	2013 - Active	Up to 55000 in 2015	5600	Government	Entire Country	x	Peace agreement in 2019
South Sudan	Bor Dinka	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	320	Power struggles	East	Jonglei	
South Sudan	Dinka People	x	Tribal group/Militia	Active	Uknown	582	Power struggles	East	Jonglei	
South Sudan	Jie People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	280	Power struggles	North	Warrap	
South Sudan	Lou Nuer People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	2185	Power struggles	East	Jonglei, Pibor	
South Sudan	Luac Jang Dinka People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	180	Power struggles	North	Warrap	
South Sudan	Murle People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	2440	Power struggles	North	Pibor	
South Sudan	Nuer People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	620	Power struggles	Center/North	Warrap, Lakes	
South Sudan	Rup Dinka People	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	250	Government	South	Central Equatoria	

Country	Group name	Acronym	Type	Active	Size	Related death	Main Enemy	Region	Region	Note
South Sudan	Thiyic Dinka	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	330	Government of Sudan (United)/ Government of South Sudan	Northern part of South Sudan	Unity, Warrap	
South Sudan	Waat Dinka	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	210	Government of Sudan (United)/ Government of South Sudan	Northern part of South Sudan	Unity, Warrap	
Sudan (until 2011)	South Sudna Defence Movement/Army	SSDM/A	Insurgents	2010 - 2011	2000	690	Power struggles	North/Center	Warrap, Lakes	Integrated into the government forces of South Sudan in 2012
Sudan (until 2011)	South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army	SSLM/A	Insurgents	2011 - 2013	1000 - 3000	570	Power struggles	East	Jonglei	Integrated into the government forces of South Sudan in 2012
Sudan (North)	Justice and Equality Movement	JEM	Insurgents	2000 - Active	Less than 5000	780	Power struggles/ Ngok Dinka	South	West Kordofan, South Kordofan	
Sudan (North)	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army	SLM/A	Insurgents	2003 - Active	2500 in 2009	660	Government	South	South Kordofan	
Sudan (North)	Sudan People's Liberation Movement	SPLM/A-North	Insurgents/ Paramilitary forces	2011-2017 2017 - ?	47000	785	Government	West	Darfur	Supported by South Sudan
Sudan (North)	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North Malik Agar-faction	SPLM/A-North - MA	Insurgents/ Paramilitary forces	2017 - 2020	Thousands	70	Government	South	South Kordofan	Split from SPLM/A-North, Peace agreement in 2020
Sudan (North)	Sudan Revolutionary Front	SRF	Insurgents/Militia	2011 - Active	More than 35000	4400	Government	South	Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan	ceasefire in 2019
Sudan (North)	Beni Hussein	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	390	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Darfur Joint Resistance Forces	x	Insurgents	2014 - 2017	Uknown	310	Government	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Fulani people	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	340	Ethnic clashes	South	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Habaniya	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	280	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Misseriya - Awlad al-Zuid clan	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	1700	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Ngok Dinka	x	Ethnic group/Militia	Active	Uknown	350	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Rizeigat Abbala	x	Ethnic group	Active	Uknown	880	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Rizeigat Baggara	x	Ethnic group	Active	Uknown	1220	Ethnic clashes	West	Darfur	
Sudan (North)	Salamat Baggara	x	Clan militias/ Strongman	Active	Uknown	930	Government	West	Darfur	
Tunisia	Islamic State	IS	Terrorists/Religious militia	2014 - Active	Uknown	100	Government	Entire Country	x	
Uganda	Harakat al-Shabaab Mujahideen	x	Terrorists/Religious militia	2006 - Active	7000 - 9000	74	Government	Center	Kampala	

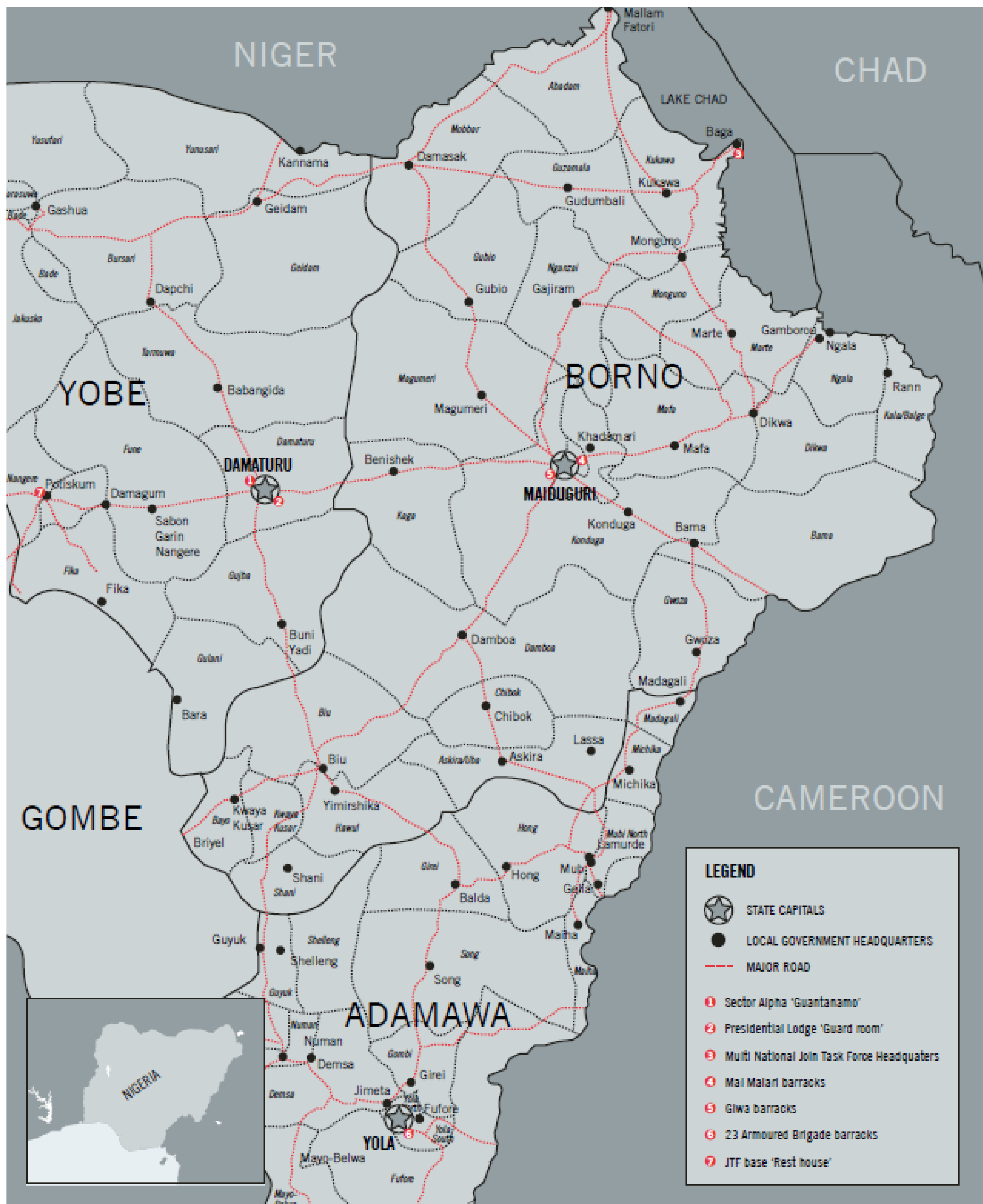
Appendix no. 2: The Territorial Distribution of Violent Non-State Actors in Africa (map)



Appendix no. 3: The map of AMISOM Sectors in Somalia (map) (Williams, 2016, p. 2)

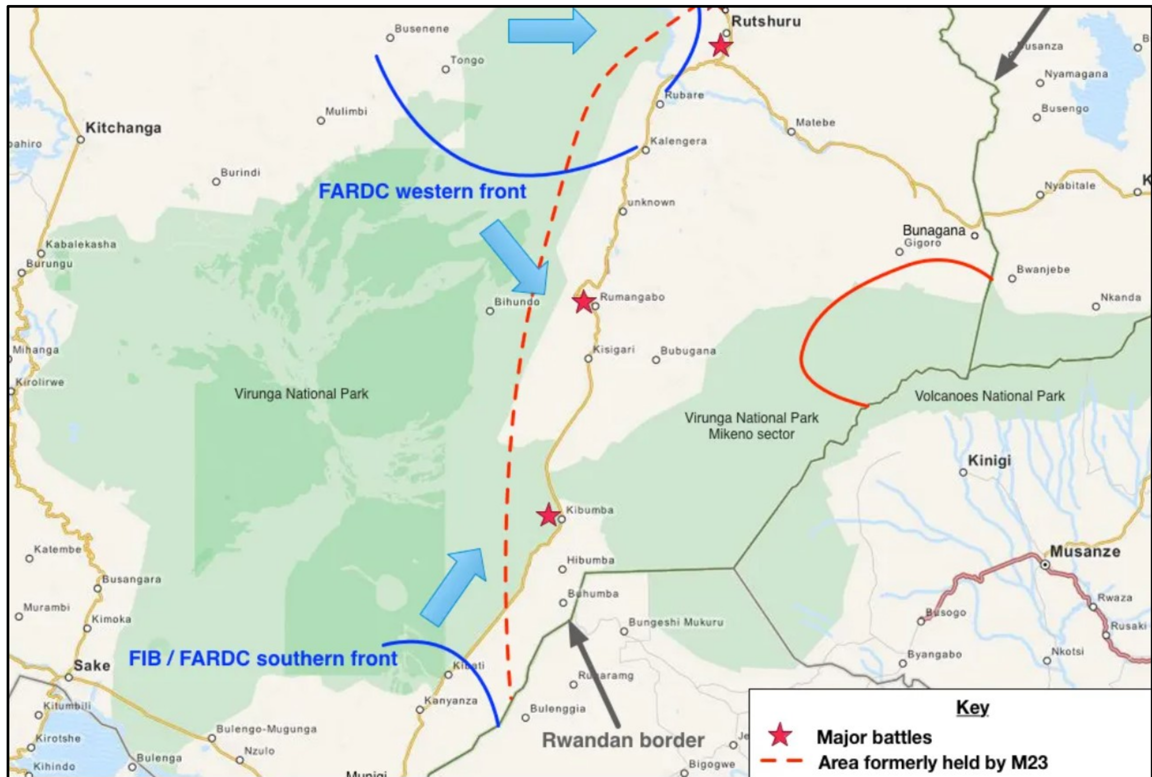


Appendix no. 4: The map of North-Eastern Nigeria (map) (AI, 2015)



Appendix no. 5: The map of the Region of North Kivu in the DRC (map) (RW, 2012)

Appendix no. 6: The COIN Operation Against the M23 Insurgency (map) (Darren, 2013)



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Diploma thesis project

Operations of African states against violent non-state actors in Somalia, Nigeria, and the Democratic republic of Congo

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Study programme: Security Studies
Date of submission: April 2020

Introduction to the topic

There are many kinds of threats and dangers that every state must face in order to ensure its internal integrity, security, or even its very existence. While the probability of interstate conflict still remains very low, one of the most serious risks for the state is undoubtedly the presence and activities of violent non-state actors (VNSAs) on its territory, especially if their ultimate goal is to destroy the existing official governmental structure. The term VNSAs is very diverse, its categorization includes several types of groups with different motivation, orientation, and organizations. They vary from non-territorial based terrorist groups, through militias and warlords, to paramilitary groups and criminal organizations, when sometimes boundaries between such typological groups are very narrow. Clear recognition and categorization of VNSAs is undoubtedly essential for better understanding of their behaviour. From the perspective of security studies, the crucial question is how the state responds to these actors and tries to defeat them by its military counterinsurgency operation - COIN.

In the diploma thesis, I will analyse counterinsurgency efforts of African countries on their own territory focusing on their key strategic and tactical elements, motives and goals. Further, I will examine potential similarities and common features of these operations. Countries, which I have chosen for the analytical part of the thesis are Somalia, Nigeria and Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), where long-term clashes between insurgents and counterinsurgency forces take place. Specifically, with the jihadist terrorist group Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the jihadist terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria, and with dozens of rebel groups like M23 in DRC.

The reason for my choice is that the academic research is still primarily interested in COIN efforts of Western or developed countries, while in case of developing countries falls short. The amount of academic literature and existing stock of knowledge focusing on military intervention of countries like United State, Russia, and China, France, and United Kingdom against insurgents in so called Third world countries are extensive and substantial. On the other hand, the comprehensive comparative analysis of COIN operations conducted by developing countries is not sufficient, despite the scope and seriousness of impacts of VNSAs on current political and security situation of many states, especially in Africa. For that reason, the focus on indigenous counterinsurgency operations and the research on how

developing countries react to such a threat are topics of high relevance not only for political science, but also for international politics.

Research target, research question

The empirical section of the diploma thesis will have analytical and comparative parts. The objective of the first part is to analyse counterinsurgency operation of African states against violent non-state actors present in their territory, as well as the main motives and goals of African states to conduct COIN operations. As Scott Moore mentions, "*insurgencies erupt rarely in stable and effectively governed societies or countries*." Therefore, "*counterinsurgencies that attempted to maintain the status quo rarely succeeded; pre-existing social conditions and structures, as well as attitudes, demanded change to achieve lasting stability* (Moore, 2011, p. 20)." For this reason, it will be useful to examine whether the motivations of COIN actors are to restore the status quo ante bellum, to reform state and society, or whether the actors try to reach some kind of modus vivendi with insurgents in the attempt to survive.

In the second part, I will compare results of the case-study analysis to determine the development of the strategy of COIN operations conducted by African states, and identify common features of the operations in African continent. By doing this, I will be able to answer these research questions:

RQ1: What are the key strategic and tactical elements of counterinsurgency operations conducted by African states?
RQ2: What are the main motives of African states to conduct COIN operations?
RQ3: How does strategy of counterinsurgency operations conducted by African states evolve over the time?

In analytical part, I will focus on analysis of three case studies of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Nigerian COIN operation against Boko Haram, and COIN operation in Democratic republic of Congo. The case studies are not selected randomly, but instead they have been chosen by three criterions. First, selected case studies represent major armed conflicts with VNSAs in different regions of the continent, namely the Horn of Africa, Central Africa and West Africa. Second, the length of each COIN operation is sufficient for analysis of potential strategy evolution. Third, COIN actors differ case by case. Specifically,

counterinsurgency forces vary from external coalition of African states (states of African Union in Somalian case), through internal leading actor (Nigerian armed forces in Nigeria), to weak internal actor supported by other states (Congolese army). Because the main objective of the thesis is searching for potential common features of African-led COIN operations, these criterions are essential for valid outcomes.

Prolonged internal conflicts followed by chronic social-political instability last for years in case-study countries. In Somalia, after almost 20 years of completed state collapse and bloody violence, the peace-making AMISOM mission was launched in 2007 as an effort to support almost virtual transitional government in restoring peace, stabilizing country and combating Islamic terrorist group Al-Shabaab. Until now, more than 23 thousand people were killed in the country since 2007, whereas AMISOM had suffered casualties of approximately 1800 its members until December 2018 (UCDP, 2020; Williams, 2020). In Nigeria, the peak of violence related to Boko Haram culminated in March 2014, and again in February 2015, when the number of deaths per month had reached 3400 and 2600, respectively (CFR, 2020). However, despite the significant decrease on the death rate to the average of nearly 500 deaths per month, overall casualties since 2011 almost touch a milestone of 70 thousand people (CFR, 2020). The situation is similarly critical in DCR, but it is almost impossible to estimate exact casualties. Nevertheless, according to Uppsala Conflict Data Program, more than 18 thousand people were killed during last decade, mostly in the eastern part of the country (UCDP, 2020). Such numbers demonstrate perfectly the unsatisfactory security situation of these states.

For analytical purpose, it will be necessary to clearly determine a beginning of the case-studies. In Somalia, the examined period corresponds with a beginning of AMISOM mission in February 2007. In case of Nigeria, I will define the outburst of violence and clashes between Nigerian armed forces and Boko Haram in July 2009 as a starting point of COIN operation. In DRC, I will focus on COIN efforts since April 2012, when the prominent M23 rebel group of deserters from Congolese army were formed.

Theoretical framework, methodology and data

As a theoretical framework of counterinsurgency operations, I will primarily use David Kilcullen´s study on counterinsurgency (Kilcullen, 2010), David Galula´s theory of COIN warfare (Galula, 1964), Paul Christopher´s and Clark Colin´s testing of approaches to counterinsurgency (Christopher et al., 2010), and US Army field manuals on insurgency and

counter insurgency (USDA, 2009; USDA, 2014),. These sources will provide solid background for further analysis of COIN operations of African states. In case of violent non-state actors, the thesis will be based on Ulrich Schneckener´s and Phill Williams´ conceptualization and typology (Schneckener, 2007; Williams, 2008), which will be applied for categorization of violent-non state actors active in Africa during last ten years, particularly since 2010. Further, I will use this categorization combined with Uppsala Conflict Data Program information for mapping of VNSAs typological and territorial distribution in Africa. These findings will provide wider context of VNSAs presence on the continent.

The thesis methodology will be the structured, focused comparison of case studies. In other words, the method is theoretically focused on counterinsurgency operations, and it is structured because it is based on clearly identified group of cases to be studied, the research objective and the research strategy to achieve that objective guides the selection and analysis of the cases within the phenomenon under investigation, and because case studies will employ variables of theoretical interest for purposes of explanation (Bennet; George, 2005, p. 67). The structured, focused comparison will have two follow-up phases. During the first one, I will answer the research questions asked of each case by in-depth analysis of three case-studies of African COIN operations. It will allow me to examine strategy of operations and its evolution over time, as well as motives and objectives of the COIN actors. For instance, one of the vital aspects of successful COIN operation, especially during long-term conflicts, is whether the counterinsurgency forces are able to react and modify themselves quickly and properly to adaptive insurgents. On the contrary, the inability to set up sustainable and effective strategy could be viewed as an indicator of COIN failures.

Findings from the first phase will be used in second phase focusing on comparison of different COIN operation in order to find out if there are any key similarities or characteristics common for operations of African countries. Both parts combined will lead to description of features typical for these operations and to answers for research questions. Consequently, the diploma thesis findings will give a complex picture about counterinsurgency efforts conducted by African states.

In the thesis, I will initially draw from primary sources, as official website of AMISOM mission in Somalia, or United Nation mission in DRC MONUSCO. However, the secondary sources will be vital due to significant limits of primary ones. Therefore, I will extensively use academic literature, books (Comolli, 2017; Hansen, 2016; Oloya, 2016) and

publications focusing on African insurgency and counterinsurgency, as well as research project like Global Conflict Tracker (CFR, 2020), Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP, 2020) and International Crisis Group (ICG, 2020).

Planned thesis outline

1. Introduction
2. Approaches to Counterinsurgency Warfare
3. Conceptualization of Violent Non-State Actos
4. Violent Non-State Actors in Africa
5. Analysis of COIN Operation of African States
    5.1. African Union AMISOM Mission in Somalia
    5.2. Nigerian COIN Against Boko Haram
    5.3. COIN in Democratic Republic of Congo
6. Comparison of COIN Operation of African States
7. Conclusion

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