Maritime terrorism: Why the East African Community is the Next Potential Target of Maritime Terrorism

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Abstract

Maritime terrorism is a politically motivated crime launched at or from the sea. In recent years, there have been a number of terrorist incidents on land in the East African Community (EAC) region, all in Kenya. Nonetheless, no act of terrorism has yet occurred by sea in the EAC, even though Kenya shares both land and maritime borders with Somalia. This study investigates the likelihood of the EAC being the next victim of maritime terrorism. It also looks at why the EAC is so vulnerable to maritime terrorism. This study found that the likelihood of the EAC being a target of maritime terrorism stems from the fact that it borders Somalia and that Kenya is at war with al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based terrorist group. Al-Shabaab has significant experience in the EAC maritime domain and the possibility of al-Shabaab using the Muslim youths it has recruited in Mombasa, Kenya and among ethnic Somalis living in Kenya further heightens the likelihood of the group attacking the EAC's shores. This study further found that the lack of a regional maritime security strategy (including a Maritime Domain Awareness programme), unpoliced maritime waters and poor cooperation between Kenyan and Tanzanian maritime law enforcement agencies make the region extremely vulnerable to maritime terrorism. The author of this study believes that this paper would act as a wakeup call to the EAC Secretariat and the politicians amongst the EAC member states on the importance of investing their political wills and financial resources in the regional maritime security efforts.

Key words: Maritime Terrorism; Maritime Security; East African Community; Kenya; Tanzania; Al-Shabaab,

1.   Introduction

1.1   An overview of the EAC

The EAC is an intergovernmental organisation (IGO). It currently comprises the states of Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The EAC was officially re-established on 7 July 2000, after a former version crumbled and was dissolved on 1 July 1977 (Katembo, 2008). The former version of the Community was made up of the states of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. These three states are also known as the 'founders' of the new EAC. Burundi and Rwanda are the two newer members of the Community, taken on board on 1 July 2007. Kenya and Tanzania are the only coastal states of the Community; the rest are landlocked. The EAC borders Ethiopia, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, and the Indian Ocean to the east. Through Kenya, the EAC shares both land and maritime borders with Somalia. In its current state, the EAC is not a federation. However, the ultimate goal of the Community is to have a federal government (i.e. political unification) (Aminzad, 2013).

1.2   A survey of the EAC maritime domain

As noted, the EAC is not currently a federation. Therefore, the EAC maritime domain comprises only the maritime domains of Kenya and Tanzania. The EAC maritime domain has a coastline of approximately 1,950 kilometres and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about 383,541 square kilometres (UNCTAD, 2005; Cook and Carleton, 2000; Kenya Government, 2009). None of the EAC member states have so far been able to extend their maritime zones to the outer limit of the Continental Shelf (CS) despite attempts to do so. The CS areas for which the two EAC coastal states – Kenya and Tanzania – have made bids are absolutely vital for the energy security of the region and beyond. If the bids are successful, then potentially, the EAC might have extra maritime waters further out over the Continental Shelf of about 164,520 square kilometres.

Like all other such domains, the EAC maritime domain is affected by a number of maritime security threats. The threats predominantly affecting the EAC region are piracy, armed robbery against ships, smuggling of illicit

drugs, light weapons and human trafficking, illegal fishing and environmental destruction (Very, 2013). There is also an ongoing maritime border dispute between Kenya and Somalia (Kaye, 2010). The dispute is now in the hands of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Although there has not been any incident of purely maritime terrorism in EAC waters, such a possibility cannot be ruled out.

2.   Maritime terrorism in context

Maritime terrorism is a politically motivated crime launched by sea. It is sometimes considered as an act of war launched at sea (Bellamy, 2012). Hoffman considers terrorism to be the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence, or the threat of violence, in the pursuit of political change (Hoffman, 2006). Whatever the definition might be, maritime terrorism is regarded as the deadliest maritime security threat (Bateman, 2009; Murphy, 2007). According to Bueger, "maritime security refers to threats such as maritime inter-state disputes, maritime terrorism, piracy, trafficking of narcotics, people and illicit goods, arms proliferation, illegal fishing, environmental crimes or maritime accidents and disasters" (Bueger, 2015, p. 159). For many years, terrorists have largely targeted sites on land. This is because the conditions necessary for a successful terrorist attack on water can be fulfilled only with difficulty (Murphy, 2007). Most terrorists do not have the necessary maritime skills. Obtaining competency at sea, for example, is both expensive and time-consuming. These are some of the reasons why terrorists prefer land over sea when it comes to delivering the deadliest possible attacks. If terrorists had the maritime competency to command a ship or undertake combat diving, for example, that could put maritime terrorism on the world map as the deadliest of crimes. In West Africa, for example, there is speculation that marine cadets in Nigeria are engaged in piracy and armed robbery against ships (Maritime Executive, 2016). These cadets do not find employment opportunities in their home country or anywhere else because of insufficient sea time served, among other reasons. As a result, they actively participate in maritime crimes in the region. This is said to be one of the reasons why piracy and armed robbery against ships are still problems in West Africa. While maritime skill is one of the prerequisites of maritime terrorism, in West Africa that skill can be outsourced quite easily.

The evidence shows that, in recent years, maritime terrorism has become terrorists' new focus. This is partly due to the fact that international commercial ships and other maritime infrastructures, such as mega ports and offshore oil and gas rigs, appear to be soft targets for maritime terrorism. Maritime terrorists target maritime infrastructures with the goal of causing significant damage to human life and the environment, as well as triggering large financial losses. For example, blowing up an LNG ship, an oil tanker, a passenger ship or a mega port would have devastating effects on the maritime supply chain and on the economy; in extreme cases, there could be huge loss of life.

As with maritime security, the term 'maritime terrorism' doesn't have an internationally agreed definition. However, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) Working Group has offered an extensive definition of maritime terrorism: "…the undertaking of terrorist acts and activities within the maritime environment, using or against vessels or fixed platforms at sea or in port, or against any one of their passengers or personnel, against coastal facilities or settlements, including tourist resorts, port areas and port towns or cities" (CSCAP qouted in Chalk, 2008, p. 3). The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) defines piracy as "an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with apparent intent or capability to use force in furtherance of that act" (Chalk, 2008, p. 3). The IMB's definition of piracy sheds some light on the context of maritime terrorism even though it lacks international acceptance. Despite the lack of international recognition, the IMB's definition is widely used in most maritime commercial activities. For instance, the definition is common in the insurance industry. It eases the marine insurance processes associated with sailing a ship in areas where there is a high risk of piracy and with claiming compensation in case of an attack, damage or loss. Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides a universal definition of piracy, but it is almost impossible to insure a ship under it.

The 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) and its protocols is one of the few maritime frameworks used to address maritime terrorism, more specifically in the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, 1988. There is, however, some concern that the SUA Convention does not refer to terrorism specifically (Johnson and Valencia, 2005). The US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is the latest attempt to prevent maritime terrorists accessing and spreading conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In the records of worldwide terrorist attacks, maritime terrorism is considered insignificant compared to land-based terrorism. According to the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents, maritime terrorist incidents account for two per cent of worldwide incidents recorded between 1968 and 2007 (Chalk, 2008). There

have only been two notable maritime terrorist incidents in the wider region and close to the East African region, neither of which took place in the EAC maritime domain. On 12 October 2000, two suicide bombers in a boat loaded with explosives attacked the *USS Cole* in the Yemeni port of Aden. Seventeen American sailors were killed and 39 were injured. The attack caused US$250 million in damage to the warship, which took 14 months to repair. The second incident involved the French oil super tanker, the *Limburg*, which was rammed by an explosive-laden dinghy on 6 October 2002 in a suicide attack. Approximately 90,000 barrels of oil leaked into the Gulf of Aden. One crew member was killed and 12 others were injured in the attack (Sinai, 2004). A terrorist organisation, possibly the notorious al-Qaeda, is believed to have been running a fleet of approximately 15 mysterious ships for many years. These ships sail internationally and are used to transport weapons, explosives, terrorists and money to be used in terrorist operations (as well as in ordinary business operations) (Mitz, 2002). The evidence suggests that some of al-Qaeda's ships were used to transport explosives used in the 1988 bombing of two US embassies in East Africa (Mitz, 2002).

3.   Connections between Somali piracy and maritime terrorism

Very often, sea piracy is associated with maritime terrorism; however, the two are different maritime crimes that require different countermeasures from policy makers (Nelson, 2012). As Nelson argues, "the overlapping characteristics and marked similarities between pirates and terrorists operating at sea make it difficult to tell them apart. Such ambiguity has significant implications and serves as an impediment to effectively countering these threats" (Nelson, 2012, p. 15). In an attempt to differentiate between piracy and maritime terrorism, Bellamy (2012) argues that piracy differs from maritime terrorism because it is organised crime and is primarily motivated by financial gain. Terrorism, like piracy, is also a highly organised crime; however, it is conducted with political motivations (Bellamy, 2012). As Joubert argues, "the motive determines whether an incident should be classified as an act of piracy or an act of terrorism; piracy is for financial gain while terrorism is for political gain" (Joubert, 2013, p. 111). Judging criminal motives is one of the most difficult tasks faced by law enforcement agencies. Motives are inner intentions that are difficult for law enforcement agencies to determine, which causes difficulties when trying criminals. The choice of target, the tactics used, and the use of violence are other factors that differentiate piratical and terrorist acts.

Murphy, for example, says that maritime terrorists choose targets that fall into four categories: "a) Ships as iconic targets; b) ships as economic targets; c) ships as mass casualty targets; d) ships as weapons" (Murphy, 2007, p. 55). Piracy and terrorism pose difficulties to law enforcement agencies. This is partly due to their operational similarities. Both pirates and terrorists launch their attacks in the maritime domain and use boats or ships. Bellamy acknowledges that piracy might sometimes take a maritime terrorism approach, which makes it very difficult to differentiate between the two (Bellamy, 2012). Nelson argues that what defines piracy and terrorism often lies in the eye of the beholder (Nelson, 2012).

In the case of Somalia, cooperation between pirates and terrorists is unlikely, but it is not impossible and could be dangerous, especially in vulnerable areas such as the coast of Somalia, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the EAC. Al-Shabaab, a notorious Somalia-based terrorist group, is at war with Kenya and poses a significant threat to the entire EAC region, as well as to the wider area. Also, a connection between Somali pirates and al-Shabaab, while not yet proven, cannot be ruled out (Leonard and Ramsay, 2013). Although the evidence does not support the idea that the two are working together, there is a chance that al-Shabaab might use pirates to deliver attacks at sea (Leonard and Ramsay, 2013). Al-Shabaab has recently, through the group's spokesman, "praised their pirate bothers as '*Mujahideen*' [i.e. Islamic warriors] because they are at war with the Christian countries" (Leonard and Ramsay, 2013). The act of al-Shabaab praising pirates is yet another indicator that the two groups might be mobilising to work together, since they are both at war with non-Muslim countries. In recent years, al-Shabaab has been driven out from its strongholds and coastal towns and has lost control of strategic ports. The port of Barawe, the port of Kismayu and the port of Marka, for example, were once important supply chain hubs used to import arms and foreign fighters. Losing these ports means al-Shabaab has now been cut off from the sea and their supply chains have been seriously damaged. However, that defeat did not last for long. In February 2016, al-Shabaab overran the Kenyan military camp in Somalia and the Kenyan army suffered significant causalities. As a result, perhaps for security reasons, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) gave up the port city of Marka to al-Shabaab just four years after its first recapture in 2012 (Burke, 2016). This has not only opened the way for al-Shabaab to revive its sea supply chains but also to improve their links with piracy.

As an alternative, the group might link their important supply chains to their pirate allies who still have some access to the sea. There is speculation that al-Shabaab was, for many years, hiring pirates to smuggle members of al-Qaeda into Somalia. It is claimed that in 2009 alone up to 1,000 foreign jihadists were brought into Somalia

(Shay, 2014). If this kind of cooperation is possible, it is likely that they might use the same arrangements to deliver deadly attacks to any vulnerable maritime infrastructure and, potentially, against East African shores.

Between 2005 and 2012 the Somalia piracy business generated approximately US$400 million in ransom money (UNCTAD, 2014. p. 17). On average, the piracy kingpins or financiers receive up to 50 per cent of the ransom money while the pirates themselves (i.e. the foot soldiers) receive less than one per cent of the money. The rest of the money (around 49 per cent) remains unaccounted for (Harress, 2012). There are some claims that approximately 20 per cent of the ransom money ends up in terrorists' hands, in particular those of the al-Shabaab group (Kambere, 2012). The group receives the money in the form of a tax charged to the pirates in exchange for protection and the use of Somalia's shores to launch attacks. This became official in December 2010, when al-Shabaab took control of a pirate base called Harardhere (Kambere, 2012). There is, however, strong suspicion that al-Shabaab is also behind the escalation of Somali piracy, because it is one of their sources of revenue. This further supports the hypothesis that al-Shabaab is partly financed by money from piracy. The group uses funds generated from piracy to terrorise the region, mostly Kenya, which is an economic powerhouse of the EAC.

Because of the political agendas driving terrorism, law enforcement agencies and the international community consider it a severe form of criminality. In comparison to their treatment of pirates, law enforcement agencies do not show terrorists any mercy. This is one of the reasons why some negotiation with pirates can be established, eventually allowing victims to be ransomed, whereas negotiation with terrorists is almost impossible. Terrorism is perceived to be more deadly: a politically motivated act of war led by well-organised international criminals such as 'jihadists'. Piracy, however, is regarded as less dangerous, since it is a privately motivated and profit-orientated form of maritime criminality.

4.   How likely is it that maritime terrorists will attack the EAC's maritime infrastructure?

As noted, the EAC, through Kenya and Tanzania, has 200 nautical miles of EEZ with approximately 383,541 square kilometres of maritime waters. The EEZ is full of natural resources, including oil and gas and a large stock of tuna fish. As with other African EEZs, the EAC's maritime waters largely remain ungoverned all year round. The absence of proper governance provides a perfect opportunity for maritime criminals to attack with minimum resistance from law enforcement agencies. While there have been no purely maritime terrorist attacks in the EAC's waters, such attacks are far from impossible. Al-Shabaab probably does not have the necessary maritime combat capabilities to deliver maritime terrorist attacks on its own. Nevertheless, al-Qaeda, of which al-Shabaab is an affiliate member, might be able to deliver some attacks from the sea (Barnett, 2013).

There is some speculation that al-Shabaab, in collaboration with al-Qaeda, trains its maritime militants in diving techniques using leisure diving schools in different parts of the world. There are some rumours that al-Shabaab, in a special arrangement with pirates, was placing two to three of its men on board hijacked ships in an attempt for them to learn the basic skills of running a ship. The establishment of a maritime wing was also one of aims that was top of the agenda for al-Shabaab (Eichstaedt, 2010). This further suggests that al-Shabaab is secretly upgrading its maritime combat capability ready for its next maritime terrorist attack. While al-Shabaab is attempting to acquire maritime skills, al-Qaeda, as al-Shabaab's mentor, has most maritime skills ready to use. Based on these facts, and given that al-Shabaab is just on the EAC's doorstep, security analysts confidently predict that the next maritime terrorism incident will probably take place on the East African ports, most likely at Mombasa port in Kenya (Barnett, 2013).

According to Murphy, there are seven preconditions for maritime terrorism to take place: legal and jurisdiction weakness; geographical proximity; inadequate security; secure base areas; maritime skills; charismatic and effective leadership; and state support (Murphy, 2007, p. 46). Al-Shaabab has many of these elements already, so it is just a matter of time before it can strike again – this time probably by sea. On the one hand, al-Shaabab operates in a lawless state with minimum security, which provides the perfect secure base to train militants and launch attacks with minimum interference. On the other hand, the EAC maritime domain is less policed and within reach of al-Shaabab. The EAC ports appear to be easy targets for terrorist attacks. This is due to slack security measures at the region's ports. For example, two audits taken at the port of Mombasa highlighted glaring shortcomings that make the premier port a soft target for terrorist attacks (AllAfrica, 2007). The audits were carried out independently, one by the US Government through the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Office and the second by the Kenya Maritime Authority. Following the audit reports, the Kenyan Government quietly improved security at the port of Mombasa with assistance from the US Government (Very and Mandrup, 2015). Security improvements were made in the electronic surveillance systems and the physical security systems, as

well as by increasing the police and security presence at the port. Nonetheless, there are some concerns that the security measures taken are not tough enough to scare terrorists. While security appears to have been improved at the port of Mombasa, corruption is yet another problem that might weaken the security of the port (Akwiri, 2016). Through special arrangements with some corrupt officials and security personnel at the port, terrorists might overrun the port and deliver a deadly attack at the port and on other maritime infrastructures.

Al-Shabaab has significant experience of the EAC waters, which include the Mombasa and Dar es Salaam ports. This gives the group opportunities to launch their next attack at sea, or against ports and offshore installations or to deploy its combat militants onto EAC shores using small boats. In recent years, the group has made a number of successful terrorist attacks on land in various parts of Kenya. Some of the weapons and explosives used in those attacks may have been delivered onto Kenya's shores by boat. As noted, al-Shabaab does not seem to have the maritime expertise to reach remote ports, in particular those that are well secured. Al-Shabaab will only attack ports with limited security and surveillance. The equipment and training needed to detect divers using port sensors and optic netting is both expensive and sophisticated. This technology and the technical training required is only utilised in a limited number of African ports. In this case, it is not inconceivable that a combat diver with the most rudimentary skillset could breach port security in the EAC region and attack vessels undetected.

The EAC ports, Mombasa and Dar es Salaam in particular, have been accused of investing too much in cargo security while paying less attention to serious security issues such as stowaways and terrorism, which would have a devastating impact on people, vessels and the general economy of the entire EAC region and beyond (Jones, 2013). While Kenya and Tanzania are state parties to the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, for example, there is some concern that they are struggling to implement the Code. This is partly explained by the fact that many ports in developing countries, Kenya and Tanzania included, are struggling to find the financial resources to cover the initial costs and compliance costs associated with the implementation of the ISPS Code (UNCTAD, 2007).

Al-Shabaab has recently been accused of recruiting and radicalising a number of Muslim youths at the Kenyan port city of Mombasa (Anneli, 2014). These youths are prepared to be '*Mujahideen*', so to fight against their own country. Many of those radicalised are believed to be al-Qaeda supporters. In fact, Mombasa is one of the many important al-Qaeda bases. Al-Shabaab also makes the best use of approximately half a million ethnic Somalis living in Kenya as refugees (Hansen, 2013). For a long time, some of the ethnic Somalis living in Kenya as lawful residents or refugees have been used as an important financial supply chain for al-Shabaab. They are smuggling large sums of laundered money to al-Shabaab in Somalia. The finance is largely gathered from the Somali diaspora across the world and through Somalis' black-market businesses in Kenya. It is estimated that the diaspora money entering the Somalia economy is between US$500 million and US$1 billion annually (Menkhaus, 2006, p. 90). The recruitment and use of local residents or refugees increases the chance of al-Shabaab launching attacks on the EAC maritime infrastructure remotely, even though the group is not physically present in the region. These two scenarios (locals and ethnic Somalis) cause a great deal of stress to Kenyan law enforcement agencies when it comes to deciding who is a terrorist and who is not. Furthermore, the EAC maritime waters largely remain ungoverned; this further increases the likelihood of the occurrence of maritime terrorist events in the region.

5.   Why is the EAC's maritime domain so vulnerable to maritime terrorism?

Unfortunately, through Kenya, the EAC shares both maritime and land borders with Somalia. It also borders the Indian Ocean to the east. As a failed state, Somalia is said to be the source of many of the EAC's security issues, and those of the wider region. Somalia, for example, provides a safe haven for al-Shabaab, which is a potential threat to the EAC's maritime infrastructure. The absence of an effective regional maritime security strategy, including a regional Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) programme, makes the region more vulnerable to maritime security threats. As noted, most of the maritime security issues in the EAC are caused by Somalia-based piracy and al-Shabaab. The IMO defines MDA as the effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment (IMO, 2010). At a regional level, there is no MDA initiative. Individually, bilaterally or sometimes in collaboration with international partners, Kenya and Tanzania police their own maritime domains. However, due to the sheer size of the EEZ and the limited capacity of their law enforcement agencies and navies, individually, Kenya and Tanzania find it almost impossible to monitor the entire EEZ.

For example, none of the EAC coastal states have a coastguard unit. Kenyan and Tanzanian navies undertake both law enforcement and warfare roles. This is an overwhelming task given their software and hardware

capacities. While intelligence information is a prerequisite for an effective MDA, it is apparent that Kenya and Tanzania do not share important maritime intelligence information. This is partly explained by the differences in political ideologies between these two coastal states. While Kenya is an ally of the US and the West, Tanzania is widely known to be an ally of China; even their hardware and software capacities follow this pattern.

Both the Kenyan and Tanzanian navies have recently upgraded their naval hardware. In 2012, for example, the Kenyan navy added a brand-new, Spanish-made destroyer to its fleet (Martin, 2012). More recently, Tanzania's navy added two Chinese-made offshore patrol boats to its young fleet (Auger, 2015). Despite being young navies, the Tanzanian navy in particular, when synchronised, would probably make a big difference against regional maritime security threats in EAC maritime waters. The absence of solid cooperation is partly explained by the lack of a regional maritime security strategy in the EAC. For that reason, the EAC maritime domain is more vulnerable to maritime security threats.

For example, on 28 September 2012, the Kenyan navy, with the collaboration of African Union forces, did what was previously thought to be impossible for a young African navy, when it launched its first ever amphibious attack on the city of Kismayo, an al-Shabaab stronghold (BBC, 2012). Al-Shabaab was almost caught by surprise, leading to their defeat. This is yet another example proving that working together would make the EAC maritime waters less vulnerable. Maritime criminals are notorious for their ignorance of maritime borders; hence, a collective effort is what is needed now, until there is a full-fledged political unification of the EAC. In an attempt to fight terrorism, Kenya and Tanzania passed anti-terrorism acts in 2002 and 2012 respectively. While these acts have been taken by the US mostly as a significant step forward in the war against terrorism, they are widely considered by human rights activists to ignore human liberty. More recently, the Kenyan high court declared portions (eight sections) of the controversial anti-terrorism law unconstitutional (Jurist, 2015). This further weakens the judiciary capacity of the region in the war against terrorism. Despite having these controversial laws in place, both Kenya and Tanzania have so far failed to combat money laundering effectively. Money laundering is considered an essential element in terrorist operations.

6.   Conclusion

Maritime terrorism is an organised maritime crime undertaken purely on political grounds. Unlike piracy, which is a financially motivated crime, maritime terrorism is aimed at the destruction of the economy, maritime infrastructure, and maritime supply chains. In extreme cases, maritime terrorism would result in the extensive killing of innocent people. While there have been a number of notorious land-based terrorist incidents in recent years in Kenya, the EAC has not yet experienced any incidents of maritime terrorism. However, such a possibility cannot be ruled out. All land-based terrorism incidents in Kenya were undertaken by al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is a notorious Somalia-based terrorist group that is still active and regarded as a significant threat to the EAC region. It is also believed that the group has the necessary network to allow it to launch maritime attacks on the EAC's shores. For example, through various special arrangements with Somalia-based pirates, ethnic Somalis living as refugees in Kenya, and potentially through radicalised Muslim youths in Mombasa, Kenya, al-Shabaab has the best opportunity to launch maritime terrorism attacks against EAC shores. This is in addition to the technical support it has from al-Qaeda.

Al-Shabaab has recently been defeated by African Union forces and driven far away from its strongholds in coastal towns such as Barawe, Kismayu and Marka. This defeat cuts off the group's international supply chain of arms, foreign fighters and sources of revenue. Although the military capability of the group has been weakened following the defeat, it does not completely eliminate the possibility that the group could launch attacks by sea. Most of the conditions necessary for maritime terrorism to take place are evident in the EAC region. It is just a matter of time before al-Shabaab can strike. In February 2016, for example, al-Shabaab retook the port city of Marka from Africa Union Mission forces. Although the city was retaken without a fight, it is an indication that the group is still active and keen to attack. So long as the EAC is not taking a leading role in regional maritime security and coastal states do not fully cooperate with each other, the EAC maritime waters will remain vulnerable to maritime security threats. The absence of an EAC maritime security strategy leaves the two coastal states of Kenya and Tanzania with no option but to take a unilateral approach against common maritime security threats.

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