

MEDIMUN XII Annual Session 2017



RESEARCH REPORT – GA3

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Topic 1: • Maintaining the freedom of the press and guaranteeing the safety of journalists in the Middle East

Introduction

The freedom of the press and guaranteeing the safety of journalists in the Middle East is one of the aims of the United Nations. The 19th Article of Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"

The press is sometimes called the fourth estate. That is probably an exaggeration, but it does suggest an important and coherent the press is in society. That independence is crucial. The press does not share the same aims as government, the legislature, the executive, religion or commerce. It is, or should be, an outsider.

A free press is fundamental to a democratic society. It seeks out and circulates news, information, ideas and comments and holds those in authority to account. The press provides the platform for a multiplicity of voices to be heard.

According to the United Nations, in 2016, more than 3 billion people have access to the internet. This change in audience has changed the role that access to information plays in human society. It is essential for journalism and the press to continue to develop and to adapt to changing technology. Advances in global technology have increased the amount and variety of news making them available to citizens around the world. Since the Internet's arrival in the last decade of the 20th century, it has expedited the exchange of information and shortened the distance between people. Thus, this exchange of views has increased the role of the press in global affairs.

Journalism is a dangerous business as the reporters travel all around the world trying to inform the world of international events. It is a dangerous job because the safety of the journalists is not a high priority of governments.

The life of journalists who go into war zones is in danger every day due to the disrespect of allies and enemies towards journalists who are doing a public duty in reporting information to the world. Journalists should not be held captive, tortured or killed. However, in many countries journalists have been arrested, tortured and killed for reporting on public events and for expressing their view on the events occurring.

The NGO "Reporters without Borders" cites 54 journalists were killed in 2016 and 170 journalists were imprisoned. One third of them were killed in Middle East, 6 in Iraq, 1 in Jordan, 3 in Libya, 7 in Syria and 1 in Turkey. Furthermore, 28 journalists were imprisoned in Egypt, 13 in Iran, 31 in Turkey, 9 in Syria and 1 in Israel.

Many journalists are held captive in order for terrorist groups to have baited whilst threatening countries.

The UN condemns acts of violence and the UN acts to limit the censorship and government control over news agencies and journalist reports.

Definition of Key Terms

Freedom of speech

The right to express any opinion without censorship or restraint. As stated by Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights. Humans have the right to be opinionated and express their opinions freely without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers

Journalism

Journalism can be described as a way to disseminate news and information to public masses. However this broad definition gives almost anyone with a social media connection and access to the Internet the opportunity to call himself or herself a journalist. The common and standard definition of journalism is changing. The definition is not solidified, but the field of law is helping narrowing it down. Journalists no longer have to be tied to a single media outlet that is gathering media for livelihood. In the United States the courts have decided these needs to be an ethical test to decide whether or not someone is a journalist.

Freedom of the press or freedom of the media

The freedom of communication and expression through mediums including various electronic media and published materials. While such freedom mostly implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state, its preservation may be sought through constitutional or other legal protections.

Fundamental Human Rights

Human Rights are universal rights each individual possesses by virtue of their humanity. These rights operate under the assumption that each individual human is moral, rational being who deserves to be treated with dignity. A mutual respect

among peoples and nations is key to the United Nations vision for the world. Freedom of the press and the freedom of speech are considered to be among the Fundamental Human Rights. Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that all people can receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Terrorism

It is the use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

ISIS/ISIL

ISIS is the acronym for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is often referred to as ISIL, which stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and is a motivated terrorist group, one of the largest and most successful terrorist groups to date. They currently occupy large areas of Syria and Iraq and their operations have remained intact because they have controlled and exploit many different oil drills/rigs in the Middle East. ISIS/ISIL has carried out many atrocities against journalists and other citizens.

General Overview

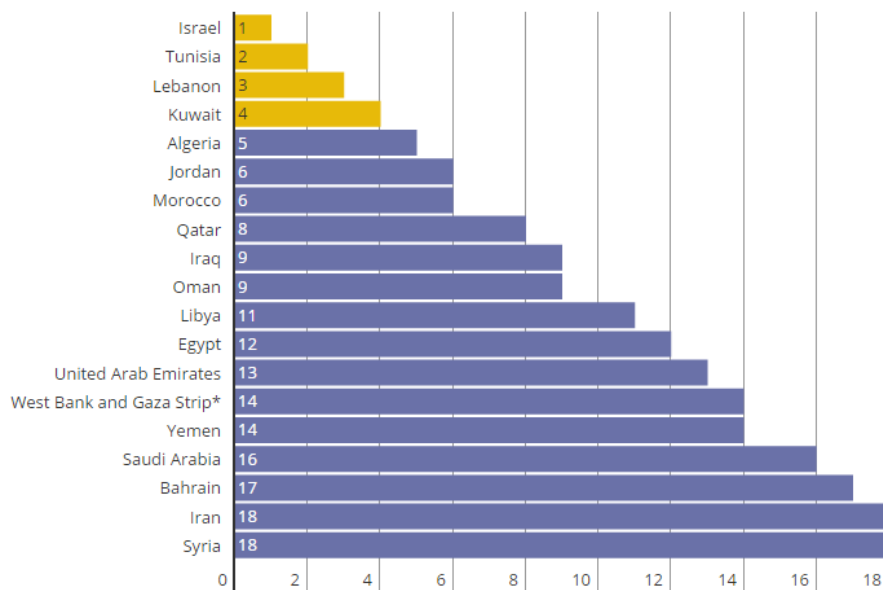
Journalists seen as targets in a war zone are not a new phenomenon. But the sheer scale of the problem since the Arab uprisings is unprecedented, according to the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists) data of the 227 journalists killed globally since 2011; one third died covering events taking place in Syria. What is really disturbing is the number of journalists which have been taken captive: more than 80 in Syria over the past three years, with 20 still missing, presumed to have been kidnapped. Most are Syrians who responded to the upheaval in their country by becoming news-gatherers or working for the international reporters who have smuggled themselves across the border from southeast Turkey.

Research recently conducted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Middle East, has shown that although the constitutions of the majority of Middle Eastern countries provide for freedom of expression, in reality conventional and international media remain under restricted and intimidatory legal, political and security environment.

"Once you are kidnapped in Syria it's a completely black hole you're never going to come out of," a freelance photographer who worked in Syria said. That is, unless you come from one of those Western countries that pays ransom. Media reports have

pointed to ransoms paid by west European countries, while the U.S. and U.K. do not pay ransom. Journalists were being increasingly targeted, especially for kidnap.

The question of how to cover conflict without getting killed or captured is not new. Editors and reporters wrestled with it throughout the Iraq war. It's just that the outlook in Syria appears even bleaker. The question now for many journalists and editors is how to cover Syria without getting killed or captured. here are no easy answers but the fact that safety is top of most people's agenda is already progress.



In the *Freedom of the Press 2016* report, each country and territory receives a numerical score from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free), which serves as the basis for a status designation of Free (Green), Partly Free (Yellow), or Not Free (Purple). View the report here: <http://freedomhou.se/fofp2016>.

Major Parties Involved

Syria

Syria is ranked at 177 out of 180 by RWB, making it the least free country in the Middle East. The country is divided between the government and rebel groups. Between kidnappings, murder, and arrests, both local and foreign journalists have fled Syria because it is far too dangerous to work. Most press coverage of the civil

war has come from outside the war-torn country. Foreign journalists have a much harder time covering Syria than local journalists do.

“On the regime side, (local) journalists are kept under a tight leash. Journalists who try to criticize the government have fled or been imprisoned and those who are left are pro-government people. On the rebel side, it is more chaotic and you see a greater degree of freedom of the press.

Egypt

In the annual report for 2015 of the Freedom of the Press, Egypt’s score declined from 68 to 73 due to arrests of journalists and a number of flawed court cases, which resulted in harsh punishments of journalists and media workers. “Egypt is considered to be partly free” News outlets have been banned; both traditional and self-censorship are widely practiced.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISI/ISIL)

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have used brutal techniques in carrying out its oppression of free speech and free press. ISIS is violating numerous international agreements and laws in regards to the way that is treating reporters and journalists. In 2014 alone, they acquired more than 20 million dollars from ransoming off kidnapped Europeans.

Israel

The press freedom is in Israel generally respected. However Israel declined in the 2015 annual report of the Freedom of the Press from *free to partly free due to the ground of 'Israel Hayom'* country's leading print outlet. It is owned and subsidized by American businessman Sheldon Adelson and strongly supports Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In addition after national elections in March, Prime Minister Netanyahu decided to serve as communications minister himself, giving him control over the regulation of various segments of the market.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The issue of maintaining the freedom of press and guaranteeing the safety of journalists in the Middle East has been the subject of various resolutions of the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council(HRC) ,UNESCO and other intergovernmental organisations(see Appendix)

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of event
10 December 1948	<p data-bbox="619 331 1209 369">Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p> <p data-bbox="619 398 1409 571">An important document that laid out the Fundamental human rights for all people .It is the most Signed and passed document in the history of the UN.</p>
18 December 2013	<p data-bbox="619 600 1117 638">UN General Assembly Resolution</p> <p data-bbox="619 667 1485 705">RES68/163. The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity</p>
2014 and 2015	<p data-bbox="619 801 890 840">UNGA Resolutions</p> <p data-bbox="619 869 1430 907">69/185. The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity</p>
27 October 2016	<p data-bbox="619 936 1002 974">UNESCO Interactive Panel</p> <p data-bbox="619 1003 1342 1102">Safety of Journalists and Ending Impunity in Conflict Situations</p>

Possible Solutions

- Create an international Community of Journalists , within the United Nations ,which will deal with the issues of freedom of Press and have the backing and resources of the UN and member nations.
- The UN needs to create a means of defining, enforcing and prosecuting issues of freedom of the press, as only 1 in 10 of those who commit crimes against journalists are actually prosecuted.
- Revision of the relevant treaties
- Raising public Awareness on the issue.

Appendix/Appendices

Treaties/Resolutions

- Resolution 2222, 27th May 2015-SC/11908/
- Security Council Letter, 1 May 2015, S/2015/307
- European Parliament Resolution on the freedom of press and media in the world, 13 June 2013. 2011/2081/INI

Sources

<https://cpj.org/blog/2014/09/journalist-beheadings-in-syria-reignite-debate-ove.php>

www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11908.doc.h

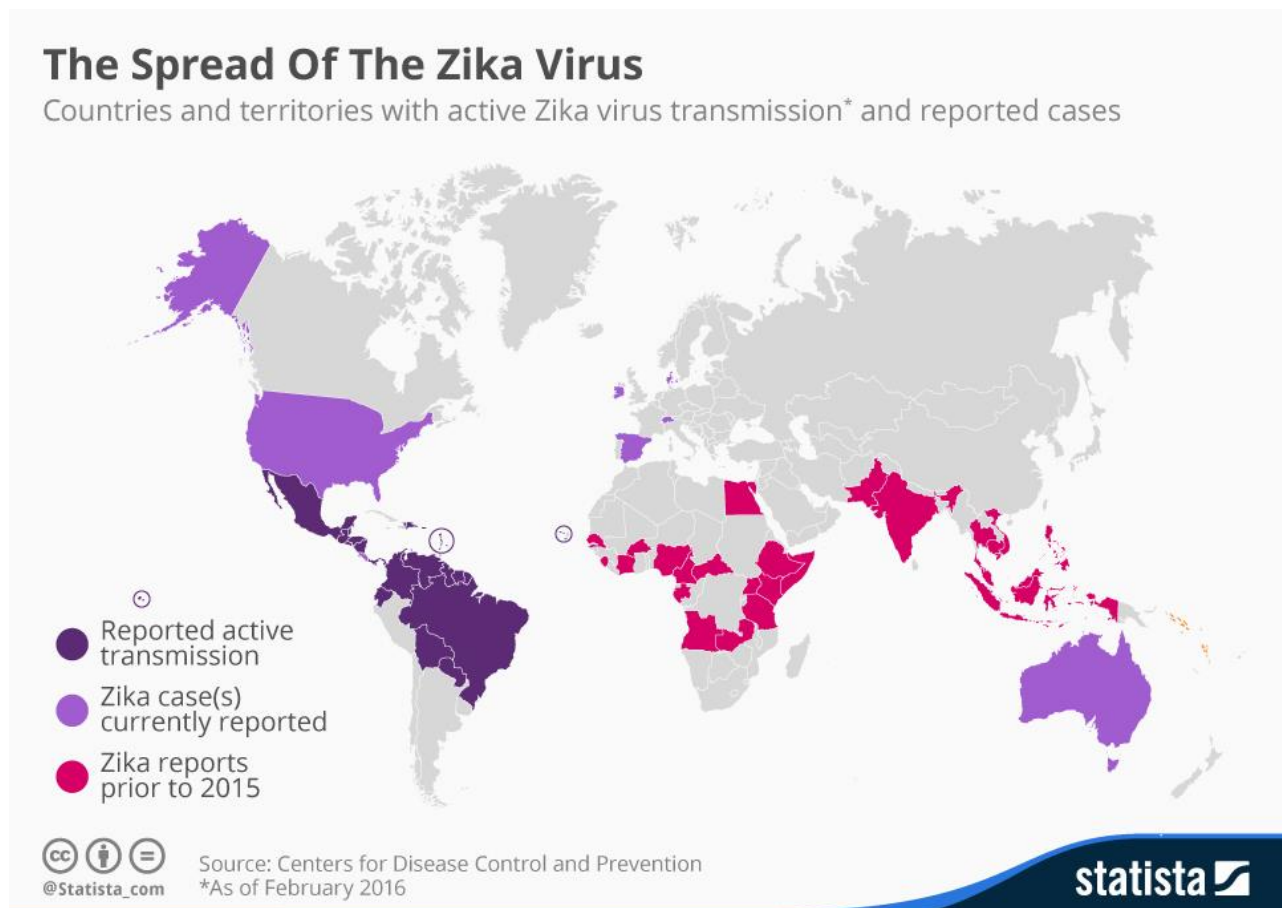
[en.unesco.org/.../calling-concrete-actions-safety-journalists-and-partners-mark-day-en.](http://en.unesco.org/.../calling-concrete-actions-safety-journalists-and-partners-mark-day-en)

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2016>

Topic 2: Strategies to combat the spread and impact of the Zika Virus

Introduction

The Zika Virus, a buzzword we hear a lot today yet know very little about, so here are a few facts to get you more familiar with the term. The Zika Virus disease is a mosquito-borne virus (mainly transmitted through the *Aedes* mosquitoes), it can cause symptoms such as fever, skin rashes, muscle/ joint pain and conjunctivitis in adults. However, when the virus infects during a pregnancy, it is also the cause of brain abnormalities such as Microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome. In the last 3 months, widespread transmission has been observed in areas such as the USA, Singapore and Brazil.



Definition of Key Terms

Microcephaly:

Abnormal smallness of the head, a congenital condition associated with incomplete brain development.

Guillain–Barré syndrome:

An acute disorder of the peripheral nerves, often preceded by a respiratory infection, causing weakness and often paralysis of the limbs.

Conjunctivitis:

Inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye.

General Overview

The Zika virus is in no way a new disease; it was observed in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The first large outbreak of Zika was reported from the Island of Yap (Micronesia) in 2007. In 2015 there was a link made between Zika and Microcephaly as well as Guillain-Barré syndrome.

So how does one get Zika? There are several ways of transmission with the main one being through mosquito bites. When a mosquito becomes infected (from biting a person who has already been infected with Zika) it can transfer the infection to a healthy person through bites, particularly during the daytime as they are not as aggressive at night. Also, a pregnant woman can give Zika to her foetus if she is infected during the pregnancy. Moreover, Zika can be transmitted through sexual intercourse, blood transfusions and even through exposure to Zika in a laboratory (there have been 4 reports of this occurrence).

Symptoms of the Zika virus include:

- Fever
- Rash
- Joint pain
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Muscle Pain
- Headache

These symptoms can persist for about a week and very rarely require hospitalization it is very rare someone dies of Zika). There is currently no vaccine or specific method of treatment for this virus but medical professionals suggest rest, drinking plenty of fluids and taking medication to reduce fever. Infected individuals are also advised from

avoiding the outdoors so as to avoid infecting mosquitoes and men are encouraged to avoid sexual intercourse. Emphasis has been placed on pregnant women specifically to avoid visiting countries where Zika has been observed and to get tested if they have been in such countries. It is very important for these women to avoid being infected as the Zika symptoms will fade for them but their children will have to live with the abnormalities caused by Zika for a lifetime. It is also worth mentioning that there is also no treatment for Microcephaly other than supportive therapy to reduce the effects of the developmental issues that come with the illness. Guillain-Barre syndrome is also currently incurable but there are some treatments such as Plasma exchange and Immunoglobulin therapy.

Main Countries Affected by Zika:

- The USA
- Brazil
- Cuba
- Argentina
- Barbados
- Colombia
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Venezuela
- Papua New Guinea
- Fiji
- Samoa
- Cape Verde (Africa)
- Singapore
- Nicaragua

For a more complete list visit:

http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/zika_virus_infection/zika-outbreak/pages/zika-countries-with-transmission.aspx

What has been done about the Zika Virus :

- The World Health Organisation has outlined a Response plan which has 4 main objectives in avoiding and managing the complications of Zika virus: detection, prevention, care and support, as well as research
- A test has been developed that can confirm Zika in the first week of illness or in a sample from an affected child
- The CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) has published precautionary measures to be taken to avoid mosquito bites. They advise people to cover exposed skin as much as possible, use "permethrin¹-treated" clothing and gear and sleep sleeping under a mosquito bed net

Previous Attempts to the Issue

Possible Solutions

- Community-based design and implementation of green spaces/landscapes at homes for the prevention and control of vector-borne diseases
- Educating the public, health care providers and the public about the infection.
- Campaigning in schools and teach students how to prevent the spread of mosquitoes, avoid contracting the Zika virus and dengue, and recognize symptoms of these diseases.

¹ a synthetic insecticide, used chiefly against disease-carrying insects

World Health Organization

ZIKA STRATEGIC RESPONSE

To support national governments and communities to prevent and manage Zika and its complications.

- DETECTION**
Develop, strengthen and implement surveillance to guide the response.
- PREVENTION**
Prevent adverse health outcomes through mosquito control, risk communication and community engagement.
- CARE & SUPPORT**
Strengthen health and social systems to provide services and support to individuals, families, and communities.
- RESEARCH**
Fast track research for public health guidance and for mosquito control tools, diagnostic tests and vaccines.

60 Strategic partners collaborating

\$122.1M Funding needs July 2016 to December 2017

60+ More than 60 countries affected

Sources

<http://www.who.int/en/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36992962>

Topic 3: Measures to end the humanitarian crisis caused by long-term food shortages and drought in Somalia

Introduction

"The worst drought in 60 years" is a term widely used to describe the devastating drought faced by Somalia in the past 2 years. Because of this drought millions of Somali people find themselves with little to no food for themselves, let alone for their families. The drought is not the only reason for the famine though, the governments' inability to get the country out of poverty and the lack of funds from international donors not to mention the inability to access food are also huge contributing factors to the colossal crisis currently faced by Somalia.

Definition of Key Terms

Drought

A drought is defined as "a period of abnormally dry weather sufficiently prolonged for the lack of water to cause serious hydrologic imbalance in the affected area

Famine

A famine is a widespread scarcity of food, caused by several factors including crop failure, population imbalance, or government policies. This phenomenon is usually accompanied or followed by regional malnutrition, starvation, epidemic, and increased mortality. Nearly every continent in the world has experienced a period of famine throughout history. Some countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to have extreme cases of famine. It remains to be the most affected area in the world. And due to climate change, the conditions only fluctuate more and more.

Food Security

Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, is the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Humanitarian Crisis

A humanitarian crisis (or "humanitarian disaster") is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area. Local, national and international responses are necessary in such events. Each humanitarian crisis is caused by different factors and as a result, each different humanitarian crisis requires a unique response targeted towards the specific sectors affected. This can result in either short-term or long-term damage. Humanitarian crises can either be natural disasters, man-made disasters or complex emergencies. In such cases, complex emergencies occur as a result of several factors or events that prevent a large group of people from accessing their fundamental needs, such as food, clean water or safe shelter.

General Overview

The drought in Somalia has been described as "the worst in 60 years" and it now threatens the lives of more than 40% of Somalia's population. This drought however is not the sole cause of the famine as; -according to Oxfam- a famine is the result of a "triple failure" of food production, citizens' ability to access food as well as the reaction by governments and international donors.

To expand further into this concept of triple failure we must examine the main causes:

- Food Production failure: Here is where the (two year) drought comes into play as it has the obvious effects of decreased crop production which has also caused "record food inflation" (available food was much more expensive). It is worth noting that Somalia had already had very high levels of premature mortality and malnutrition so it has been in a sort of "normalized" state of emergency.
- Access failure: The drought has managed to kill up to 90% of livestock in some areas and the on-going internal conflict has made development even more difficult to achieve.
- Response Failure: The underlying problem in Somalia's famine has been the government's inability to get the country out of poverty. As a result of this, there are little funds placed in social services and basic infrastructure, weakening the people's ability to cope with this situation. External donors have not been much help either as their contributions have been too little and too late. To illustrate this point: it is estimated that 1 billion dollars are needed

to meet immediate needs and donors have only contributed 200 million so far.

Keeping these points in mind, one might wonder what the effects have been on the Somali people; in brief, the effects have been devastating. Because of this drought over 300,000 children under 5 are “acutely malnourished” and more than 1.1 million people are unable to meet their daily food requirements.

Major Parties Involved

AMISOM

The African Union Mission in Somalia is an active regional peace support mission set up by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union with the full support of the United Nation. The Principal aim is to provide support for the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to stabilize the country and foster political dialogue and reconciliation.

AMISOM is also mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and create necessary conditions for the reconstruction and sustainable development of Somalia. AMISOM was created with an initial six month mandate though subsequent renewals of its mandate by the AU peace and Security Council have also been authorized by the UN Security Council.

AMISOM will continue to support the Somali Federal Government as it prepares the country for a referendum on the national constitution and a general election by 2016.

Al Shabaab

The Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin—commonly known as al-Shabaab—was the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts that took over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006. Despite the group’s defeat by Somali and Ethiopian forces in 2007, al-Shabaab—a clan-based insurgent and terrorist group—has continued its violent insurgency in southern and central Somalia.

Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for many bombings—including various types of suicide attacks—in Mogadishu and in central and northern Somalia, typically targeting Somali government officials, AMISOM, and perceived allies of the FGS. Since 2013 al-Shabaab has launched high-profile operations in neighbouring countries, most notably the September 2013 Westgate mall attack in Nairobi, the May 2014 attack against a restaurant in Djibouti popular

with Westerners, and the April 2015 massacre of university students in Garissa, Kenya.

Kenya

Kenya hosts the largest amount of Somalia refugees who fled from the conflict in Somalia. According to UNHCR, over a half million Somali refugees have resettled in Kenya since the war broke out. Many young Somalis in Kenya are recruited by Islamists in Somalia to advance their agendas in Somalia and the region.

Kenya's national security and stability as well as economy have been destabilized by waves of terror attacks which targeted some important sources in the country by Al-Shabaab. Tourists and aid workers were also kidnapped from Kenya into Somalia by the group. In response to the security threats, Kenya decided to interfere in Somalia's conflict militarily, in order to protect its national security. The KDF entered Somalia in 2011 in and fought with Al-Shabaab, capturing many territories inside Somalia from the group. The Kenyan troops have initially entered Somalia without the consent of Somalia's government, but were later on contributed to the AMISOM peace keeping mission.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

- In 2016, WFP(World Food Program) has been supporting 1.4 million vulnerable people in food insecure areas throughout the country. To address malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, mothers and pregnant women, WFP is providing nutritional assistance as well as targeted communication aimed at promoting behaviour change and tackling the underlying causes of malnutrition.
- To relieve hunger and encourage continued enrolment in primary school, WFP provides cooked school meals to children.
- UNHAS(United Nations Humanitarian Air Service) facilitates the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and the movement of aid workers to and within Somalia by providing critical and safe air services in Somalia.

Possible solutions

- Long-term investment is needed in food production and basic development
- Water resource management and improved sanitation, that includes assessments of groundwater resources and formation of water councils to help improved drought resilience and water security

Appendix/Appendices

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