

# Terrorism as a Universal Evil Rather than a Product of Religion

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*“The appeal of the transcendence of the human spirit is universal and the response to this is varied.”*

Jaco Beyers, The Africa Institute for Missiology, Pretoria, South Africa

## Introduction

Generally, terrorism is very often subjectively understood: it is commonly applied to mean unreasonable violence by one party against another, not vice-versa. The parties involved are the aggressor and the victims. WordNet (2011) defines terrorism as calculated use of violence (or a threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political, religious, and ideological or a combination in nature. The goals are attained through intimidation,

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coercion and instilling of fear.<sup>1</sup> The International community has been unable to formulate a universally agreed, legally binding, and criminal law definition of terrorism, with respect to parties affected; whether ‘aggressor’ or ‘victims’. Terrorism has been associated with religious and political causes or both, but newer evidence points to socioeconomic gaps in development processes that eventually lead the irrational and evil acts (terrorism). The Ugandan youngsters who bombed Kampala had been promised an equivalent \$250 Uganda Shillings per month.<sup>2</sup> And while ‘evil’ is a religious concept and man a religious ‘animal,’ terrorism as a ‘universal’ evil is overlooked at the individual and group level. It is always simple to tie it to one religion or another, other than oneself or one’s group. This paper examines the interplay of those concepts and views terrorism as a universal evil.

### ***Background***

The development of societies and states coincided with the emergence of terrorism since violence was the main tool of the development processes. There was broad agreement on the need for close linkages to arrive at one global development agenda for the post-2015 period, with sustainable development at its centre.<sup>3</sup> Religions around the world have had one common human development goal: to pursue goodness and truthfulness.<sup>4</sup> The ideological extremes in them have been biggest challenges to peace and development.<sup>5</sup> Consolidating universal good and right (or truth) was strong tool for achieving global cooperation for

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1. <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=terrorism>.

2. [http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/oct/somalia\\_al\\_shabaab\\_paid\\_250\\_to\\_die.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/oct/somalia_al_shabaab_paid_250_to_die.aspx) accessed on December 15, 2011.

3. *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda* by ECOSOC <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml> accessed November 15, 2013.

4. *Theological and Psychological Aspects of Mental Health: The Marriage of Good and Truth* by Leon, James accessed on November 15, 2013 <http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/leonj/leonpsy/instructor/marriage/marrtext1to15.html>

5. *Addressing extremism* by Peter T. Coleman and Andrea Bartoli [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/9386\\_WhitePaper\\_2\\_Extremism\\_030809.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/9386_WhitePaper_2_Extremism_030809.pdf) accessed on November 15, 2013

advancement of the common development goals of all beings.

From among Africans, 'God' was a Supreme Being.<sup>6</sup> Religion entered into everyday life of Africans (Awolalu, 1976). The African sense of being in the world was religious, spiritual.<sup>7</sup> Experience was their greatest source of knowledge deducible by analysis of the present and the past.<sup>8</sup> Everything was highly linked to everyone and everything else, either living or dead through a complex network of spiritual relationship. Natural features were sanctuaries of gods and places of worship: forests, fields, lakes and oceans.<sup>9</sup> The spiritual experiences anywhere on earth indicated omnipresent nature of the Supreme Being. The environmental challenges posed serious concerns to the wellbeing of people around the world. The communities often failed to manage the precarious livelihoods as much as other social, political and economic crises, including persistent poverty, increasing inequalities and social discontent – were intricately linked to and exacerbated by environmental change (World Social Science Report, 2013). In Buddhism, the 4-noble truths were central in an individual's way of life, which were: an understanding of the reality that suffering existed, the fact that suffering had an origin, the fact that it was possible for suffering to end naturally, and the fact that there was a way through which to end it: meditation or mindfulness.<sup>10</sup>

But new strong global influences, driven by ego and human greed, championed 'survival of the fittest' slogan. Like many other traditions in the world, Africans have long been detached from

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6. *The meaning of peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture* by Onah, Godfrey Igwebuikwe, <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/goddionah.htm> accessed on November 15, 2013

7. <http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals/literature/time.cfm> accessed on November 15, 2010.

8. <http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals/literature/time.cfm> accessed on November 15, 2010.

9. [http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-3/chapter\\_v.htm](http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-3/chapter_v.htm) accessed on November 15, 2010.

10. *Morals in the Life Story of the Buddha: Lessons for Teaching Youths* by Knight, Margret Lisa [www.bps.lk/catalogs/international\\_%20catalogue.pdf](http://www.bps.lk/catalogs/international_%20catalogue.pdf) Accessed on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010.

principles of universal good and truths. The consequence of that have been accelerated miseries along with an equal effort to sustain them (miseries), since the status quo facilitated the preservation of selfish interests of a few global powers. Amidst such conditions, the majority others were always bound to rise against the handful selfish and greedy party in any given community. Religions have been widely fronted as media for liberated struggles that the confronted party described as terrorism while the excessive counter violence became the holy act. Within religions individuals fell into three categories: less involved, moderately involved, and extremely involved in the practice of its ideals. Coleman and Bartoli (2002) argued that extremism involved belief systems and labeling someone terrorist was rather a subjective act.

Buddhism was among religions prey to the extreme minds from its 500 million associates.<sup>11</sup> For example, the Kammatṭhāna was renowned Buddhist extremist group, whose group ideology and actions were committed to fulfill political motives in the name of the religion rather than as doctrinally expected.<sup>12</sup> Religions have thus become more of manipulated spirituality meant to serve interests of man for the worst or the best. Once the irrational motives get generated and tailored in religious practices, conflict ensues and violence becomes the ultimate, entailing acts of terrorism. Such motives further got taken advantage of by strong sociopolitical and economically minded characters, who took it to unreasonably extreme levels and extents.

Between 1968 and 2006, international terrorism was responsible for 35,000 deaths. These deaths seemed senseless and arbitrary, and victims perceive a lack of control (Summit Report, 2008). The 9/11 had massive impact on the collective consciousness and global media. Those attacks were an extraordinary event in many ways. The death

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11. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/12/buddha-birthplace-discovered-nepal-20131210104114734178.html> accessed on January 12, 2014.

12. <http://www.theonion.com/articles/buddhist-extremist-cell-vows-to-unleash-tranquilit,34623/?ref=auto> accessed on November 20, 2013.

toll of about 3,000 made the World Trade Centre tragedy the single most deadly attack on a civilian target in recent history (Marshall, 2002). In the July 11, 2010 terror attacks in Ugandan capital – Kampala 76 people were killed. A Somali terrorist group called the Al-Shabaab, allied to the Al-Qaeda network claimed responsibility for the attack (Ssenkabirwa, 2010). Such dysfunctional socioeconomic systems and unsecure working environments constrained efforts to realize MDGs in a back-to-back cycle. The local and international experiences of conflict have led the United Nations to consider peace building seriously, by responding to the underlying problems of countries coming through it (conflict).<sup>13</sup>

### ***Learning Objective***

This paper explores the following objectives:

1. To establish extent to which terrorism was merely a universal evil;
2. To establish the extent to which terrorism was religiously caused;
3. To examine extent of tolerance among religions; and
4. To find the relationship between universal evil of terrorism and religion.

### **Methods**

The research design was exploratory study, involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and used both primary and secondary data sources. Research consisted of reviews of online articles. N=148 was considered for quantitative approach, and SPSS data analysis tool was used to identify majors expressions and themes as a basis for analysis and interpretation of the July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (7/11) bomb attacks.

### **Findings**

This section presents findings of the study in particular response to the learning objectives listed above. See **1.2**.

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13. United Nations Economic and Social Council at <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/peacebuilding.shtml> accessed on January 18, 2014.

### *Universal Evil*

Expressions that showed terrorism as a universal evil: 90% (yes) due to evil; 1% (no), and 9% (due to other factors). There was interfaith message condemning terrorism, the universal evil. The Inspector General of Police, Kale Kayihura, joined the Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, Pastor Martin Sempa, Orthodox Bishop Yona Lwanga, and deputy Mufti Abdu Mukiibi (of the Muslim Leadership) converged during prayers for victims of bomb blasts at Clock Tower in Kampala, and in their message they condemned terrorism.<sup>14</sup> There was tremendous loss from terrorist attacks in Kampala, Uganda. Survivor in Naguru, Kampala narrated: *'Lots of people died, children orphaned, and businesses collapsed, and children are not going to school anymore.'*



**Source: Secondary Data/Emailing System.<sup>15</sup>**

The injuries ranged from very severe, severe, to minor injuries. The incident was very tragic, hard to imagine, and to tell by affected families of varied religious backgrounds.

*"The International Hospital Kampala (IHK) was filled with bloodied bodies; my brother was severely injured... I was coughing blood. I realized later on that I had been hit by fragments in my groin areas, and felt pain only after 30 minutes. My brother asked to know where I was. He was able to locate me right next to him.*

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14. New Vision, Friday, 16th July, 2010 p.1

15. Courtesy of Standard Chartered Bank

*He held my arm firmly. But suddenly his hand slipped off. I felt he had died, but the medics kept it a secret. My other brother was killed while running away by the second bomb.”–Anuari Sadat, a Muslim Survivor in Naguru, Kampala.*

### ***Religious Causes***

Expressions that showed innocence of religion: 54% (no), 31%, and 15% (due to other factors). Al-Shabaab leader Sheik Yusuf Issa told Reuters, *“Uganda is a major infidel country supporting the so-called government of Somalia. We know Uganda is against Islam and so we are very happy at what has happened in Kampala. That is the best news we ever heard.”* Later in July 12, 2010 after the bomb Blasts in Kampala, Sheik Ali Mohamud Rage from Mogadishu stated: *“We will carry out attacks against our enemy wherever they are ... No one will deter us from performing our Islamic duty.”<sup>16</sup>*

### ***Religious Tolerance***

Expressions that showed mutual respect across religions: 60% showed respect to other religions 14% showed no respect to other religions, and 26% (undefined or other reasons). Buddhist meditation practice allowed one to explore reality, attain peace and harmony with the self and with others –progressing to purity of the mind – with highest happiness, love, and joy at the success of others –too. It emphasized self-practice to attain wonderful outcomes than merely believing or made to. It was a fight of one’s own battle and own way to salvation –universal path acceptable to people of all shades (Goenka, 2007:23).

### ***Relationship between causation factors (universal evil and religion)***

There was a positive correlation between universal evil as a cause of terrorism and religion showed by  $P=0.310$  Significant at 0.024 (2-tailed)  $< 0.05$ . God did not stop humans when they pursued a bad

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16. July 2010 Kampala Attacks at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July\\_2010\\_Kampala\\_attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_2010_Kampala_attacks)· accessed on December 2010.

cause; neither was He the cause of what resulted (Luke 15:11-15).<sup>17</sup> When religion failed to provide answers to the physical needs of the individual, evil took its place.

*“I was taken by Al Qaeda men who lived in Nairobi after promising me jobs. I thought they would smuggle me into Dubai via Somalia, but when we reached Kismayo, we camped there. Eventually, I learnt that I was counted as an Al Qaeda fighter, not Al Shabaab.”*  
Muhamoud Mugisha, July 11, 2010 Terror Suspect.

### **General Discussions of Findings**

In this section, the findings (3.0 above) were discussed in relation to other situations in support or against them.

#### ***Terrorism as Universal Evil***

The expressions of terrorism as universal evil were very high at 90% but the definition of evil was subjective. Anyone was potential candidate to be evil or fall prey, and eventually become a terrorist. There was a lean boundary between evil and holiness. The perceived presence of the evil one was dictated by a person’s best abilities to deal and cope with it, guided by religious codes and determination to follow through them. As the religious practice became more extreme and irrational, individuals tended to drift through the lean boundary into the evil bottom. Many experts believed conflict was inevitable and had to occur owing to psychological and social factors that are part of the development process. Psychological factors such as intergroup threat, uncertainty, group identity, emotions, moral beliefs and how intergroup conflict affected views of the world and of oneself. Psychological factors contributed to and perpetuated intergroup violence through emotional responses and belief systems fostered by conflict.<sup>18</sup> Failure to identify the universal evil

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17. Holy Bible, *New Century Version*. Ft. Worth, Texas: Worthy Publishing, 1987

18. Social psychologists say war is not inevitable, psychology research should promote peace at <http://www.thealmagest.com/social-psychologists-say-war-inevitable-psychology-research-promote-peace/4943> accessed on January 18, 2014



as common enemy elevated humanity to more vulnerable states. As a consequence they made evil ones among themselves through acts like terrorism. New religious beliefs and modifications of old religious doctrines were reinforced by extreme egos that prompted irrational minds, decisions, and actions, including terrorism. *"Cannibal called 'Mad Dog' drags Muslim off bus, sets him alight and eats his leg 'to avenge murder of pregnant wife' as Christian militia rampage in Central African Republic."* Ted Thornhill, Daily Mail (UK).<sup>19</sup> The collective experiences had a lot to inform about the individual's likelihood to be violent. Identifying religion-mythical elements was essential to peace-building efforts (Rodrigues, 2010). From them anomalies were identified and corrected for the better of the individual and society.

Jimmy Carter's excerpt from the National Geographic Magazine (2002) revealed that the challenges (including terrorism) faced in today's world were economic, health-related and ignorance-caused. The world was faced with tremendous challenges as populations soared, mostly in the poorer nations, and as consumption increased in the industrialized world. Their failure to attain life goals as good education and economic wellbeing led to irrational means of realizing them, including terrorist acts. The benefits from such actions led to their rationalization in order to deal with guilt and feel comfortable. It was always the thinking from aggressors and victims that the actions were either religious or evil, respectively. Humanity had the spiritual and intellectual power to reverse the trend. The dynamic nature of human beings made them sources of solutions to the problems that were directly or indirectly caused by them. The change from the worst states of life stemmed from rational understanding. If we understood, we cared, and once we cared, we changed such that at the end of the day we had only common evils to fight against, of which terrorism was part. Of the 15 challenges of the globe suggested by the millennium project is peace and conflict (The Millenium Project, 2009).

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19. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2538471/Footage-emerged-cannibal-eating-leg-Muslim-Central-African-Republic.html> retrieved January 10th 2014

### ***Terrorism as a Product of Religion:***

At 54% (no) for religious causes of terrorism, there was no guarantee for safety against terrorism because perpetrators of terrorism were small groups in isolated areas of the world but well networked and organized to cause global terrorism. This partially disregarded many minds that suggested violence as part and parcel of religious practice. The attribution error phenomenon explained largely the reasons for the various causes of terrorism. Under this notion, it was always easier for one party to consider another person and the external situation as responsible for the bad event, in order to regain 'comfort' and person 'peace.'<sup>20</sup> Religion was manipulated spirituality meant to serve interests of man to the worst or best of himself (or herself). Nationalism prompted religions to scramble for dominion and influence over its followers and promoters. Religion was often used by nationalists to promote and support war. Indeed it was ugly as reinforcement for war victories as well as positive reward in peace-building efforts. However, it responded positively towards peace-building efforts, through forgiveness, restoration, healing and transform the people from viewing it as personal faith to community level wellbeing (Rodrigues, 2010).

Religiosity has been found to be human, which streamed from how we felt about ourselves, others, situations and the patterns from the inter-relations developed about how to behave in place of others made it real. Moore (2013) argued that even 'non-believers' needed rituals. Rituals were central components of religions. She wrote: "*... it seems to be fundamentally human to seek narratives, find patterns and create rituals to include others in the meanings we make. If we want a more secular society – and we most certainly do –there is nothing wrong with making it look and feel good.*"<sup>21</sup> Rituals made a difference in the lives of believers as either closer to the Supreme Being, the most holy one or rather spiritually well. And several experiences have

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20. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution\\_%28psychology%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_%28psychology%29) retrieved January 17, 2014

21. New Humanist, Guardian Comment Network at [http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/27/why-non-believers-need-rituals-atheists?CMP=fb\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/27/why-non-believers-need-rituals-atheists?CMP=fb_gu) accessed on January 10, 2014.

revealed a strong link between spiritual wellness, mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing. According to Goenka (2007), awareness of the natural and normal breathe advanced one to gain subtle truths about one-self [p.3]. *Vipassana* technique helped to purify the mind – eradicate the negativities within the person. It was a form of ‘surgical’ operation within one’s conscious performed to remove complexities hidden therein [p.4]. And Rippentrop Et al (2005) indicated in Article; “The relationship between religion/spirituality and physical health, mental health, and pain in a chronic pain population” that prayer, meditation and consumption of religious media were inversely related to physical health outcomes.

There was evidence linking terrorism as a form of violence to unfortunate socioeconomic backgrounds and competition for development resources, whose leadership claimed to be championing the causes of the discriminated and marginalized communities. A media source, Asia-Pacific, indicated: “*Myanmar, a predominantly Buddhist nation of 60 million people, has been grappling with sectarian violence for nearly two years. More than 240 people have been killed and another 140,000, mostly Muslims, forced to flee their homes.*”<sup>22</sup> The religious leaders soon joined politics to influence actions towards the marginalized sections of society. The failure of international development frameworks to guarantee equity for all peoples is greatly to blame. The United Nations Social and Economic Council (ECOSOC) suggested further efforts and strong development partnerships were needed to accelerate progress to reach the MDGs by 2015.<sup>23</sup> Political religions have been stepped up in most liberation struggles, but made blunders as a consequence that characterized ‘terrorism’ and ‘evil.’ Charles Hirschkind wrote:

“Over the last few decades, Islam has become a central point of reference for a wide range of political activities, arguments

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22. At <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/01/mob-hacks-women-death-myanmar-201411614926891193.html> accessed on January 16, 2014.

23. **Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda** at <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml> accessed on January 16, 2014.

and opposition movements. The term “political Islam” has been adopted by many scholars in order to identify this seemingly unprecedented irruption of Islamic religion into the secular domain of politics and thus to distinguish these practices from the subsumed in Western scholarship under the unmarked category “Islam”. In the brief comments that follow, I suggest why we might need to rethink this basic framework.”<sup>24</sup>

A new trend across the world showed a determined move to more secular thinking and action, leading to moderation of religious practices and, subsequently, terrorism. With the same ability and means of creating new tenets of religion, mankind can still rediscover or discover peace and tranquility, through continuous questioning religious teachings and practices. Michelle Boorstein observed: *“Rabbis who are engaging Jews’ questions about circumcision are asking people to think about the ritual in a different way.”*<sup>25</sup> The defeat of the historical Muslim brotherhoods in Egypt has created a huge sigh of relief. And new revolutions compelled many other religiously-run countries to rethink fundamentalism, including Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and above all, Iran. Today, there is now more pragmatism. And the trend was likely to continue in many other countries so that the ultimate experiences in peace and tranquility for all beings, take place. The effects of the revolutions in the Arab peninsula particularly provide world people important lessons for the future. Dr Khalil al-Anani, a Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute, observed:

“The downfall of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood (MB) has put political Islam at a crossroads. Not only has it shown that ideology per se is not a guarantor of political success, but also that Islamists need to rethink their strategy and tactics in order to deal with the new environment following the Arab Spring. However, the debate over the end of political Islam in the Middle

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24. Middle East Research and Information Project at <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/what-political-islam> accessed on January 16, 2014.

25. Washington Post, Guardian Weekly: Friday 17 January 2014 at [http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/17/us-jewish-parents-question-circumcision?CMP=fb\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/17/us-jewish-parents-question-circumcision?CMP=fb_gu) accessed on January 17, 2014.

East is not only premature but also irrelevant and certainly misleading. Instead it would be more effective to discuss the ideological and political changes that might occur within Islamist movements during crisis time.”<sup>26</sup>

### ***Tolerance among Religions:***

There was 40% indication of overall expressions of lack of mutual respect among religions. It was relatively small percentage but anything small created anonymity of actions, including terrorism. Small and determined groups ably caused chaos. Their small numbers generated views and sentiments pertaining to ‘marginalization’, ‘discrimination’, ‘segregation’, and ‘inequalities’, which were common justifications for terror activities in affected parts of the world. Universalizing religion was the aim rather than conflicting evangelism. Religions evolved through learning from each other. For example, despite relative lack of organization, Buddhism evolved into a global faith through “reverse evangelism”. People naturally got attracted to its teachings of self-reliance, inner peace, and universal spirituality, without the necessity of being religious (Piya, 2010). It had the element of respect for diversity. It was rather the rational and irrational actions of practitioners that were incompatible to the Buddhist doctrine that many times made the difference. Today, we wake up to scenes of terrorism all over the Buddhist World, led by Buddhists and more so Monks! Since the good news recently was that, the happiest man on earth was Buddhist monk<sup>27</sup>, a lot of inspiration could be made for the violent-minded monks and Buddhists around the world to act in accordance with the Buddhist Doctrine so that they too may experience happiness and join other happy Buddhists to inspire the whole world to live happily and peacefully.

In an interview by the South African Broadcasting Corporation,

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26. Wither Political Islam at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/12/whither-political-islam-2013122310825761430.html> accessed on January 18, 2014.

27. Happiest man on earth is a Buddhist monk at <http://www.bbncommunity.com/happiest-man-on-earth-is-a-buddhist-monk/> accessed on January 18, 2014

president Barak Obama put it clearly that Islam was a great religion that prospered alongside other religions within Africa, and that one of the greatest strength of Africa was its diversity not only of religion but of races and ethnicities. Contrary to that, he noted that the radical Islamist were anti-democracy, anti-freedom of speech and freedom of religion agenda (Sunday Vision, 2010). While it was possible that tolerance among religions was possible through their core emphasis on peace, the view was also evident that indeed terrorism was linked to the person's poor functioning contrary to the dictates of religious doctrines and made suggestions of extremism and its undesirable reflections on religion a lot true.

The International Religious Freedom Report (2005) on Uganda provided impressive state of religious freedoms and mutual respect between private Qur'anic and Christian schools. In public schools, religious instructions were optional, and the curriculum covered academic study of world religions rather than instruction in one particular faith. There were many private schools sponsored by religious groups that offered educational services. These schools were open to students of other faiths and usually did not offer minority religious instruction. There were no reports of forced conversion or targeted attacks unlike the years before 2005 (2001-2002) when terror attacks sparked off in the country (Uganda). The July 11, 2010 attacks questioned the absence of targeted attacks by one religious group against another. Incidentally, terrorism affected a cross-section of believers, including those from the terrorists' religion since residency was shared.

### ***Relationship between Terrorism as Universal Evil and Religion:***

Religion aims at pursuance of right intentions, orderliness, harmony and peace. Unfortunately, man dragged religion and God's name in pursuance of personal motives and selfish ends and, accordingly, justified them. After attacking an army barracks and kidnapping women and children, including soldiers, Shekau, the wanted insurgent leader in Nigeria boasted: *"Our fighters stormed the Bama barracks. This is a victory from Allah."*<sup>28</sup> However, more rational

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28. Boko Haram says attacks on barracks is victory from Allah at <http://>

religious writers have argued that Islam and terrorism were never associates, and no religion ever supported violence as its mission (Yusuf, 2010). Prophet Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Mohammed came to preach love, created harmony among mankind and transformed people into believers in the creator and promoted faith in him. The belief in the God of peace and the faith and trust in him was strong predictor of sustainable peace. Fundamentalism was ill conception of the religious teachings and did not make the person in question appropriately religious. Gilles Fraser argued:

*"...and if 'being too Christian' makes you think of Christian fundamentalists, I'd want to insist that they are simply not Christian enough. Indeed, that it's their lack of faith that makes them cling to a bogus form of certainty and literalism. Mostly, Christian fundamentalists worship a book. They like the safety of having pat answers. But this is just another form of idolatry of which the Hebrew Scriptures regularly warn. Worshipping a book and worshipping God are two totally different things."<sup>29</sup>*

At an all Africa Bishop's Conference, the President of the Republic of Uganda, Kaguta Museveni wondered why people went to war on grounds of religious specifications:

*"...you fight this one, fight that one; what is your problem? That I am a Muslim? If you are, so what? If I am a Christian, what's your problem? ...you are what you are, I am what I am and every one of us is here in their own right by the permission of God; so you must accept me the way I am."<sup>30</sup>*

Peace was just, as of now, a state of harmony and tranquility within individuals and groups manifested at different levels of spirituality,

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[www.vanguardngr.com/2013/12/boko-haram-says-attacks-barracks-victory-allah/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/12/boko-haram-says-attacks-barracks-victory-allah/) accessed on January 18, 2014

29. Can you be too religious? at [http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/24/can-you-be-too-religious-jesus?CMP=fb\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/24/can-you-be-too-religious-jesus?CMP=fb_gu) accessed on January 18, 2014

30. New Vision Report by Musoke, Ssemakula, and Kagolo at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008260067.html> Accessed on January 15, 2010.

global, regional, national, family and personal level, henceforth; a universally-desirable element. It was integral part of African Traditional Religion whose members identified with it in every aspect of their lives.<sup>31</sup> Peace was central in the life of individual Africans. In African society, the relationship between individual and community was intertwined. It was expressed by a dictum from John Mbiti: *'I am because we are, we are therefore I am'* (Vision Thoughts, 2010).

### Conclusion

While it was impressive that 90% expressions showed universal evil as an explanation of terrorism, the concept of evil was used subjectively rather than universally. And at subjective levels it generated mutual suspicion and mistrust –causing social disorder and disharmony as the universal evil. Religion got manipulated to serve the ends of people with vested interests, so that the outcomes looked religious. Ultimately, the evil practices appeared religious. Mutual respect among religions could only mean peace if it was 99% minimum representation of it, not merely 60%. The international community has a lot to do to promote global unity, tolerance, and realize a common destiny, fighting together the evils in the world. Only when that became the perception, would the MDGs be swiftly achieved. Sustainable peace and sustainable development were complimentary. Therefore there is need to investigate the economic underpinnings of terrorism; the poor governance structures and psychopathology, which affect humanity today, regardless of the culture and religious backgrounds.

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31. The meaning of peace in African Religion and Culture at <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/goddionah.htm> accessed on October 2, 2013.



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