Press release

Sharp rise in number of Islamist militant attacks in Africa

Attacks concentrated in Somalia, with Nigeria and Mali as the second most-prominent theatres of Islamist militant activity

19 June 2018, London – Sub-Saharan Africa suffers under a sharp rise in the number of Islamist militant attacks. In its report *Changing Patterns in Terrorism and the Threat to Business*, Control Risks, the specialist global risk consultancy, finds that the number of incidents rose from 317 in 2013 to 1,549 for the period April 2017 to April 2018. While some of the attacks are inspired by the so-called Islamic State (IS) that loses its grip in its Middle Eastern heartland, the drivers behind this rise in sub-Saharan Africa are more complex.

Jean Devlin, Partner and Head of African Analysis at Control Risks, explains: "Many factors lie behind this, including the local dynamics of long-standing conflicts and insurgencies. In East and West Africa, the increase in attacks has several drivers: Although security forces in affected countries have for the most part been able to reduce the capability of militant groups to hold onto and control territory, this has pushed them to engage in asymmetric warfare against civilian 'soft targets'. Security forces are struggling to comprehensively degrade the capability of these groups, and as a result the threat is proving resilient despite gains made."

Somalia, which witnessed 879 incidents over the period, accounted for over half of the Islamist militant incidents recorded across sub-Saharan Africa; the only other East African country affected during the period was Kenya, with 79 incidents. In West Africa, where 36% of the incidents were reported, Nigeria suffered most (220 incidents), followed by Mali (194) and Cameroon (96). Although the total number of Islamist militant attacks in Southern Africa was relatively low – 56 incidents in total; 43 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 12 in Mozambique, 1 in South Africa – the rise in attacks particularly in Mozambique, where the first attack was recorded on 5 October 2017, is concerning.

Looking at all types of terrorist activity, government, military and security forces, and their installations typically top target lists across the world. Retail and road[1] top the list of civilian sectors affected by Islamist militancy globally – something that is mirrored in sub-Saharan Africa where vehicles and road infrastructure such as bridges are most targeted, particularly in Nigeria, Mali, Kenya and Somalia. The hospitality sector comes in second (with most incidents in Somalia and Mali), followed by retail. Targeting these areas allows Islamist militants to hit civilians and government/security forces alike, as the latter congregate in the respective facilities or use the infrastructure for movements.

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[1]   Incidents clustered under 'Road' are: roadside bombs, car bombs; attacks against vehicles, including convoys, trucks and buses, road construction companies/sites and personnel, bridges, parking lots

The many shades of political and ideological violence and militancy in play across the globe are part of a complex picture of risk and opportunity facing businesses and organisations. Combined with other threats such as cyber security, kidnap and general criminality, these create a complex security environment for international business.

"Consistent monitoring of which sectors, asset types and locations are vulnerable, and of emerging trends, is critical", says Devlin. "Based on the qualitative analysis that helps understand drivers of terrorism, organisations can spend resources wisely and assess opportunities accurately. Resilience comes from having full visibility of the threat landscape and adopting an organisational posture that allows you to continue seeking opportunity."

Download the full report here

For more information or if you would like to schedule an interview, please contact:

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▶ **Sectors most affected in sub-Saharan Africa**

	Sector	
01	Road	79
02	Hospitality	32
03	Retail	31
04	Education	26
05	Aviation	19
06	Telecommunications	15
07	Healthcare	11
08	Power	7
09	Marine	4
10	Agriculture	5

Notes to Editors:

About Control Risks

Control Risks is a specialist global risk consultancy that helps to create secure, compliant and resilient organisations in an age of ever-changing risk. Working across disciplines, technologies and geographies, everything we do is based on our belief that taking risks is essential to our clients' success. We provide our clients with the insight to focus resources and ensure they are prepared to resolve the issues and crises that occur in any ambitious global organisation. We go beyond problem-solving and provides the insight and intelligence needed to realise opportunities and grow.

About CORE

Control Risks CORE is the essential online risk monitoring toolkit that allows our clients to evaluate opportunities and threats around the world. CORE provides incisive analysis and forecasting on geopolitical and security issues, a series of country risk ratings and an extensive database of incidents. Coupled with visualisation and analytics tools, these help you make informed business decisions and plan operations in confidence.