

IV. Military expenditure in Africa

OLAWALE ISMAIL AND SAM PERLO-FREEMAN

The increase in military expenditure in Africa in 2011 was the largest of any region, at 8.6 per cent in real terms, reaching an estimated \$34.6 billion. Over the period 2002–11, African military spending increased by 65 per cent. The regional increase in 2011 was almost exactly equal to the increase of the region's largest spender, Algeria. Its military spending increased by 44 per cent to reach \$8.7 billion. The picture in the rest of Africa was mixed, with the spending of another 10 African countries increasing or decreasing by more than 10 per cent in real terms (see tables 4.3 and 4.9). The total for sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to have been unchanged in 2011.

The factors driving military expenditure in Africa include civil conflicts, regional ambitions, economic growth and rising oil revenues. In some parts of the continent, the threat of terrorist activities by Islamist groups has increased, drawing considerable interest from external actors, especially the United States. The most important groups in this regard are Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen (Mujahedin Youth Movement, or al-Shabab) in Somalia, which has also carried out attacks in Kenya and Uganda; al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), operating in Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Tunisia; and Boko Haram in Nigeria.¹ The counterterrorism effort in response to each of these groups has largely been led by the military. In most cases, however, it is unclear whether such concerns are acting as a significant driver of military expenditure. In fact, the neighbouring countries most involved in the Somalia conflict—Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda—have actually cut their reported defence budgets in recent years.²

Oil and counterterrorism in Algeria

Algeria has increased its military spending almost continually for two decades but the increase of 44 per cent in 2011—which included a 22 per cent mid-year increase in the defence budget—marked a sharp acceleration of this trend and is likely to leave Algeria with one of the highest military burdens in Africa. Algeria's increases have been fuelled in recent years by

¹ On the conflicts in Somalia and the Horn of Africa see chapter 2, section II, in this volume.

² Uganda made some significant arms purchases in 2011, several of which were paid for directly with oil. Some payments for arms imports have also been made through supplementary budgets drawn without prior parliamentary approval and it is not certain if these are included in published budget and expenditure figures. 'Uganda receives more SU-30s', Defence Web, 20 Oct. 2011, <http://www.defencewebsite.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20271&catid=74&Itemid=30>. See also Wezeman, P. D., Wezeman, S. T. and Béraud-Sudreau, L., *Arms Flows to Sub-Saharan Africa*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 30 (SIPRI: Stockholm, Dec. 2011), pp. 22–23.

rising oil revenues, with oil and gas accounting for 70 per cent of public revenues in 2011.³ Although Algerian oil production has declined slightly since 2008, this has not stopped the rise in military spending.⁴

The activities of AQIM in both Algeria and the wider Sahel region constitute Algeria's most immediate security challenge. The number of terrorist attacks in Algeria increased from 20 in 2001 to 120 in 2006 and 185 in 2009. This trend appears to have continued into 2011. Between July and August 2011, AQIM was responsible for at least 32 attacks against Algerian security forces. Counterterrorism operations by the armed forces of Algeria and neighbouring countries such as Mauritania have subsequently increased.⁵ There is also an emerging regional dimension to the response, as countries in the Sahel have established new multilateral military training, cooperation, alliances and joint counterterrorism operations. For example, in 2010 Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger established a joint command centre to coordinate and undertake joint military counterterrorism operations throughout the Sahel.⁶ External actors are also involved in the counterterrorism effort. For example, the US-funded Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), in which Algeria participates, provides training and other support to counterterrorism activities in the Sahel and the Maghreb.⁷

Nonetheless, it is doubtful that terrorism is the principle driver of Algerian military spending. The mid-year increase in spending in 2011 in particular appears to be linked to concerns over the conflict in neighbouring Libya, in response to which Algeria has opened new military bases near the border.⁸ Further, while Algeria has embarked on a major rearmament

³ Alternative Energy Africa, 'Algeria looks to wean its oil revenue dependency', 24 Aug. 2011, <http://ae-africa.com/read_article.php?NID=3212>.

⁴ US Energy Information Administration, 'Country Analysis Brief: Algeria', 8 Mar. 2012, <<http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=AG&trk=p1>>.

⁵ Larémont, R. R., 'Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: terrorism and counterterrorism in the Sahel', *African Security*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2011), pp. 242–268; Leigh, K., 'North Africa's Sahel: the next terrorism hot spot?', *Time*, 12 Sep. 2011; US Department of State, Office of the Co-ordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010* (US Department of State: Washington, DC, 2011), p. 20; and Renard, T., *Terrorism and other Transnational Threats in the Sahel: What Role for the EU?*, Policy Brief (Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation: Washington, DC, Sep. 2010), p. 2.

⁶ E.g. in Jan. 2012 Algerian forces crossed into Mali to provide assault helicopters, added firepower and other logistics to Malian troops battling AQIM affiliates in northern Mali. Keenan, J., 'A new crisis in the Sahel', *Al Jazeera*, 3 Jan. 2012, <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/01/20121274447237703.html>>.

⁷ The TSCTP includes Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. US Africa Command, 'The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership', <<http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp>>.

⁸ 'L'Algérie révisé sa politique de défense face aux menaces en Libye' [Algeria revises its defence policy in the face of threats from Libya], *Global Net*, 9 Sep. 2011, <<http://www.gnet.tn/revue-de-presse-internationale/lalgerie-revisé-sa-politique-de-defense-face-aux-menaces-en-libye/id-menu-957.html>>; and 'Algérie : la coûteuse sécurité de la crise libyenne' [Algeria: the costly security of the Libyan crisis], *Jeune Afrique*, 3 Oct. 2011. On the conflict in Libya in 2011 see chapter 2, section I, and chapter 3, section II, in this volume.

programme, becoming the seventh largest importer of major conventional weapons worldwide in the period 2007–11, most of this equipment, in particular major naval and air systems, does not relate to counterterrorism.⁹ A desire for regional power projection, rivalry with Morocco (which has also increased military spending substantially in recent years) and the political influence of the military may be more important driving factors.¹⁰

Oil and counterterrorism in Nigeria

In Nigeria, where military spending increased by 11 per cent in 2011, reaching \$2.4 billion, oil revenues form a crucial part of government income and drive military expenditure.¹¹ The country is also facing a major security challenge in the form of escalating violence by the militant Islamist group Boko Haram.¹² The government's adoption of a militarized response to this threat was underlined in September 2011, when it deployed troops to six northern states to address the violent activities of the group, in addition to the existing internal security deployments in the Niger Delta. While the number of troops deployed has not been revealed, one officer suggested that it might amount to a division (10 000–15 000 troops) in one state alone. In many states, soldiers have established roadblocks and checkpoints along highways and have become a common presence on the streets.¹³

Nigeria's approach to counterterrorism is dominated by the military. The office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), which coordinates counterterrorism operations, is headed by a retired army chief; the adviser to the president on terrorism is a serving army general; and the multi-agency Joint Task Force (JTF) deployed for internal security (counterterrorism) operations is dominated, coordinated and headed by the military.¹⁴

Counterterrorism efforts appear to be shaping the configuration of the armed forces, as reflected in the creation of new antiterrorism units and specialist counterterrorism training. Since 2009, Nigeria has revived or

⁹ See also chapter 6, section I, in this volume.

¹⁰ Holtom et al., 'International arms transfers', *SIPRI Yearbook 2010*, pp. 296–301; and Perlo-Freeman et al., 'Military expenditure', *SIPRI Yearbook 2009*, pp. 200–201.

¹¹ On oil revenues and military spending in Nigeria see Perlo-Freeman et al., 'Military expenditure', *SIPRI Yearbook 2010*, pp. 180–82.

¹² The real name of the group is Jama'atul Ahlus Sunna Li Da'awatis Jihad (JASLIDAT, People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) but it is generally known as Boko Haram ('Western education is forbidden'). It was formed in 2002 in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri and later spread to neighbouring states. 'How we formed Boko Haram, by spokesman', *Vanguard* (Lagos), 27 July 2011.

¹³ 'Military in biggest peacetime deployment: investigation', *Daily Trust* (Abuja), 20 Sep. 2011.

¹⁴ Ailemen, T., 'Azazi appointed National Security Advisor', *Daily Champion* (Lagos), 5 Oct. 2010; Ogbu, A. and Shuaibu, I., 'Jonathan fires adviser on counterterrorism', *This Day* (Lagos), 5 Sep. 2011; and Amnesty International, 'Nigeria: unlawful killings by the Joint Military Task Force in Maiduguri must stop', Joint Public Statement, 14 July 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR44/013/2011/en>>.

created the Anti-Terrorism Unit, the Special Warfare Unit, the Mountain Warfare Unit and the Composite Counter Terrorism Unit.¹⁵

As with AQIM, the activities of Boko Haram have drawn a response involving external actors, both from West Africa and beyond. In early 2012 Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria signed a military cooperation and intelligence-sharing pact in relation to Boko Haram.¹⁶ Nigeria has also explored counterterrorism cooperation with the United Kingdom.¹⁷

The full cost of these counterterrorism efforts is hard to assess but some costs are reported in the government budget. In 2010 a new budget line for the cost of military-led security operations, separate from the regular defence budget, was introduced, amounting to \$232 million in 2010 and \$137 million in 2011—approximately 12 per cent and 6 per cent of Nigeria's total military spending in 2010 and 2011, respectively.¹⁸ These figures only cover operational costs and therefore may not take account of the costs of changes to force structures due to counterterrorism efforts or of new equipment acquired for these purposes. However, the new budget line does include the cost of operations in the Niger Delta.

The climate of fear and national security emergency generated by terrorism and governments' militarized responses to it makes military spending increases easier to justify domestically. Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan noted in his 2012 budget speech that providing 'more support for the police, defence and counterterrorism operations' was a key priority in 2012, driving proposed increases in military and counterterrorism expenditure.¹⁹ Fear of terrorism may also be creating a political climate in which public scrutiny or criticism of military spending or the military in general are increasingly difficult. For example, the Nigerian Government arrested a newspaper columnist in July 2011 for alleged 'subversive' activities following his publication and analysis of the 2011 budgetary allocation to the military, the police and the office of the NSA. Although the columnist was later released without criminal charges, both his arrest and the subsequent deployment of armed soldiers to disperse civil society groups protesting against the removal of petrol subsidies in

¹⁵ Soriwei, F., Owuamanam, J. and Adepegba, A., 'Army deploys US-trained Nigerian commandos in the north', *The Punch* (Lagos), 13 Nov. 2011.

¹⁶ Soriwei, F. and Alechenu, J., 'Nigeria, three others, seal pact against Boko Haram', *The Punch* (Lagos), 7 Feb. 2012.

¹⁷ 'FG, UK working on counter-terrorism strategy', *The Punch* (Lagos), 1 Feb. 2012; and British Prime Minister's Office, Transcript of press conference in Lagos, Nigeria, 22 July 2011, <<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/transcript-of-press-conference-in-lagos-nigeria/>>.

¹⁸ Nigerian Appropriation (amendment) Act 2011, assented to 26 May 2011, <<http://www.nassnig.org/nass2/acts.php>>; and Nigerian Appropriation (amendment) Act 2010, assented to 10 Aug. 2010, <<http://www.nassnig.org/nass2/acts.php>>.

¹⁹ The proposed outlay for national security in 2012 is 920 billion naira (\$5.7 billion), including 326 billion naira (\$2 billion) for defence, 17 billion naira (\$106 million) for internal security operations by the military and 124 billion naira (\$773 million) for the NSA, among others. Nigerian Federal Budget Office, '2012 budget speech', 13 Dec. 2011, <<http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/>>, para. 33.

January 2012 suggest increasing militarization in Nigeria.²⁰ The military, always a strong political actor in Nigeria, is subjected to weak civilian scrutiny. This has encouraged severe corruption in the military sector and wasteful and excessive spending more generally.²¹ While the government has made some efforts to tackle this in recent years, for example through greater budget transparency and reforms to military procurement, the climate created by military-led counterterrorism could put such limited gains at risk.²²

Developments in other countries

The role of oil revenues as a driver, or at least enabler, of military spending increases in many African countries has been noted in previous editions of the SIPRI Yearbook.²³ Angola, now the third largest spender in Africa, is another example. Between the end of the country's civil war in 2002 and 2008, Angola's military spending soared by 148 per cent in conjunction with growth in oil production. Since then, however, military spending has levelled out, possibly linked to a slight dip in oil output.²⁴ According to official data, the increases in Angola's military budget have largely been directed towards improving the pay and conditions of troops and the creation of a 'professionalization program' for personnel.²⁵

South Africa, the largest spender in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest in Africa after Algeria, resumed its growth in military spending in 2011. After reaching a post-apartheid trough in 1999, spending had increased by 66 per cent by 2005, partly due to a major, corruption-ridden arms acquisition programme; spending then remained relatively constant until 2010.²⁶ The increase of 4.2 per cent in the budget for 2011, to \$5.1 billion, is to be followed with planned increases in the 3 years 2012–14. The

²⁰ Adisa, T., Olatunji, J. S. and Ajayi, W., 'el-Rufai arrested; why he was picked up—SSS; Buhari, Fani-kayode talk tough', *Sunday Tribune* (Ibadan), 3 July 2011.

²¹ Nightingale, K., *Shooting Down the MDGs: How Irresponsible Arms Transfers Undermine Development Goals*, Oxfam Briefing Paper no. 120 (Oxfam International: London, Oct. 2008), p. 13; Perlo-Freeman, S. and Perdomo, C., 'The developmental impact of military budgeting and procurement: implications for an arms trade treaty', SIPRI, Apr. 2008, <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/publications/unpubl_milex>; and Omitoogun, W. and Tunde Oduntan, T., 'Nigeria', eds W. Omitoogun and E. Hutchful, SIPRI, *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Processes and Mechanisms of Control* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006).

²² Nightingale (note 21).

²³ Perlo-Freeman et al. (note 11).

²⁴ US Energy Intelligence Administration, 'Country Analysis Brief: Angola', Aug. 2011, <<http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=AO>>.

²⁵ 'Angola defense budget surges upwards', Forecast International, 19 Aug. 2010, <<http://emarketalerts.forecastl.com/mic/eabstract.cfm?recno=176108>>; and 'China's visit to Angola raises questions about future arms purchases', Forecast International, 27 May 2010, <<http://emarketalerts.forecastl.com/mic/eabstract.cfm?recno=173252>>.

²⁶ See Feinstein, A. et al., 'Corruption and the arms trade: sins of commission', *SIPRI Yearbook 2011*.

increase in 2011 is largely due to a new salary structure but future increases will allow for new equipment purchases.²⁷

One of the largest but least remarked upon increases in recent years has taken place in Swaziland, where, despite a slight fall in 2011, military spending has increased by 160 per cent since 2002, reaching \$123 million, and has doubled as a share of gross domestic product, to 3.2 per cent in 2010. The increase in spending has occurred despite the fact that 70 per cent of the population earns less than \$2 a day. Swaziland also has the world's highest HIV infection rate and faces an economic crisis involving severe cuts to social services. These factors, and the lack of any internal or external military threats, led to increasing criticism in 2011 of the high level of military spending.²⁸ However, as Swaziland is an absolute monarchy, where parliament is forbidden from debating the defence budget, its high military spending may be in part a matter of poor governance.²⁹

²⁷ Heitman, H., 'S Africa increases defence budget', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 2 Mar. 2011, p. 19; and South African National Treasury, *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement 2011* (National Treasury: Pretoria, October 2011).

²⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2011: Sustainability and Equity—A Better Future for All* (UNDP: New York, 2011), p. 144.

²⁹ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 'Swaziland: opposition to military spending grows', 29 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/94336/SWAZILAND-Opposition-to-military-spending-grows>>.