

**TANZANIA/KENYA: NEW AL-QAEDA-LINKED TERRORIST GROUP “AL-MUHAJIROUN IN EAST AFRICA” ISSUES THREAT AGAINST WESTERN TARGETS**

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In a statement, posted online on May 4, a recently created Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group named 'Al-Muhajiroun in East Africa' threatened to carry out attacks against western interests in the region, accusing UN forces of 'encouraging repressions against Muslims'. The group also threatened to carry out attacks against targets in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

The latest statement, that was published the same day as when a Tanzanian convoy was attacked by ADF rebels in North Kivu province in Democratic Republic of Congo, raises concerns over the threat presented by the new Al-Qaeda offspring in East Africa. To recall, the new terrorist group Al-Muhajiroun ('Emigrants') of East Africa announced its creation in January 2015 and declared its allegiance to Al-Qaeda and Al Shabaab.

The group that today is primarily based in Kenya is allegedly subordinated to Somalian Al-Shabaab and supposedly headed by Emir Abou Khalid Abou Izz al-Din. The exact relationships between Al-Shabaab and Al-Muhajiroun in East Africa remain unclear. Meanwhile some reports suggest that Al-Shabaab has surrendered some of its operational plans in Kenya to Al-Muhajiroun and that the group today is the official operative of Al-Shabaab in Kenya.

There is also a confusion in numerous sources between the newly created group and the group Al-Muhajiroun that was established in the 1990s by the UK radical Islamist cleric Anjem Choudary. In the statement, posted last April 26 on its Twitter account, Al-Muhajiroun in East Africa denounced any links to Choudary, claiming: 'Brother [@anjemchoudary](#) (May Allah protect him) is a brave Muslim known for promoting Islam. Emigrants of East Africa has no links to him'.

The involvement of the terrorist group in the attack against Garissa University on April 2, which has been officially claimed by Al-Shabaab, is also a subject of active speculation in the media. Meanwhile at the present moment the exact degree of implication of group's members in the attack can not be ascertained. On March 31, the group issued a statement on its Twitter account in Swahili, saying "We ask the East African Mujahadin to wait".

There is also little information about the composition of the group, which was allegedly formed by elements close to Al-Shabaab commander Muhamed Kuno aka Dulyadeen-Gamadheere, the mastermind of attack against Garissa University, and foreign jihadists predominantly from Canada, Australia and France.

In its statement the group expressed numerous times its support to Al Shabaab, as well as to other Al-Qaeda affiliates across the world. It also issued a series of threats on its Twitter account (both on Swahili and in English) against the countries of the East African region, namely against Tanzania, 'In Tanzania we will work against democracy as our brothers in London have done'.

Indeed, Tanzania today can be considered as a primary target of the new terrorist group. Indeed, right after the announcement of its allegiance to Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab, the group issued a call to the people of Tanzania, entitled 'Protecting our Sheikhs' in which it declared: "To sit by idly, and watch the government of Tanzania harass, intimidate and humiliate our Sheikhs is untenable and must now end. Ending such a policy and tactic in Tanzania is not just the responsibility of the Mujahideen but also of all Muslims in Tanzania."

So far the group has not claimed responsibility for any terrorist attack, meanwhile its direct links to Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda and clear intentions to attack western targets in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, fuel concerns of security experts in numerous countries, confirming the imminent threat represented by this new Al-Qaeda offspring for the whole region.

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