

SMS Africa Report 2 – Kenya – January 2017

Operation Linda Nchi

The news of an attack on a base in Kulbiyow has dominated security news in the second half of the month. This belies the fact that there was access to ‘terror’ related security information, both home and abroad, for those seeking it.

JUST IN: One person shot dead by somali bandits at Sosoma area in kitui county (PatrickssafariR, 2017)

KDF UPDATE on Ambush at Busar. KDF Soldiers Respond to Al-Shabaab Ambush, Kill Several Militants in Gedo Somalia (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

#KUDOS Security Agents Kenya Security Agents Claim Tremendous Progress in Counter-terrorism, Records Reduced Attacks (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

#BREAKING High Threat of Multiple Terror Attacks in Kenya and AMISOM Contributing Countries (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

On January 24th, the KDF touted their success in a place called Badhaadhe. This must have been important as it warranted a press release directly from the MoD and@kdinfo:

KDF soldiers under @amisomsomalia launched an offensive operation on Al-Shabaab terrorists in Badhaadhe, Somalia, killing seven of them. #KDF (Kdinfo, 2017)



Source: <https://twitter.com/kdinfo/status/823862819078672385>

KDF, Foreign Forces Take Badhadhe From Islamists Militants-- Al-Shabaab (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

KDF Operational UPDATE on Badhaadhe. 7 Terror Operatives Killed, 8 AK 47 and Ammunition Recovered (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

Coverage of the outcomes of missions and skirmishes in Somalia has increased, overall but not on the official channels who prefer to keep the information general. For greater detail the Strategic Intelligence Services Facebook page is a place to start. The response on social media to these posts on Badhaadhe was muted relative to the discussion around Kulbiyow, which occurs three days later. The response to Kulbiyow suggests that either the attack on a base is much more evocative, maybe because of El Adde.

GetIT411: ANOTHER KDF camp overrun by Al Shabaab terrorists in Kulbiyow town, Somalia this morning but details remain sketchy. (Suemc_phee, 2017)

BREAKING: Massive #AlShabaab attack on #KDF base in #Somalia's #Kulbiyow town, near #Kenya border, ongoing – Residents (Daudoo, 2017)

Perhaps it is a matter of high casualty numbers and any other fire fight in which KDF soldiers lost their lives would yield the same level of interest. News about Kulbiyow was dispersed by various sources. In this report, I focus on official sources. I also reproduce some of the responses by the public in order to provide a feel for the variety of sentiments. It is worth noting that AMISOM's only social media comment was to re-post the press release from the MOD in Kenya.

#OpsUpdate. 1. Our soldiers under @amisomsomalia fiercely engaged Al Shabaab who had attempted to attack our camp at Kolbiyow. #KDFKulbiyow (Kdfinfo, 2017)

#OpsUpdate 2. Our brave soldiers repulsed the terrorists who had tried to access the camp using a Suicide Vehicle Borne IED #KDFKulbiyow (Kdfinfo, 2017)

----@kdfinfo @ahmednasirlaw do you people think we are fools ?, (Ngadidaggy, 2017)

----@kdfinfo toeni video.We must win this war with information (Midgini, (2017)

----@kdfinfo so they are only spreading propaganda...good if what u are telling is true (Kiplishkoech, 2017)

----@kdfinfo @EricJowi video itakuwa released hapa leaving me wondering who's telling the truth and who's lying... 🤔 #ElAdde (Mbayathahoncho 2017)

----@mbayathahoncho @kdfinfo mazee, they denied #ElAdde until al shabaab posted videos online. Sad that we have to get info from shabaab videos (EricJowi, 2017)

#OpsUpdate 3. Our brave soldiers are currently undertaking intensive pacification operation reinforced by #KenyaArmy & #KenyaAirForce planes (Kdfinfo, 2017)

----@kdfinfo @SpokespersonGoK This is good to know. However some somali journalists are reporting shabab has overrun the town and is filming (Muki254, 2017)

#OpsUpdate 4. It is important to note that contrary to information peddled by the terrorists,our camp has not been overran.#KDFKulbiyow #KDF (Kdfinfo, 2017)

----@kdfinfo reports on the ground shows that alshabaab 18 shabaab bodies counted by residents.. The rantags repulsed weldone KDF (Yahyarmy2010, 2016)

----@kdfinfo I'll be a fool to believe this, last time I checked, KDF has never ever been an open and credible institution. #KDFKulbiyow (Kcmaiyo, 2017)

----@kcmayo. This is war. Dont expect any army to tell you how the enemy is winning.
Understand (ChapaaOnline, 2017)

----@kdfinfo #KDFKulbiyow we are sure to never know the truth anyway and this does little to help
it...its all about trust and accountability (LarryWambs, 2016)

#OpsUpdate 5.Our soldiers remain vigilant &will continue to relentlessly pursue the terrorists to
ensure secure Kenya &Somalia #KDFKulbiyow (Kdfinfo, 2017)

The full Press Release on #KDFKulbiyow incident @amisomsomalia .#Kulbiyow #NgaoYaTaifa
#TukolmaraAngani #OnTimeOnTarget #ThisIsKDF #WeAreKDF (Kdfinfo, 2017)



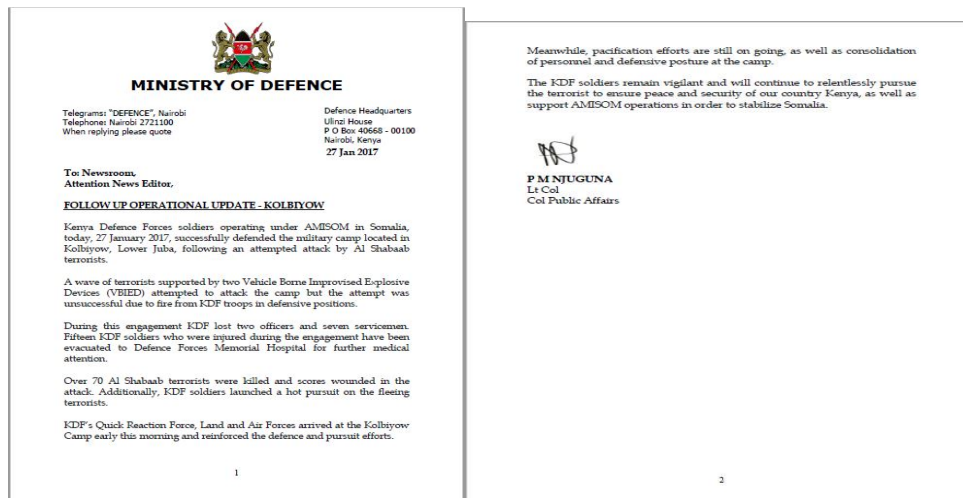
----@kdfinfo Any report on the #ElAdde attack? Westgate? Mpeketoni? Garissa attacks? Why
would we trust this one? @amisomsomalia #KDFKulbiyow (Elvo_L, 2016)

----@elvo_L.Would you then trust the terrorists? (ChapaaOnline, (2017)

----@kdfinfo @amisomsomalia we hope this information on #KDFKulbiyow is reliable because y'all
kept secrets on #ElAdde attack (Phisaki33, 2017)

An update followed nine hours later

Follow up Operational Update Press Release on #KDFKulbiyow. Our Quick Reaction Force soldiers
killed over 70 Al Shabaab terrorists.#WeAreKDF (kdfinfo, 2017)



Source: <https://twitter.com/kdfinfo/status/825033773087674368>

And another one the following day, complete with the timeline of activities undertaken after the attack:

Second Follow Up Operational Update on Kolbiyow. Following successful defence of #KDFKulbiyow Camp by our brave soldiers, here is a timeline (Kdfinfo, 2017)

 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE	
Telegrams: "DEFENCE", Nairobi Telephone: Nairobi 2721100 When replying please quote	Defence Headquarters Ulinzi House P O Box 40668 - 00100 Nairobi, Kenya 28 Jan 2017
To: Newsroom, Attention News Editor,	
<u>FOLLOW UP OPERATIONAL UPDATE - KOLBIYOW</u>	
Following the successful defence of Kolbio Military Camp by KDF soldiers operating under AMISOM in Somalia yesterday, the following is the brief timeline of activities that have taken place:	
Yesterday 27th January 2017	
• KDF fallen heroes and those injured were received at the Defence Forces Memorial Hospital. • The next of kin of the fallen heroes as well as those injured soldiers were notified and plans to support them were established in line with the Defence Forces Standing Orders. • Senior KDF Commanders, General Officer Commanding Eastern Command Maj Gen Biwott, and AMISOM Sector 2 Commander Brig Shume visited the troops at Kolbiyow to boost their morale. • Personnel and equipment consolidation was effectively undertaken. • Troops on the ground embarked on restoration of the innovative tactical defence to address the threat posed by vehicle bound explosive devices (SVBIED).	
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	Today 28 January 2017
	• The Cabinet Secretary for Defence Ambassador Raychelle Omamo, accompanied by Chief of the Defence Forces, Principal Secretary, Service Commanders and other senior military officers visited DFPMH to comfort soldiers recuperating from the Kolbiyow incident. The Cabinet Secretary also addressed the next of kin of fallen heroes who were present at the hospital and sent her condolences to the bereaved families. • Since yesterday, offensive ground and air operations have been intensified targeting Al Shabaab camps and pacification of the area has been undertaken. • KDF soldiers at Kolbiyow Camp remain vigilant and undeterred. They bravely continue to relentlessly pursue the terrorists to ensure peace and stability of the region as well as support AMISOM in stabilizing Somalia.
	On behalf of the Ministry of Defence and the Kenya Defence Forces fraternity, the Cabinet Secretary and Chief of the Defence Forces condole with the families of the fallen heroes who paid the ultimate price in defence of our motherland.
	 P.M. NJUGUNA Lt Col Col Public Affairs
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Source: <https://twitter.com/kdfinfo/status/825380706469736449>

In comparison, this is how Strategic Intelligence Services reported on the attack on their Facebook account.

#BREAKING Al-Shabaab SVBIED Detonates Outside KDF Kulbiyow FOB, 2 Others Destroyed by Army (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

32 AMISOM (KDF & SNA) Troops Killed in Kulbiyow SVBIED Attack (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

----This is how I lost my brother last year at El adde..God protect our Soldiers (Sammy Wangara Wanjoki, 2017)

----The news are confirming that Kenyan army killed by alshabab are 63 (Mohamed Abdi Kadiye, 2017)

#BREAKING KDF has secured the Kolbiyow base after it was attacked using a SVBIED by terrorist early Friday. Terrorists didn't overrun the base rather breached some parts of the encampment but were repulsed by the officers manning it. Over 37 terrorists killed in the attack. Few casualties on KDF side More to follow (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

Over 87 Al-Shabaab Terrorists killed in Kolbiyow after they breached the gates of an AMISOM-KDF base early Friday (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

----Amos Keino, (2017), Parade them.seeing is believing

Injured and dying terrorists involved in the Kolbiyow attack transported to Jiliib. KDF conducting operations targeting terrorists mobile units now (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

#BREAKING: Al-Shabaab terrorists Killed the Mayor of Kulbiyow Mohamed Tohyare Nuh today when they attempted to overrun the KDF AMISOM contingent base in the town (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

#BREAKING Al-Shabaab Suffered its Worst Defeat in History at Kolbiyow: AMISOM. 180+ Killed by KDF. 150+ unaccounted for. 100+ Badly wounded received at Jilib. 550 Terrorists Attacked 143 KDF Soldiers but suffered a humiliating defeat (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

Strategic Intelligence Services had more detailed information. The KDF's account was much more conservative, even with respect to casualty numbers.

One of the consistent responses from the public was a request for proof. This it seemed would be best delivered in the form of video--like Al Shabaab was wont to do. Not only was the public requesting this evidence, they were also asking for the military to take the propaganda war seriously.

Over 87 Al-Shabaab Terrorists killed in Kolbiyow after they breached the gates of an AMISOM-KDF base early Friday (CTNSIS 2017)

----@CTNSIS any pictures pls, can u assure us no casualties on our side. Hii sio counter propaganda? @Disembe @RobertAlai (SamLelan, 2017)

----@CTNSIS no pictures equal no proof, and that's how AS will always win on social media, coz they will be releasing plenty of HD pic evidence (Dennisfidha, 2017)

When a Twitter user claimed to have pictorial evidence of Al Shabaab casualties, that later turned out to be from a different incident, they were chastened for deliberately trying to mislead.

Current situation in Jilib, Al Shabaab counting loses after attempted attack on KDF camp in #Kolbiyow #KDFKulbiyow @Daudoo @yahyarmy2010 [pics of dead] (LeFemme254, 2017)

----@LeFemme254 Thanks, but these pictures are old, some of them taken in 2015. see here <http://bit.ly/2kubjzV> @yahyarmy2010 #KDFKulbiyow (Daudoo, 2017)

----@LeFemme254 @Daudoo @yahyarmy2010 These pictures R from Google images. Somali residents reported the attack happened & vehicles were taken (c_aided, 2017)

----@LeFemme254 @Daudoo @yahyarmy2010 Are u just posting this pics to get more followers or what? Post credible information not old images (NorthernKE, 2017)

@Gathara continued to represent the group who felt that explanations were due and perhaps those that want Kenya to withdraw from Somalia.

#Kulbiyow illustrates the folly of ignoring #ElAdde and its lessons. Will we now demand a full accounting from GoK? (Gathara, 2017)

After the initial evocative Twitter based bulletins, it seemed that calm was restored.

EpukaUgaidi, (2017), @kdinfo repulse Al Shabaab in Kolbiyow. The camp is now under command and control of KDF troops #KDFStrong

General Officer Commanding Eastern Command & @amisomsomalia Sector II Commander visited troops in #Kulbiyow to boost their morale.#KDFStrong (Kdfinfo, (2017),

It appears that during this period, IG Boinnet had travelled to North Eastern province. Perhaps as a precautionary measure, this information was only relayed after the trip had ended.

NPSOfficial_KE, (2017), PRESS RELEASE: INSPECTOR GENERAL'S FIVE DAY VISIT TO NORTH EASTERN AND NORTH COAST REGIONS

 OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE NAIROBI – KENYA PRESS RELEASE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S 5-DAY VISIT TO NORTH EASTERN AND NORTH COAST REGIONS The Inspector General, Joseph Boinnet undertook a week-long tour of North Eastern and North Coast Regions from 24th to 28th January 2017, that included among others areas, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River and Lamu Counties. It was a tour meant to interact and bond with the officers on the ground, as well as to inspire and encourage them. It was encouraging to note the high degree of determination and alertness of the officers in all the areas that were visited. The Inspector General lauded the multi-agency approach to security operations that enjoins various security agencies, which had tremendously improved the security situation in the North Eastern as well as in Boni Forest area of operation. As a result of the concerted efforts, the previously vacated villages in Boni Forest that included Mararani, Basuba and Wema have resumed normal life. The schools that had been closed including Mararani and Basuba Primary Schools, have since been reopened with children resuming studies. The socio economic life of the local communities is back with the government expanding and rehabilitating the Hindi and Kiunga roads. This is testament to the fact that the multi-agency approach to security operations has provided the desired results.	The Inspector General also met officers from various national security agencies as well as officials from the National and County Government. He thanked them for a job well done and urged them to continue with the same spirit so as to protect the lives and property of Kenyans. He also urged local residents to continue cooperating with security agencies in this endeavor. The Inspector General had previously toured the ongoing construction of the perimeter wall along the Kenya-Somali border in Mandera County, by engineers from the Kenya Defence Forces and thanked them for partnering with other national security agencies to provide peace and security within our borders. Accompanying the Inspector General was the Kenya Police Director of Operations, Mr. Benson Kibui, General Service Unit Commandant, Mr. Stephen Chelimo and other senior officers from the National Police Service.  GEORGE KINOTI (AIG) FOR: INSPECTOR GENERAL NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE Date: 29th JANUARY, 2017
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Source: https://twitter.com/NPSOfficial_KE/status/825738861716369408

Police involvement in Kulbiyow was also revealed by a notification about a visit to injured officers. We had been aware of their presence due to recent kudos bestowed upon them by AMISOM. At that time they were involved in training Somali police, but perhaps they are also involved in the military campaigns.

I today visited KDF Officers injured in the Kolbiyow attack including two Police Officers who were also injured as they rushed to respond (JBoinnet, 2017)

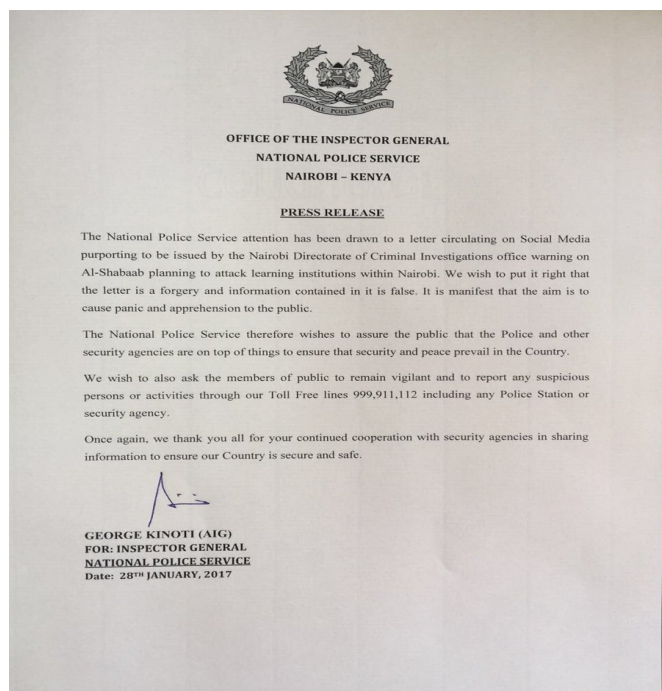
Since the attack, @kdfinfo has reported on activity from the field. This time, on the good works of KDF in Somalia.

Our personnel conducted a medical camp in Kuday, LowerJubba Region @amisomsomalia .Residents came out in large numbers.#KDFStrong #ThisIsKDF (Kdfinfo, 2017)

Our medical personnel in Hoosingow, @amisomsomalia, assist a mother in bringing a new life into the world.Our resolve is unshaken.#KDFStrong (Kdfinfo, 2017)

Alarming social media posts

Days after the attack on Kulbiyow, the Ministry of the Interior (which was uncharacteristically silent during the incident) sent out a message to discredit information about an imminent attack on local institutions of higher learning.



Source <https://twitter.com/InteriorKE/status/825312270171389954>

Days earlier, on the 20th of January the police had warned the propagators of a message about election rigging that they were hoping to find a law to prosecute them under.



Source https://twitter.com/NPSOfficial_KE/status/822505860115087361

In better news on digital devices and security, apparently Kenya's National Crime Research Centre has revealed a new app through which crimes can be reported. It will probably be one more thing for the person NPSOfficial account to do but perhaps not as effective. The fact that there are people watching and commenting is probably why tweeting has been so effective for mobilising a response.

Reporting Crime Goes Digital. Kenya's National Crime Research Centre Mobile App to Fight Crime (Strategic Intelligence Services, 2017)

NCRC has launched a Mobile Phone Crime Monitoring App. To download it, go to App store, Google Play Store & Windows Store & search NCRC Kenya (@NRCKenya)

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