

Threatened Paradise

Growing religious and political violence on Zanzibar

For the last two years, attacks on representatives of Christian establishments have been increasing. On the 13th of September 2013 a Catholic priest was seriously injured in an acid attack. One month before, an acid attack on two British women drew international headlines and last year in November 2012 the mufti's secretary thus had been hurt seriously. Arson attacks, violent demonstrations and public hate sermons are further characteristics of the increasing radicalization of religion on Zanzibar. In connection with speculations about these developments the name Uamsho occurs repeatedly. It stands for a radical Islamist movement that supports the political separation of the half-autonomous island from Tanzania.

For more than 100,000 tourists annually, Zanzibar is above all a tropical vacation paradise. In the travel catalogs, the minarets, cathedrals and Hindu temples that line the silhouette of the capital Stonetown are marketed as a symbol of the peaceful religious coexistence. However, this idyll is deceptive. Just a few meters beyond the luxurious resorts and safari lodges, one comes into direct contact with the low development level and ubiquitous poverty of the local population. The political situation has been characterized by tensions for years. Ever since the attainment of independence parliamentary and presidential elections have been accompanied by violent escalations and testify to the difficult political and socio-economic conditions of the society. And many people in Zanzibar refer to the introduction of the multi-party-system as a turning point with regard to political tensions and violence. In the past few months, there has also been an increase in the number of

situations in which religious tensions have become violent: arson attacks against churches, public hate sermons and the circulation of flyers inciting violence and religious protest marches characterize the radicalization on the island of Zanzibar. Religious protest marches were also reported from the Tanzanian mainland when Christians and Muslims in Tunduma on the Zambia border clashed over the right to slaughter for commercial use and a mosque under construction got destroyed. Besides on the mainland not only the Islamic preachers are making a name for themselves, but also the evangelical churches are propagating themselves increasingly. A tragic high point in the development of rising tensions was the bombing attack during the inauguration of a Catholic church on the 5th of May in Arusha in which three people were killed.

On Zanzibar, the radical Islamist movement Uamsho has been mobilizing for the last two years for the political separation from the mainland. In approximately the same time period, the constitutional reform process in Tanzania has publicly unfolded. Yet, topics that were actually declared taboo by the government, such as the question of the political union of Zanzibar with the Tanzanian mainland, have been brought to the public mind by the media and civil society organizations. And within the same time period, the government lost considerable support of swathes of the population, which might provoke irritation among the powerful elites in view of the coming 2015 parliamentary and presidential elections. Religion in the context of a political arena characterized by this type of power struggles and anxieties always runs the risk of becoming a politically instrumentalized projection area and venue. The current developments in

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TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

Tanzania and above all on Zanzibar are reason to worry.

For the last two years, acid attacks against people have developed into a new phenomenon. Five such attacks have been reported on the mainland since April 2011. The victims were often people with public relevance; details about the circumstances of the crimes and their background were not known. Approximately half a dozen acid attacks on Zanzibar within the last 18 months have been attributed to Uamsho. International furor however first came about as on August 7th, two young British women who were volunteering at an Anglican kindergarten in Stonetown were doused with acid. Above all, the British press acted quickly and independently with a flood of self-invented explanations. In this way, the arrest of the radical Islamist preacher Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda on the mainland in the city of Morogoro, about 200 km west of the coastal city Dar es Salaam, was brought into a direct connection with the acid attack. Quickly several media followed with in no way corroborated false trails, for which not even the Tanzanian press had delivered the information.¹ The most troubling thing according to a Tanzanian daily newspaper was the willingness to risk the further escalation of religious tensions through wild speculation.²

Father Anselm and Sheikh Soraga

Immediately after the last attack on the Catholic priest Father Anselm Mwang'ambo, who was doused with acid as he left an internet café on September 13th, security speakers on Zanzibar announced the arrest of ten suspects and at a press conference staged the public exhibition of several canisters of acid allegedly confiscated over the

¹ Sky News: "Suspect Preacher on Run. A radical Muslim Preacher wanted in connection with the acid attack on two British girls escapes after being shot by officers", <http://news.sky.com/story/1127173/zanzibar-acid-attack-suspect-preacher-on-run> (online August 14th, 2013).

² Ben Taylor: "UK media not letting the facts get in the way of a story", *The Citizen*, August 14th, 2013, p.9.

course of the investigation. Some of those taken into custody were allegedly on their way to Somalia to join the Jihad, according to the police chief of Zanzibar,³ in a later discussion with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* at the end of September he, however, denied all knowledge of such previous statements.⁴ Whether one can see this as evidence of a connection between Uamsho and al-Shabaab, or whether the identification of a threat by the government is just a way to guarantee their future justification of use of force remains a matter of speculation.

In November 2012, the liberal preacher Sheikh Fadhil Soraga became the victim of an acid attack as he was on his way home after jogging. As the secretary of the Mufti of Zanzibar, he is responsible in religious circles for the permission or forbidding of prayer gatherings. In his preachings, he supported an interreligious dialogue and was an advocate of cooperation among different religions. Today he suffers from massive chemical burns on his eyes, face and upper body, which will strongly impair him for the rest of his life. As in the case of the two British women, the first aid available was, due to the miserable medical treatment possibilities, completely insufficient. Only with a long delay transport to the mainland was undertaken, followed by delivery to the hospital in Dar es Salaam and a first round of skin transplantations, scar and pain therapy in India. Nine months after the attack, Sheikh Fadhil Soraga is still dependent on the humble medical care available on Zanzibar for his necessary and ongoing intensive treatment.

Moderate Islam and Radicalization

Daily life on Zanzibar is conspicuously arranged along the lines of Islamic tradition and practice. Approximately 95% to 98% of

³ For the first time, the government placed Uamsho in the same group as the radical Islamist militia al-Shabaab, who are responsible for the recent bloodbath in a shopping mall in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

⁴ Thomas Scheen: *Das Ende der Toleranz, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 30th, 2013, p.3.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

the 1.3 million residents of Zanzibar are Muslims. According to estimates, the majority with 80% to 90% are Sunnis, while the remaining Shiite groups are mainly of Asian descent. The rest of the population is composed of Christian groups and an even smaller minority of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Baha'is. Estimates for the Tanzanian mainland, with 30% to 40% for both Muslims and Christians, are often rife with discrepancies. A study about Islam and Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa conducted by the US-American opinion research center PEW in April 2010 yielded estimates of 60% Christians, 36% Muslims and 4% other religious affiliations in Tanzania. But these figures should be perceived with caution only since exact numbers are actually not available; in August 2012, by the fifth census since the Union of Tanzania, again the question of religious affinity was systematically rejected on political grounds.

As a half-autonomous federal State, Zanzibar has its own president, its own legal and judiciary systems and its own constitution, however it is subordinate to the Tanzanian constitution. Both constitutions protect religious freedom and prohibit religious groups from registering as political parties. Zanzibar's secular government maintains close relations with the clergy in the form of payment of Imam's salaries. A parallel Qadi legal system exists as well. All secular legal questions can be appealed on the mainland at the Union Court of Appeal, and all Qadi verdicts can be appealed at a higher court made up of five Sheikhs and a top Qadi.

The majority of the population of Zanzibar belongs to a moderate form of Islam. Several signs on Zanzibar indicate however a social change towards religious radicalization and the interpretation of Islam as a political ideology. The number of women who wear a veil and in part also hide their faces has been increasing over the course of the last several years. A few years ago it was common for students from Zanzibar to do their studies abroad in Europe, Canada or the US; nowadays, mostly scholarships from Islamic foundations fund studies above all in Saudi Arabia or Iran. While these observations may seem to be purely superficial and

harmless social changes, European visitors, but also mainland Tanzanians, increasingly report verbal attacks about a "too western" clothing style, which place these observations in a different context. In January 2012, a member of the Zanzibar House of Representatives suggested that women who wear miniskirts during the month of Ramadan should be chastised through corporal punishment. The then minister for justice and constitutional and legal affairs rejected the suggestion, but communicated that his agency had created a commission to investigate and prevent objectionable behavior during the fasting month of Ramadan.⁵ The numerous flyers with religiously-based hate speeches and calls for violence against Christians that circulated in the last year⁶ or the declarations of sympathy with radical Islamist movements that were posted on buildings present an even clearer expression of the changing role of religion. It should be noted that one of these flyers threatened to bomb a mosque as a revenge for the attacks on Christians. And even though Christian leaders were quick to denounce that appeal it stands clearly for the severity of the developments. The clearest warning signal at last has to be the numerous arson attacks in the past year through which several churches were damaged or even destroyed. Local bars and shops selling alcohol were also the target of attacks and threats.

Islamist Mobilization

It is significant that the Uamsho movement's political activism has only come to the forefront within the last 2 years. Uamsho (Swahili for "awakening") was officially founded in 2001 under the name *Jumuiya ya Uamsho na mihadhara ya kiislami* (JUMIKI), „Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation“, and registered as a non-governmental organization. In the fol-

⁵ United States Department of State: 2012 - Report on International Religious Freedom, Tanzania; May 2013, p. 3.

⁶ On some of the flyers, the attack on Sheikh Soraga was praised, and calls were made for similar attacks on concretely mentioned persons.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

lowing years, the group was not publically active. The first turning point for Uamsho's history was the collaboration between the opposition party Civic United Front (CUF) and the Tanzanian ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). After the creation of the Government of National Union (GNU), which had already been decided in advance before the parliamentary and presidential elections of October 2010, support for Uamsho and its demands for the separation of Zanzibar from the mainland increased dramatically. Before the unification with the ruling party, the fight for Zanzibar's autonomy had been a central point of the opposition party's agenda.

Many Zanzibaris perceived the change in CUF's course as a betrayal; the CUF had been the proponent of the island residents and had been locked in a decades-long fight with the CCM about the de facto unfair, violent and rigged elections until that point. Above and beyond these considerations came the constitutional reform process, which centered around the preservation of national unity. Several articles from the November 2011 Constitutional Review Act made the question of unity an untouchable taboo in the constitutional reform process. Public debates and assemblies and even opinion polling were censored; contraventions were punished with draconian fines and even imprisonment. Theoretically this means that civil society organizations planning to organize events concerning this topic were liable to prosecution. The vehemence with which the government attempted to block all criticism about the Union of mainland Tanganyika with the archipelago Zanzibar just added new fuel to the fire that the Uamsho movement had started on Zanzibar. According to Deus Kibamba, the leader of the Tanzanian constitutional forum Jukwaa la Katiba, Uamsho has become a venue for political machinations in order to give the Zanzibaris a voice in the constitutional reform process. Furthermore, he asserts that Uamsho has been manipulated in order to fill certain political ambitions, and can no longer be seen as a purely religious movement.

Public rallies organized by Uamsho became ever more popular especially in late 2011 and early 2012, and they have attracted more and more participants. Up to thousands of people have been gathering at so-called *mihadhara*, open air religious gatherings, to hear the Koran recitations and listen to the sermons of religious leaders. Preacher Sheikh Farid Hadi, the leader of the group, began to propagandize for a dress code for foreigners, restrictions in the consumption of alcohol, and the establishment of the independent state of Zanzibar.⁷ With the circulation of flyers and with their presence in social media, the movement attempts to reach all the resident groups on Zanzibar. A search on the internet video site YouTube for the word "Uamsho" yields more than one thousand hits. The Facebook site for the group has over 14,500 likes, however the profile of the sympathizers reaches beyond the island of Zanzibar to regions along the Swahili coast such as Dar es Salaam, Tanga or Mombasa.

Violent outbreaks

In May 2012, the break-out of violence erupted after a so called peace-march arranged by Uamsho. Sheikh Farid was arrested because he had spoken against the Union although he had been warned not to do so during religious gatherings. These first violent clashes between Uamsho's supporters and police were triggered by the arrest of a radical preacher after a demonstration against the constitutional reform process extended beyond the area it was officially allowed to fill. During the unrest, at least three churches were set on fire and about 30 protest members were arrested. In predominantly Muslim Zanzibar, most of the Christians stem from the mainland; for this reason, churches are often seen as a negative symbol of an unwanted influence from outside. The conflicts flared up much more intensely as Sheikh Farid Hadi Ahmed disappeared in mid-October 2012 for three

⁷ Maximilian Hess: Uamsho. Zanzibar's Growing Islamist Movement, <http://blog.inkermann.com/index.php/2013/02/22/uamsho-zanzibars-growing-islamist-movement> (from 23.08.2013).

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

days under still mysterious circumstances. While Uamsho's supporters claimed that he was violently abducted by police for interrogation purposes, the police claimed that the disappearance was devised by Uamsho themselves in order to incite unrest and turmoil. The three days of protests were accompanied by a massive police action, which included the use of rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas.

Supporters of Uamsho

It is not easy at all to answer the question who or what Uamsho actually is. In the media, Uamsho is usually used as a synonym for militant Islamism, an attitude that represents a crude overgeneralization. It seems that on the one hand many Zanzibaris sympathize with the separatist agenda Uamsho stands for but that otherwise the violence and the alleged connection to radical Islamism makes it difficult for the people to identify themselves fully with Uamsho.

It's highly likely that Uamsho's supporters can also be found outside Zanzibar. Rumors of money from Saudi Arabia, Libya and Oman have been circulating on account of Sheikh Farid Ahmed's travel activities. Presumably more than 1 million US dollars flow annually from Saudi Arabia to Tanzania for the construction of mosques, madrasahs and Islamic centers.⁸ There are many speculations about existing connections between Uamsho and other militant Islamist groups like al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda, who bombed the US-American embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in 1998. Two known al-Qaeda activists come originally from Zanzibar.⁹ Another subject of speculations are possible contacts between Uamsho and the separatist Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) on the Kenyan

⁸ Maj Jodi Vittori/Kristin Bremer: Islam in Tanzania and Kenya. Ally or threat in the war on terror? 2009, p. 23. <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA536072> (retrieved March 20th, 2013).

⁹ Khalfan Khamis Muhammad who was involved in the 1998 bombings, and Qaed Sanyan al-Harithi who was killed in Yemen; cf. Vittori/Bremer, p. 23.

coast.¹⁰ The oppressive political discourse in Mombasa boasts structural parallels with the situation on Zanzibar. A fundamental linguistic and cultural affinity exists because both places were historically a part of the Sultanate of Oman, both geographically belong to the Swahili coast. Observers report additionally about an exchange of Islamic preachers between Zanzibar and Mombasa. Many Zanzibaris have emigrated to Europe and Canada and follow the events in Zanzibar over various social media platforms with great interest. These are all factors that have to be calculated into a risk analysis. The question about the actual form of Uamsho is further made difficult by the fact that the leading members of the movement have been in jail since the end of last year; Islamist groups or single representatives can now act self-declared and uncontrolled in the name of Uamsho.

No all-clear in sight

Although Sheikh Farid Hadi Ahmed and nine other leaders of Uamsho were indicted between October 2012 and January 2013 on counts of sabotage, attempting to incite violence, and conspiracy, there is still no all-clear in sight. The shooting of the catholic priest Evarist Mushi in February 2013, after the wave of incarcerations, supports this claim, in case Uamsho was behind this deed. The fact that the actual societal injustices remain unchanged also speaks for continued vigilance. Zanzibar is confronted by a multitude of locally specific problems that differentiate it from the mainland, for example widespread drug problems or the trade in and smuggling of goods and people.

Rampant and ubiquitous corruption, high unemployment, extreme differences in income levels between the average population and the elites, and the general level of poverty are societal problems that have existed for centuries, both under the Tanzanian mainland government and the rule of pow-

¹⁰ Drazen Jorgic: Zanzibar unrests anger along Swahili coast, in der *Chicago Tribune News*, October 25th, 2012.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

erful actors on Zanzibar. The only remarkable change regards the economic boom in Tanzania with annually rising growth rates of more than 5%, from which however only the well-situated elites seem to profit. These conditions set the optimal stage for the development of a new generation of religious-political protest figures and ideological mobilizers.

The strong popularity of the Uamsho movement can be explained on the one hand through the existential need of many Zanzibaris to escape the established economic misery, persistent poverty and lack of perspective. On the other hand, the blossoming of the Uamsho movement can also be traced back to deeply-rooted questions of national and cultural identity. Tension and violent escalations surrounding elections have been present since the establishment of the first government in 1957 under British colonial power. They culminated in the 1964 bloody massacre of the Arabic aristocracy, who with their 17% had dominated both the predominantly African population (77%) and the political decision process.¹¹

The law for the union which formed the basis for today's Tanzania was signed by the then-president of Tanzania and founding father Julius Nyerere together with the then-leader of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council Abeid Amani Karume, who later became the first president of Zanzibar, in April 1964. This step was accepted only by certain parts of the Zanzibari population. In 1972, after Karume was murdered, Aboud Jumbe became president.¹² In the time that followed, the Tanzanian government strengthened their efforts to consolidate the country and united the mainland party Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) with the leftist radical Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), who represented the African island dwellers,

¹¹ For the following information, cf. Vittorio/Bremer.

¹² As compared with results of previous elections, Zanzibar's population was divided 50:50 with regard to the question of a union with mainland Tanzania, cf. Michael Okema, *Political Culture in Tanzania*, African Studies, Lewiston New York, 1996, pp. 153-154.

to the since-that-point ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party (Party of the Revolution, CCM).

Vote rigging and escalation

In 1992, new non-violent tensions arose as Zanzibar declared its independent accession to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This decision was reversed after massive protests from the mainland. After the adoption of the multiple-party-system in 1992, the Civic United Front (CUF) was formed with its main headquarters on the island of Pemba, which is widely seen as Islamic conservative, and it made the secession of Zanzibar one of their main goals. At the first multiple party elections in 1995, the CUF candidate, with a total of 49.76% of the votes, was not able to win against Salmin Amour, the candidate of the ruling party CCM, who gained a total of 50.24%. There was however clear evidence of massive election fraud, and violent outbreaks had continued throughout the election process. International observers leveled harsh criticism against the election process, and foreign development aid money was suspended. The CUF boycotted the House of Representatives and refused to recognize the government. The societal tensions continued; in 1997 a Catholic Church was destroyed in an explosion.

In 2000 the election results were again close, however Amani Abeid Karume, the son of the first president of Zanzibar, was soon declared the winner and became the next in the line of his father's successors. The result was massive demonstrations initiated by the CUF; the police reacted with heavy resistance. The organization Human Rights Watch reported shootings, beatings, sexual abuse, 35 dead and 600 injured. The ongoing crisis could finally be settled through dialogue initiatives from the CUF and CCM, but deep fissures remain in the society. In the next round of elections in December 2005, in which Karume was elected into his second term, there were once again clear signs of massive election fraud (such as double registration and registration of mainland Tanzanians). As the CUF was forbidden from using the same

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

public election campaign possibilities as the CCM had used in the past, violence broke out again. However, the election process itself was free of violent escalations, even when doubts about the counting of votes remained.

For the first time since decades, the last elections on Zanzibar in 2010 took place without any riots. In 2009, President Karume was able to promote a dialogue between the CCM and the opposition party CUF. This led to the creation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The successor in the office of the president was Ali Mohammed Shein, CCM, with a one percent lead over the opposition candidate Seif Sharif Ahmed. For large portions of the population, the creation of the Government of National Unity was tantamount to a subordination of the CUF and the simultaneous abandonment of the convictions and ideals that had been present up to that time. In the course of these developments, the possibility presented itself for Uamsho to pick up many of the former CUF voters who felt left behind by the political changes. The message consistently propagated by Uamsho's spokespersons, that Zanzibar was left behind in terms of development, in combination with the condemnation of openly displayed wealth in the form of luxury tourist resorts sums up the dissatisfaction of many Zanzibaris. Uamsho's massively propagated condemnation of the incumbent political leaders with respect to the ubiquitous corruption and political failure also falls on open ears.

Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda

When one looks at events in connection with the incarceration of the Islamic preacher Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda it becomes clear that religious conflicts and social divides are also intensifying on the Tanzanian mainland. The controversial preacher and general secretary of the Council of Muslim Organizations in Tanzania was arrested by police on the 10th of August in Morogoro, 200 km west of Dar es Salaam; in the process the preacher was badly wounded by a shot in the upper arm, although he himself was unarmed. During the hours-long sur-

gery that followed in Dar es Salaam, both a large group of his followers and an enormous contingent of heavily armed security personnel gathered in front of the Muhimbili University Hospital.

In many international media reports, the arrest of Sheikh Ponda was brought into direct connection with the search for the party responsible for the acid attack on Zanzibar. Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda has a decades-long reputation on the Tanzanian mainland as a controversial Islamist preacher. He stands for a group of Muslims who vehemently reject the government-established highest council of Muslims in Tanzania (BAKWATA, Baraza Kuu Waislamu Watanzania), and acts against it with massive protests.

The group surrounding Ponda was in the past often involved in conflicts with governmental security organizations; some of these conflicts were violent. In October 2012, Ponda and 49 of his followers were arrested and accused of breaking and entering, theft of building materials and attempts to incite revolt. The group had obtained entry to an area that had been sold through BAKWATA. The arrest of Ponda was followed by protests and upheaval, which the police had fought with tear gas and water cannons; army patrols had also been deployed on the streets of Dar es Salaam. In the same month, several churches in a suburb of Dar es Salaam were set on fire after a 14-year-old Christian youth, in a quarrel with his Muslim friend urinated on the Koran. Several hundred people were arrested in the course of the unrest. Sheikh Ponda was accused of taking part in the unrest through his incitement. In May 2013, Sheikh Ponda was given a 12-month suspended sentence based on the pretense that he would only peacefully preach and avoid criminal activities.

His arrest on the 10th of August was based on accusations of violating terms of his release by conducting provocative religious gatherings. Even when various versions of the exact details surrounding Ponda's arrest have circulated through the media, eyewitnesses report unanimously that Sheikh Pon-

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

da was unarmed as he was overpowered by armed police and badly injured. Ponda, who was still dazed from the operation, was taken in a surprise police action from his sickbed to pre-trial detention. After his attempt to be bailed out was denied by the court on September 16th, he is now waiting for the final trial.

Hundreds of sympathizers gathered after Sheikh Pondas arrest following the initiative of the Council of Muslim Organizations in Tanzania in order to collect donations for medical treatment costs and legal fees.¹³ Demands for an official apology from the government for the insult of their religious leader were spoken out just as loud as proclamation that these recent events are just part of the concentrated efforts of the government to weaken Islam in the country. This argumentation links to the idea that Christians have been preferentially treated at the cost of the Muslims since the founding of the state of Tanzania. Founding father Mwalimu Julius Nyerere has been accused of allegedly discriminating against Muslims through the implementation of a Christian agenda. And a large portion of the Muslims in Tanzania is convinced anyway that Muslims were the actual proponents of independence.

Sheikh Ponda's case is embedded in a process in which forms of derailed national violence, demoralization and religious radicalism kindle each other. It also manifests additionally the common practice of the criminalization of victims, which has become a mainstay of the government's dealings with its critics. The case of Sheikh Ponda is particularly complex due to his radical Islamist activism. In recent months the number of reported cases, in which force was used by the police against the civilian population, has risen considerably. The incumbent Prime Minister Mizengo Peter Pinda (CCM) defended this development as he proclaimed in parliament that agitators deserve to be beaten. At the objection that this stance is unconstitutional, he merely re-

sponded that the constitution is only applicable for law-abiding citizens.¹⁴ The significance of this statement from a high-level government representative hardly needs further comment.

Need for action

The power constellation has shifted radically since 2010; in the course of these changes, violent, religiously charged situations on Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania – which until this point has been known as a "haven of peace" in the otherwise conflict-rife sub-Saharan Africa region – have been increasing. Arson, hate sermons, religious protest marches, flyers with hate speech, conflicts about the right to slaughter, growing radicalization of Muslims but also the active proselytization of evangelical Christian denominations are characteristic of these developments. The most recent arson attack, the pelting of a Lutheran church in Seregea on the 23rd of August 2013 with self-made Molotov cocktails, thankfully did not result in any deaths or injuries. Connections between this occurrence and the pre-trial detention of Sheikh Ponda in the same district can only be speculated about. However the way that Islamic leaders like Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda are made into heroes as a result of misguided politics is worrisome. The potential of a further progression of religious radicalism and for transregional alliances with other ideological groups lies in precisely such a constellation.

There is very little research literature about Uamsho and other radical Islamist movements and preachers in Tanzania to date. Studies about possible cross-connections to the MRC movement in Kenya or to Islamic movements in sub-Saharan Africa are also rare and are then the product of military academies. Another widely unexplored topic is development work in Islamic countries and with Islamic organizations, in particular with regard to social radicalization. For the development of political concepts in the field of religious radicalization, a thor-

¹³ Mbashiru Katere: Hundreds rally behind Ponda, in: *The Citizen*, August 19th, 2013.

¹⁴ Peter Nyanje: Instigators of Chaos deserve a thorough beating, says Pinda, *The Citizen*, June 20th, 2013.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DANJA BERGMANN

October 25th, 2013

www.kas.de

ough understanding of the local-specific cultural, historical and political background is indispensable; language barriers can present hurdles in achieving these ends. In the case of growing religious tensions in Tanzania, very few studies exist based on the temporal proximity of the events in question.

The political course in Tanzania must be set anew. The support of interreligious dialogue both on the Tanzanian mainland as well as on Zanzibar are a crucial part of this process and today more important than ever before. Political concepts must be developed in order to bring members of the two main religious groups into conversation with each other beyond the hurdles of missing knowledge, misunderstandings, ignorance, and prejudices. Institutions must be founded that give each group their own voice and promote and moderate the understanding of the other group. Important above all is to identify and support moderate Islamist leaders such as Sheikh Fadhil Soraga, but likewise helpful contact persons in the multitude of Christian denominations. It is not too late. But it is high time for the Tanzanian government and its supporters within and outside the country to react to the numerous warning signs.