

DJIBOUTI: Border Posts

Data as of May 2018

The Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PRACT) Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funded a series of projects that seek to strengthen the Djiboutian Armed Forces' (FAD) ability to secure their borders and reduce border traffic related to terrorism. This report examines border security related to the construction of border posts, procurement of equipment, and training of border security personnel at five strategic border posts along the Somalia and Ethiopia borders.

Findings:

1. The border posts selected by the FAD for refurbishment contribute somewhat to CT operations. The refurbishments were appropriate did improve the functionality of the posts, but the majority of the illicit traffic is related to goods and immigration, rather than a direct terrorism connection.
2. The students the FAD selected completed the coursework and are using the skills and provided equipment. Upon initial implementation PAE discovered that students in both trainings possessed a lower level of basic knowledge than initially anticipated. The trainings covered all requisite material, but some FAD personnel noted that the trainings did not include some secondary equipment the project provided, creating a potentially dangerous situation. To account for this the implementer adjusted the courses to match student backgrounds and basic safety of the secondary equipment.

Recommendations:

1. State Department should conduct a needs assessment in conjunction with the FAD to ensure posts will be likely to directly contribute to deterring the counterterrorism threat before funding additional refurbishments.
2. Continue training and ensure that future trainings are tailored to the Djiboutian context, taking into account the potential additional time and resources to reach the desired capability level.
3. Future phases of the border post project will need to capitalize on U.S. government's (through PAE) lessons learned to include low basic education level of trainees and curricula recommendations from FAD leadership. The PRACT PKO team should provide implementers of future phases with Phase 1 and Phase 2 data insofar as that data helps the implementer to increase sustainment of the projects.