

Countering violent extremism in Kenya

Experiences and innovations

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Kenya is one of East Africa's most vulnerable countries when it comes to violent extremism and radicalisation. Both state and non-state actors have taken many measures to prevent these phenomena, particularly among the youth in Kenya's north-east and coastal regions. Overall though, interventions to deal with terrorism have remained largely unchanged for a decade. This report identifies some innovative programmes and the experiences of those involved in implementing them.

Key findings

- ▶ Terror attacks have decreased due to greater multi-agency action and community engagement. Focusing on security issues to counter violent extremism is not a step in the right direction.
- ▶ With the development of County Action Plans, coordination between the national and county governments has improved.
- ▶ Work is increasingly taking place at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels to counter violent extremism.
- ▶ The process of reviewing the national countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy has been slow.
- ▶ Both national and county governments have insufficient financial resources or capacity to effectively monitor the implementation of CVE policies.
- ▶ Short-term funding cycles to civil society organisations limit the sustainability of programmes.
- ▶ With the new pre-reporting measures of CVE programmes to the National Counter Terrorism Centre, there is less engagement between state and non-state actors.
- ▶ There has been less reporting by families and communities whose members have become radicalised, due to fear of being under surveillance.
- ▶ Emerging issues raised by those involved in CVE work include the plight of victims' families, expanding the role of women, unorthodox means of recruitment by extremists, the importance of information management and the need for efforts to be centralised and coordinated.

Recommendations

- ▶ The government should invest more in non-security approaches to fighting extremism in Kenya.
- ▶ There is a need to review the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, 2019 which amends the Prevention of Terrorism Act and designates the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) as the approval and reporting institution for all civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).
- ▶ The government should allocate human resource capacity and funding to communities and CSOs to implement the programmes of the national CVE strategy.
- ▶ The NCTC should fast-track the review of the national CVE strategy to incorporate the gender pillar.
- ▶ Government should designate an information management or command post where information and updates on security are shared with the public.
- ▶ Government should fast-track the release of the national Equalisation Fund to frontier counties that are at risk of recruitment by extremists. This will enable local development and economic initiatives targeting at-risk youth, women and vulnerable communities to be initiated and sustained.
- ▶ The government should, through the NCTC, focus on full implementation of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism through stakeholders such as the county governments and CSOs.

Introduction

The approaches adopted by state and non-state actors in addressing violent extremism in Kenya have evolved. Key actors include the government (both national and county), civil society organisations (CSOs), international organisations, development partners and the local communities.

Initially using military-based approaches, the government has over time embraced other more preventive approaches to usher in sustainable solutions to the crisis. This evolution has had various results and affected stakeholders differently. This study was designed to survey the experiences of various actors in their efforts to respond to countering violent extremism (CVE) policies and efforts to formulate new interventions in Kenya.

This report first outlines the methodology used for the study and states some of its limitations. It then gives a broader understanding of those involved in countering violent extremism in Kenya by categorising both state and non-state actors. Traditional approaches over the past decade used in addressing violent extremism are outlined, and following that are new approaches currently in place. The experiences of the stakeholders to these new approaches are discussed and a conclusion deduced.

Government has embraced preventive approaches that provide more sustainable solutions to terrorism

In sharing their experiences in CVE, various stakeholders intimated that the national government mentioned the benefits of coordination but also highlighted the lack of capacity in monitoring the implementation of policies and programmes. County governments interviewed for the study said they had inadequate financial resources to implement CVE policies and programmes.

The development partners have offered implementation support to both state and non-state actors but called for continued innovation in implementing the complex inter-related programmes on countering violent extremism.

CSOs specifically decried their limitations as outlined in the 2019 Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act that amended the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act. This amendment has given national government the control to first approve all the CVE policies and programmes of CSOs before they are implemented. CSOs lamented slow responses and the curtailing of their innovative methods in addressing violent extremism programmes.

The private sector posited that their involvement in community work had helped address the broader structural factors that had remained the key social drivers in curtailing extremism¹ over the past decade. This involvement has indirectly helped the sector to improve its business returns, if not in the short term, then in the long term.

This report also highlights five emerging issues in the actors' experiences and suggests that including communities in CVE and embracing more bottom-up approaches would ensure the sustainability of the CVE processes.

Methodology

Literature review

A literature review of broader issues of violent extremism was conducted with a focus on the development of Kenya's legal framework to counter-terrorism. This included books, journal articles, organisational and government reports, laws and regulations related to CVE, and media reports.

Field research

A scoping study was conducted in October and November 2019, where the experiences of the actors were narrated and a descriptive study design used. It used a qualitative methodology that encompassed in-depth understanding of the experiences of CVE actors in Kenya. The aim was to derive analysis from case studies of the actors and map out the new interventions put in place to address violent extremism.

A field study was conducted in the counties most affected by violent extremism while taking into consideration all the necessary sensitivities and anonymity. Stakeholder selection and interviews were as representative as possible with conscious efforts to include gender and diversity considerations for the

study. Primary data was sourced through one-on-one in-depth interviews with respondents.

Key findings of the study were validated by a workshop of experts in violent extremism and counter-terrorism on 7 November 2019 in Mombasa County.

Sample population and regions

A total of 73 respondents from six counties informed this research. The respondents were drawn from both state and non-state actors and the sampled counties were Mombasa, Kwale, Mandera, Garissa, Lamu and Kilifi. These counties offered different experiences that actors faced in addressing violent extremism. Snowball or chain-referral sampling was used to access other actors such as al-Shabaab returnees, individuals or unregistered groups who were doing notable work, albeit latently.

Table 1: Respondents of the study

Category	Total number
Local women	7
Community groups	5
CSOs	35
Development partners	5
Private sector	6
Government officials	15
Total	73

Field work and interviews

The field study involved administering a questionnaire that had both open- and closed-ended questions. The questions were designed to take stock of the country's trajectory in addressing violent extremism and what current actors' experiences had been.

Limitations

The limitations touched on analysing the impact of innovations used, insecurity as a limitation of not visiting specific parts of the counties sampled, and language as a barrier for interviews with key informants who couldn't speak English well.

Actors working to counter violent extremism

Many actors have implemented CVE policies and programmes in the six counties sampled. Key among them are the government (both the county and national), CSOs, interfaith groups, international organisations and the development partners. Others include the private sector, individuals and some unregistered local groups such as women's groups.

These CVE policies and programmes are implemented at three levels² that overlap in some instances, but not always, as indicated in the figure below. The primary level focuses on addressing the drivers of violent extremism within a society. The secondary focus is on reducing the risks individuals face to slow or restrict them from becoming radicalised. The tertiary level pays attention to people or groups who are already radicalised and may be actively engaged in violent extremism.

Most actors including the private sector, individuals and some unregistered local groups work particularly at the primary and secondary level. However, apart from national government, there is limited involvement of actors on the tertiary level targeting already radicalised members of society.

In most interviews, other actors raised concerns that the actions taken by government at this level – such as the use of force and lack of information – have had a cascading effect that inhibits the work they do at the other levels.

Figure 1: Levels of implementation

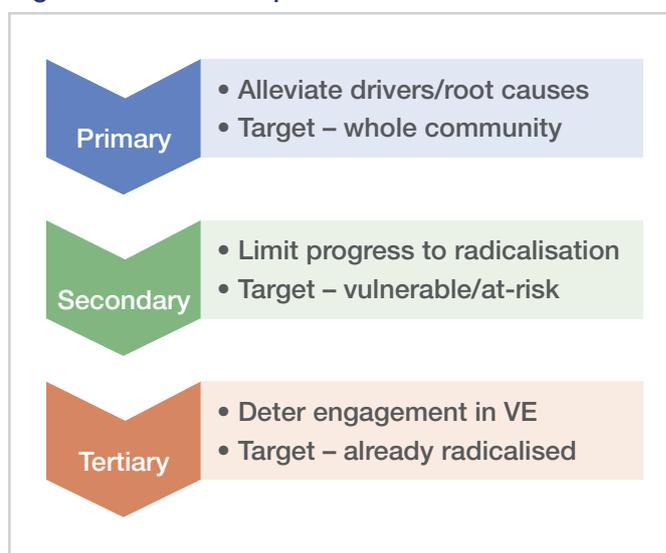


Table 2: CVE actors in Kenya

Organisation	Primary prevention level	Secondary prevention level	Tertiary prevention level
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing County Action Plans Ensuring equity in development Maintaining law and order Facilitating community policing Operationalising court user committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training Livelihood programme support Socio-welfare support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of vulnerable targets e.g. embassies, airports etc. Reintegration of returnees Reduce the porosity of land and sea borders Arrest suspects Maintain security Establishment of safe homes
Civil society organisations and interfaith groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public awareness and training Addressing inequities through community development programmes Advocating against sexual and gender-based violence Inter-religious dialogues Citizen mobilisation to community work Local environmental conservation efforts Peace messaging Developing counter-narratives Community policing Social support to socio-welfare groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livelihood improvement programmes Sports development initiatives Mentorship programmes Arts and culture events Economic empowerment programmes 	<p>[Desired]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reintegration of returnees Psychosocial support and post-trauma counselling General rehabilitation Gender-based violence responses Justice for peace initiatives Legal aid awareness and assistance
International organisations/development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing financial, technical and logistical support to CSOs and government Providing financial support to livelihood programmes Undertaking research Facilitating sensitisation, cross-learning and exchange programmes Providing training for government agencies 		
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipping schools Providing scholarships and bursaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills development e.g. adopt a village strategy (Kwale County) Providing local employment Supporting business start-ups and provide markets for locally produced commodities 	

Traditional approaches

Kenya has been a victim³ of violent extremism and terrorism for decades, with its first recorded incident in 1975 when a bomb in a Nairobi bus park claimed the lives of 25 people. The biggest terror incident in Kenya to date has been the 1998 US Embassy bombings where 213 lives were lost and 4 000 people injured. At the time there were no legal frameworks or institutions to directly address violent extremism, radicalisation or terrorism.

In response to the 2002 bombing of a hotel in the coastal town of Kikambala, Kenya established, under its then Department of Criminal Investigations, the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit.⁴ This was the first institution to mitigate and investigate terrorism-related cases. In 2003, Kenya drafted the Suppression of Terrorism Bill, where terrorism included crimes under the penal code such as robbery with violence. This definition was vague and the bill was withdrawn from Parliament amid public outcry and advocacy against its deficiencies.

The bill was amended and presented as the Anti-Terrorism Bill in 2006 but still had provisions that potentially threatened human rights and undermined civil liberties. For example, under Kenyan law,⁵ a person accused of a criminal offence is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. However, in the 2016 bill, innocence was no longer presumed – a person needed to prove their innocence at the time of the arrest and not in a court of law. This bill was rejected by the Parliament of Kenya.

After the 9/11 attacks, the United States rallied allies around the global war on terror.⁶ In 2003, the US\$100 million US-East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative⁷ was established to enhance the capacity of the police and judicial officers in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia to deal with terrorism.

This initiative led to the enactment of the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act, the first Kenyan law to guide the detection and prevention of terrorism and its related activities such as violent extremism and radicalisation.⁸ The act itself is also a domestication of many of the 19 United Nations (UN) counter-terrorism instruments and amendments.⁹

The act enhanced the capacity of criminal justice agencies including the judiciary, and one of its key

aspects was establishing an inter-ministerial committee on counter-terrorism financing. This multi-agency committee included key national law enforcement agencies and departments such as the Cabinet Secretaries of Internal Security, Foreign Affairs and Finance. Included were the offices of the Attorney-General, Governor of the Central Bank, Director of the Financial Reporting Centre, the Inspector-General of Police, the Director-General of the Kenya Citizens and Foreign Nationals Management Service and the Director of the National Intelligence Service.

These key law enforcement government departments and Kenyan military were responsible for executing all traditional approaches in combating violent extremism and terrorism. Other measures taken by the government at this time included the deregistration¹⁰ and suspension of funding to suspected organisations.¹¹

This process was not well received by non-state actors, with some civil society organisations saying they'd been unfairly profiled and targeted by government for speaking out against the use of excessive force in addressing violent extremism. Some foreigners working in Kenya were deported for directly or indirectly supporting violent extremism and sympathising with terrorism.

Kenya has been a victim of violent extremism and terror attacks since 1975

The main step Kenya has taken to address terrorism has been to deploy its military to Somalia in 2011,¹² and start building a perimeter wall between the borders of the two countries. This has led to increasing budget allocation to Kenya's national security.¹³

However, the 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act excluded the role of other actors such as CSOs and the media. It also subtly disregarded or failed to recognise radicalisation as a process that leads to violent extremism and terrorism. Other shortcomings of the act as pointed out by respondents included the assertion that the handling of terror suspects was not in line with international standards. This is regardless of the clear definition of what a terrorist act is under section 2 of the act.¹⁴

Police powers seem unrestricted and the state permitted itself to name terrorist individuals and organisations as established under sub-section 6 of the act. Respondents said some of these provisions crippled the operations of people and organisations who could help government address violent extremism and terrorism.

Other respondents of the study argued that the militarised approach wasn't enough to address the threat posed by extremists.¹⁵ Respondents acknowledged that while the use of force within the law against violent extremism groups was good, security forces' excesses against certain ethnic and religious communities and age groups were what drove communities to join extremist groups.

The CVE Strategy has nine pillars and is the first to acknowledge radicalisation as a process

Respondents also pointed out that the root causes of violent extremism included social exclusion, alienation and eroded community rights ushering in grievances and inequalities. Respondents further pointed out that these conditions led to extremists finding ample grounds to radicalise communities, especially the youth.

In 2014, with the amendment of the Security Laws Act, the government adopted a new CVE approach. This approach focused on rolling out interventions targeting the drivers of violent extremism and radicalisation. The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) was particularly responsible for the implementation of these new approaches. Placed in the Office of the President,¹⁶ its main task was to strengthen the coordination of counter-terrorism activities and processes in Kenya.

New approaches

President Uhuru Kenyatta launched the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) in September 2016.¹⁷ This strategy rallies citizens – including the social, business and religious sectors – to stand up against violent extremist ideologies and help reduce the reach of terrorist groups that seek to radicalise and recruit Kenyans. The strategy is the first to acknowledge radicalisation as a process. To achieve this, it acknowledges that it has to focus on

public-facing approaches that complement the efforts of law enforcement agencies, including the military and intelligence.¹⁸

In adopting other approaches to CVE, the NSCVE proposes nine pillars. These are: media and online, psychosocial, education, legal and policy, arts and culture, training and capacity building, political, faith based and ideological, and security.¹⁹

This was the first time Kenya's government acknowledged the inadequacy of military approaches to addressing violent extremism and associated radicalisation. By recognising different interlocutors, the government also invited non-state actors in addressing violent extremism.

While the security approaches conceptualised the problem from a purely security perspective and granted the security agencies the sole prerogative for addressing the situation, the NSCVE instead encourages a multi-sectoral approach. The approach rallies segments of Kenyan society to work together towards eliminating violent extremism. Also, all government ministries, departments, agencies and centres mandated to undertake the functions covered by the nine pillars of the NSCVE are involved in the process of countering violent extremism.

Stakeholders' experiences with new approaches

County governments

The NSCVE directs counties to develop County Action Plans (CAPs) to support national CVE efforts at the local level. CAPs are five-year strategic plans on how counties will proactively engage in preventing and countering violent extremism. Guided by the national strategy, CAPs are tailored to fit the context of each county. So far, six²⁰ of the 47 counties have developed CAPs.

The field study shows that there is increased cooperation between the national and county governments in jointly addressing violent extremism. This is fostered by the development of the CAPs and setting up subsequent CVE County Engagement Forums.

All the counties sampled in this study have created these forums, which are responsible for implementing their CAPs. County forums have representation from the

national and county governments, CSOs, the business community, religious leaders, elders and people living with disabilities, among others. They are co-chaired by both the county commissioner, who is a representative of the national government, and the governor, who heads a county government.

All the counties sampled have developed their CAPs and shared their experiences in doing so. Innovation and proactiveness were noted in Mombasa and Mandera counties. Most of their innovations are new and haven't been implemented fully. Thus this section only highlights some of these innovations, and this is a limitation of the study.

Mombasa County

Mombasa County adopted all the nine pillars of the NSCVE and added two more – the economic and women pillars. The county also has a draft policy and bill on resilience and prevention of violent extremism. These drafts are in the final stages before being tabled at the county assembly.²¹

The draft policy outlines the management of CVE through inter-sectoral dialogue and collaborations; promotion of trust between citizens and the police; improvements in data collection, analysis and information sharing among stakeholders; and response mechanisms.

The bill proposes to establish a CVE directorate that will administer and manage a CVE fund. This fund will be used to implement the Mombasa CAP. The bill also calls for preventing radicalisation through community engagement, outreach and capacity building. It lays out several ways of providing security, instilling safety and offering protection to the community. It also offers ways of educating, sensitising and training the different stakeholders engaged in CVE work in the county.

Mandera County

Mandera County launched its County Action Plan in April 2019. It marked a major boost in countering violent extremism in the county given its history of terror attacks by al-Shabaab. The respondent from the county noted that some planned activities in the Mandera action plan had been implemented. These include supporting youth with livelihood programmes and providing vehicles and stipends to Kenya Police Reserve members. This has

resulted in joint planning efforts of CVE actors including CSOs, national government, religious organisations and the community at large.

Mandera County has the Peace Actors Forum which incorporates more people working on peace and security. These two processes have seen a notable improvement of relations between the government and non-state actors.

All counties sampled had developed action plans with Mombasa and Mandera showing innovation

Achievements of the forums include the training of 600 county CVE champions from the 30 administrative wards in Mandera who are actively responding to the threat of violent extremism. This is through their advocacy with the youth and speaking out through different platforms such as programmes at local and vernacular radio stations on the dangers of violent extremism. Also, Mandera has been supporting the national police reservists by paying their stipends and issuing them with nine vehicles that are used to patrol the hot spot areas.²²

CSOs' experience

Several CSOs are working to reduce radicalisation and the effects of violent extremism. They include national organisations operating in all or some of the 47 counties. They also include registered community-based organisations working in education, social justice and environment among other areas related to the NSCVE pillars.

Generally, CSO interventions include community sensitisation such as youth mentorship and local radio stations broadcasting anti-violent extremism programmes; improving livelihoods; and offering psychosocial support to affected individuals. CSOs also work at improving community cohesion and relationships between the community and government.

Specifically, CSOs shared their innovative experiences in addressing violent extremism. Most of them offered community civic education on how to deal with conflict, violence and trauma. They focused on building support groups for young women who are returnees, or women

who have been affected by violent extremism to empower them to deal with the psychosocial effects.

Most of them have worked directly with the NCTC on the following: construction of a haven, shelter and resource centre in Mombasa with the view of receiving female survivors of violent extremism and trauma from all the 47 counties; advocating for amnesty for women and girls who are victims of violent extremism; and screening of returnees.

CSOs recorded benefits as well as problems in working with both national and county government. They said if they had a robust partnership with the government, this would give them legitimacy and ensure consistency of the designed efforts. However they observed that communication problems as well as coordination with the government could reduce the impact of their programmes with the community.

Faith-based organisations' experience

Interviews with faith-based organisations found that despite their religious inclinations, they had a common approach involving the use of intra- and interfaith dialogue as a tool to promote peace and security. The engagement of faith-based organisations in CVE is important as interpretation of religion has featured as a core factor that facilitates radicalisation. Religion also contributes to addressing extremism by inculcating values on humanity and integrity.

Robust partnerships with government would give CSOs legitimacy and ensure consistency of projects

The National Muslim Leaders Forum shared its experience in addressing violent extremism in Garissa. It has empowered religious leaders to take a leading role in preventing radicalisation in the county. They lead conversations in educational institutions and the County Engagement Forums and serve as the link between community and security agencies in the county.

These efforts have not only been recognised but awarded. For instance, the contribution of Sheikh Hassan Abdi Kambi in building the capacity of communities to prevent and counter violent extremism in Garissa County

was recognised through a presidential award on Mashujaa Day (20 October) in 2019. Also, religious groups such as Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics requested all religions in the coastal region to uphold tolerance and respect for human dignity. As such, violent extremism is essentially an antithesis to the core of all religions.

Private sector experience

The private sectors in the counties under study are also involved in CVE efforts under their corporate social responsibility. Violent extremism negatively affects the country's economy, particularly the private sector. For example enterprises, especially those in the food industry, need police escorts for their goods moving to the counties of Lamu and Mandera. This is because their transport vehicles are attacked and stolen by al-Shabaab.

The private sector becomes even more vulnerable when its businesses and enterprises are close to communities that are targets for attack or recruitment by extremists. Companies are reluctant to invest in certain counties such as Mandera and Garissa that are targets. Companies often complain of reduced numbers of customers when a terror attack occurs. This forces them to invest in additional security measures, and higher insurance premiums then increase business costs.

Respondents from the private sector said they engaged other actors in countering violent extremism through their corporate social responsibility initiatives. For example, a company like Bamburi Cement Limited in Mombasa County supports local organisations to sensitise and build the capacity of communities as well as its staff in addressing violent extremism. It is evident from such activities that the private sector participates in the primary and secondary prevention levels. This includes offering public awareness and improving livelihoods for youth at risk of joining terrorist groups.

Nevertheless, private sector activities in CVE are largely ad hoc, and only when called upon, especially by government. Corporate social responsibility activities are not an end in themselves – they contribute to the larger company goal and objectives.

Community initiatives

There are many community initiatives²³ that contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism. These

include District Peace Committees, Nyumba Kumi Initiative (Know Your Neighbour), respected individuals in the community and local unregistered groups such as youth and women's groups. Localised efforts in CVE are fuelled by the dividing effects violent extremism has on and between families, and in society generally.

For example Nyumba Kumi in Mombasa County organises neighbourhood monitoring and sharing of information on new entrants with the local chief, as well as immediate reporting of suspicious items that are ferried in or out of the locale. One Nyumba Kumi ambassador in Kisauni said the initiative provides timely early warning information to the police about pending security threats – for example suspicious teachings taking place in a religious forum.

Interviews carried out with individuals and unregistered groups indicated that they implemented their activities in CVE through registered organisations. The CSOs interviewed pointed out that including such individuals and unregistered groups enabled them to reach the 'hidden' population and also helped them embrace more bottom-up approaches in implementing CVE programmes.

International organisations

The assessment highlighted a few international organisations that were working in or funding CVE in the counties covered by the research. These organisations were linked to inter-governmental frameworks such as the UN or foreign funding agencies such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

After reporting, families with members who've joined terror groups face constant police surveillance

International organisations' main role is to fund and offer technical support in efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. Development partners are a pillar to the successful implementation of the CAPs, given that a lack of resources is a problem mentioned both by government and non-government CVE actors.

For instance, the Kenya NiWajibbu Wetu programme launched by USAID supported the development of CAPs in Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Nairobi and Wajir counties. Despite the limited engagement in tertiary prevention by

international organisations and development partners, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) shared its intervention programmes with returnees.

The IOM seeks to enhance community stabilisation and reintegration in the coastal and Somali border areas of Kenya through programmes that build the capacity of various groups for reintegration. Groups supported include returnees, small business owners, local authorities, youth and members of civil society. In 2017, the IOM 'provided 92 returnees and vulnerable youth at risk in Kwale, Kilifi and Mombasa counties with reintegration packages consisting of business development and vocational training, livelihood packages and reinsertion kits.'²⁴

Emerging issues

Five emerging issues emanated from the experience shared by actors in addressing violent extremism. These are the plight of silent families, the need for an expanded role of women in addressing extremism, the new means of recruitment used by extremists, the rising importance of information management in CVE and the need for centralised coordination of CVE policies and programmes.

Silent families

Respondents shared that families whose members are missing or have joined extremist groups find themselves in a difficult situation. Section 41 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act passes the responsibility of reporting to them by providing that:

41. (1) A person who has any information that is relevant in –
- (i) preventing the commission of a terrorist act; or (ii) securing the arrest or prosecution of another person for an offence committed under this Act, shall disclose the information to a police officer.²⁵

But they say that after reporting to the police, such families are put under constant surveillance. Staying in touch with family members who have joined extremist groups jeopardises their security with the government and their position in their communities.

Expanded role of women

Traditionally, women have been seen as victims of violent extremism given their experiences around, for example,

abductions, sexual violence, forced pregnancies and marriages.²⁶ The UN Security Council 1325 lauds the involvement of women in peace and security processes and calls for their expanded role as parents, detectors of early signs, mentors, leaders in civil society, government and community initiatives, among others.²⁷

In line with this, this study found that women can play several roles in countering extremism. Respondents said women were seen as being sensitive, intuitive and also nurturers and caretakers of community members and children. Therefore they have the opportunity to teach values as well as identify changes in children when they arise. This early intervention by mothers helps stop any desires by children to join violent extremist groups. As such they are in a position to detect signs that may show a person is being radicalised.

Also, women are on the front line of defence in detecting early signs of radicalisation among their family and friends. Given their position as caretakers in communities, they are often the first people to notice subtle changes in behaviour, attitudes, social networks or emotional responses.

Tailored campaigns use social media outlets to radicalise and eventually recruit members

Women are leading efforts to enhance public awareness on preventing violent extremism. For instance, one women's group – Moving the Goalposts – that was interviewed for this study prevents extremism by composing and singing songs that discourage radicalisation. It is also building girls and young women's resilience against violent extremism through football. It also provides livelihood skills training and financial independence for young women engaged in its sports programme in Kilifi, Mombasa, Kwale and Tana River counties.

Women lead CVE processes within their communities in an effective way. There is increased inclusion of women in various structures that deal with CVE such as community policing and the Nyumba Kumi Initiative. The county government has also incorporated women in leadership. The director of CVE in Mombasa County is a woman.

Civil society women's organisations have lobbied and advocated for reviewing both the national strategy and the County Action Plans on CVE by including the gender pillar. The Coast Education Centre is a non-governmental organisation working in Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale counties. The centre collected signatures from six counties (Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu, Tana River and Garissa) to petition for the inclusion of the gender aspects in the national strategy.

Women are actively helping at-risk people as well as already radicalised people to reduce their vulnerability. Most CSOs interviewed pointed out that women had supported each other in social, psychological and economic ways through setting up safer spaces such as cooking clubs where women could discuss cross-cutting issues to addressing violent extremism.

New means of recruitment

The study revealed that patterns of recruitment have evolved in response to counter-terrorism initiatives. Recruitment has evolved from the traditional to more unorthodox ways. While extremists reached out to potential candidates using religious-based ideologies, potential candidates are now reaching out to extremists.²⁸ Also, there has been a shift from using the face-to-face technique to recruiting candidates by spreading a tailored campaign using social media outlets to radicalise and eventually recruit.

The study also found that extremist groups piggyback on CSOs' power to mobilise to establish contact with unsuspecting youths to recruit them. A case in point was one related by the CSO Kwacha that implements CVE programmes in communities in several coastal counties of Kenya. One of their youth forums on economic empowerment was infiltrated by al-Shabaab members who gained access to the list of participants.

After the workshop, al-Shabaab invited these participants to another forum claiming to undertake a similar programme under the same organisation. One of the participants called the Director of Kwacha to confirm whether the organisation was offering this lucrative scholarship where participants could travel to learn more about entrepreneurship. This was reported and investigations were launched by Kenya's Directorate of Criminal Investigations. It was later discovered that the

conveners of the forum may have been part of the al-Shabaab group.

Other key changes have been noted in the manner in which recruitment is carried out. These are shown in Table 3 below.

Information management

Information management is emerging as a critical tool for preventing and countering violent extremism. Privileged information on pending terror attacks is often leaked to the public, and extremist groups use this to keep the public fearful. Information on pending terror attacks that becomes public causes panic. For example a foreign country or international organisation may issue information advising its citizens or employees to restrict their movement in certain places. Citizens receive this information not knowing where it came from or what the intention was of its source.

Central coordination of CVE efforts

Although there was increasing coordination by CSOs in using other approaches to address violent extremism, the new legislative requirements for NCTC reporting restrict CSO operations and thus their effectiveness. The new NCTC approving and reporting procedures as outlined in the Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019 have posed several challenges for CSOs. CSOs are already being regulated by the government NGOs Coordination Board. Now they have to report to the NCTC – another government agency.

All the CSOs interviewed said one of their cross-cutting roles was to provide oversight of government agency activities. The oversight role may not be done accurately with the new reporting measures, as they now have to work under the directive of the NCTC. The CSOs also pointed out that they work as the voice of the people

Table 3: Patterns of recruitment

Organisation	2000–2010	2010–2020
Basis for recruitment	Religious ends, future promises done mostly through religious teachings to secure the will of the individual to engage	Liberation narratives, immediate benefits and cover-up strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secular educational scholarships • Karate and judo clubs • Planned marriages by extremists where an individual marries on behalf of the extremist on the battlefield • Travel agents recruiting people by tricking them for conventional jobs overseas • Forced/involuntary/lured disappearances (In Malindi, a tailor was asked to make clothes and deliver them in Garissa. Upon delivery, she was abducted and ended up in a violent extremist training camp.)
Direction of recruitment	Extremist seeks potential recruits	Recruit reaches out to extremist for economic gain. Many extremist groups recruited online. At-risk people could connect with the groups as well as their supporters and sympathisers via social media
Mode of recruitment	Peer-to-peer recruitment	Data mining: Mega data and digital footprints are being used to locate and manipulate potential candidates into being recruited. This data aids in crafting recruitment campaigns that are highly tailored to the socio-economic and educational status of the target individual or group. These campaigns are later executed in person or online. Such methods partially account for wider geographic coverage of extremist groups
Target	Infiltrate countries	Infiltrate CVE efforts

and should therefore have autonomy in planning and implementing their programmes. Regulations under the NGO Coordination Board imply that CSOs working in the CVE sector should report to two government agencies for them to work.

Conclusion

Kenya has gained more experience in managing violent extremism and radicalisation over the years. The country has also experienced greater security and reduced terror attacks due to various multi-agency engagements and operations. Kenya's stakeholders have developed critical capacity and experience in the prevention and countering of violent extremism and radicalisation. There is improved collaboration between the various stakeholders at both national and county levels.

Using foreign military counter-terrorism strategies could erode gains made thus far

Kenya has also made strides in reducing both legal and operational gaps in preventing and countering violent extremism. But actors, especially non-state, point out that much still needs to be done. In their advocacy to incorporate innovation on tactics of addressing extremism, non-state actors have called on state actors to enable an environment that nurtures multiple approaches to combat terrorism.

However, for sustained peace and social cohesion, the country needs to have more robust engagements at national, county and at-risk community levels, especially in the frontier²⁹ counties that are in the northern and coastal parts of the country. The informal settlements in Nairobi and Mombasa should not be neglected.

Additionally, the country needs to build on successes and best practices that have been realised. It also needs to nurture greater support and coordination with local faith-based organisations, CSOs, communities and counties in

the effective roll-out and implementation of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, and importantly the implementation of the County Action Plans.

The country should nurture other home-grown approaches to prevent and counter radicalisation and extremism. There is a need for greater investment of youth and woman empowerment in at-risk counties as well as injections of resources in previously marginalised counties and communities.

After 10 years of continuous practice, non-state actors have called on the amendment of key provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act that guide on the reporting mechanisms of violent extremism work. Also, in the legal framework, all non-state actors have suggested amending the national CVE strategy by including different pillars such as gender.

Synergy is needed between state and non-state actors. This will go a long way in generating information sharing and joint programming as directed by the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. However, short funding cycles and capacity in all its forms have hindered the work actors have been doing in CVE.

Development partners have continued to call for increased innovation in CVE programmes. However, they too have a role to play by supporting existing and new programmes done by both state and non-state actors.

Caution should be exercised in accepting foreign military counter-terrorism strategies that could be counter-productive and erode the gains that have been made.

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