



## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF KENYA'S COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES SINCE 1998

**Dr. Joseph Wamocho Nasongo**

Commissioner, National Cohesion and Integration and Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, MMUST, Kenya

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### Abstract

Terrorism is a contemporary security threat not only to Kenya but also the international community of nations. Measures put in place to combat this threat by individual nations and the international community have achieved varied results. Whereas to a significant extent, successes have been realized, terrorism continues to threaten security due its dynamic and fast evolving nature. This study embarked on an examination of the counter terrorism measures since 1998. The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures put in place by the Kenya government since 1998. Within the context of qualitative research paradigm and explanatory research design, the researcher adopted historical research method. The sources for data included: journals, internet data bases on terrorism, newspaper articles, text books, position papers on the subject, government policy documents, status papers on terrorism from the national counter terrorism centre, theses and projects reports. The findings of the study revealed that terrorism is real as evidenced by series of attacks that have led to over 1000 deaths, thousands of injuries and destruction of property. The trends of terror attack followed a pattern and the tempo of attacks increased markedly after KDF invaded Southern Somalia in 2011. It was also established that the combined efforts of AMISOM and support from the international community has succeeded in uprooting Al-Shabaab from its strongholds, but continue to be lethal operating in smaller groups using new tactics. With regard to Kenya's counterterrorism measures, it was established that the country has put in place a range of measures. They include: expansion of number of security forces, acquisition of new skills and technical expertise, purchase of sophisticated military hardware, improved intelligence gathering capacity, establishment of centralized command system, enactment of legislations, and more importantly, development and implementation of national strategy for countering violent extremism that is all inclusive. There is also increased funding to the security sector. International support has also been invaluable. The support has ranged from shared intelligence, military training, sharing of experiences, fiscal support, and technology transfer. In conclusion, the study observes that the threat of terrorism is far from being won. The resolve to defeat the terrorists must be sustained through alleviation of structural causes of violent extremism, step up strategies of countering violent extremism to complement military and security operations approaches.

### Background of the study

Terrorism activities in Kenya can be traced to 1976 when the plot by the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Baader-Meinhof group to shoot down an El Al passenger plane during a scheduled stopover in Nairobi, was discovered and thwarted by prior intelligence sharing between Israel and Kenya security personnel (Mogire and Agade, 2011). This was followed by an attack by the PFLP on Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi in 1980, killing 15 people. This attack was in revenge for Kenya's assistance to Israel during the rescue operation to free hostages at Entebbe Airport in Uganda (Ibid). The year 1998 is significant in the analysis of terrorism trends and national counterterrorism measures because it marked the first major terror attack in Kenya that targeted the US Embassy. In this incident, 213 people lost their lives. This was followed by the terrorist attack on an Israeli-owned Paradise hotel and the surface-to-air missile attacks on an Israeli airliner taking off from the Mombasa airport in in 2002. At the Paradise hotel, 13 people died and several were injured.

Due to continued sporadic terrorist activities in the country and the attendant negative effects on tourism industry, the government decided to sanction military invasion of Somalia in 2011. The objective was to strike



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at the source of the transnational terrorism and eradicate the Al Shahab terror menace. However, Terrorist incidents have continued to rise both in magnitude and the daring nature through which they are mounted. Since 2012, terrorist attacks have increased and killed over 600 people in Kenya.

Some of the major terrorist attacks that Kenya has experienced since the KDF invasion of Somalia include the Westgate Shopping Mall on 21 September 2013. Armed gunmen stormed the mall, killing at least 69 people and injuring more than 175. In late 2014, two terrorist attacks killed 64 persons in Mandera County. The first incident was an attack by gunmen on a bus traveling from Mandera to Nairobi, that killed 28 persons (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014), mostly teachers and government workers heading to Nairobi for the December holidays. In the second incident, Al-Shabaab militants attacked and killed a further 36 quarry workers, many of whom were non-Muslims, near Mandera Town (2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2014). The worst terrorist attack since 1998 bombing of the US embassy was the massacre of 147 students of Garissa University College. The daring attack shocked the entire nation and world at large.

Besides the major terrorist attacks alluded to, there have been a series of attacks in the country. These terror attacks have rendered the citizenry extremely fearful and uncertain of their security. Various incidents of fearful reactions to accidental explosions by university students have been reported. Such commotions in frightful escape have led to injuries and even deaths; indicators that fear of terrorists are real.

In response to these terrorist attacks, the government has put in place counter terrorism measures. The general perception of the public is that these measures are inadequate. In reality, terror attacks have not been contained by the various measures put in place, an indication that more needs to be done to secure the country.

### Statement of the Problem

Terrorism is a contemporary security threat that affects many governments around the world. It has gained international attention because of its overall effect on nation-states and societies. Kenya has experienced numerous terrorist incidents that have resulted to loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property, general disruption of peace and security. These attacks have posed a challenge to national security systems, with regard to preparedness, capacity and the efficacy of national counter terrorism policy.

Terrorism incidences in Kenya demonstrate clearly that terrorism is, and will remain, one of the government's main security concerns. These terrorist attacks are not usually ad hoc, they conform to certain patterns and techniques. The implication of the shifting terrorist approaches is that counter terrorism measures ought to be comprehensive and dynamic as well.

Therefore, the task of this study was to analyse terrorism trends in Kenya since 1998 and examine the efficacy of counterterrorism measures put in place to combat the menace.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures put in place by the Kenya government since 1998.

### Research Question

The research question that guided the study was the following.

What measures has the Kenya government put in place to counter terrorism and how effective have these counterterrorism measures been in combating terrorism since 1998?

### Significance of the Study

An investigation into the efficacy of counter terrorism measures adopted by the government is a worthwhile task. The study contributes to existing knowledge on the subject and enhances the understanding of practitioners, scholars and general public on terrorism in Kenya. This undertaking involves suggestions on ways to refine and strengthen counterterrorism measures and therefore makes a contribution towards strengthening the war on terror.



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### Theoretical Framework

The study was contextualized within three main theories of terrorism. These are Relative Deprivation, Social Distance and Contagion theories.

**Relative deprivation** is a term used in social sciences to describe feelings or measures of economic, political, or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute. The term is inextricably linked to the similar terms poverty and social exclusion. The concept of relative deprivation has important consequences for both behaviour and attitudes, including feelings of stress, political attitudes, and participation in collective action (Merton, 1939, Gurr, 1970).

Social scientists, particularly political scientists and sociologists, usually cite relative deprivation as a potential cause of social movements and deviance, leading in extreme situations to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars and other instances of social deviance such as crime (Merton 1939, Gurr, 1970).

American sociologist Robert K. Merton was among the first (if not the first) to use the concept of relative deprivation in order to understand social deviance, using French sociologist Emile Durkheim's concept of anomie as a starting point. In defining relative deprivation theory, Runciman (1966) noted that there are four preconditions of relative deprivation (of object X by person A):

- Person A does not have X
- Person A knows of other persons that have X
- Person A wants to have X
- Person A believes obtaining X is realistic

Deprivation Theory assumes that people who are deprived of things deemed valuable in society, whether money, justice, status or privilege, join social movements with the hope of redressing their grievances. The theory is relevant to the study in terms of the contextualization of factors that promote recruitment and motivations to terrorism actions. Terrorist groups tend to have common uniting grievances and ideologies that they seek to achieve, and a kind of social political and or religious order that they aspire to establish. They consider the state and its citizenry as obstacles that should be eradicated at all costs to realize their aspirations.

**Social distance and terrorism theory:** This theory emanates from sociological theories of violence and social geometry and aptly explains the occurrence of 'pure' or mass casualty terrorism. The point of departure is that long-standing grievances alone cannot explain extreme violence. Hence, one needs to identify the sociological interrelationships between the terrorists, their grievances, and their enemies – or the 'social geometry' of the actors (Black 2004: 18). Senechal de la Roche (1996: 118-22) has proposed that terrorism is most likely to occur under conditions of high levels of 'social distance' or 'social polarization' between perpetrators and victims, including a high degree of cultural and relational distance, inequality, and functional independence.

Donald Black (2002, 2004) identifies other social distances as well, adding for example that terrorism has an 'inter-collective' direction: terrorists strike against civilians associated with another collectivity, be it another ethno-religious group or foreign nationals. Terrorism also has an upward direction; terrorist attacks are directed against targets symbolizing the central government, a dominant enemy regime, or a socio-economically or politically superior community. Thus, terrorism represents in a sense 'social control from below' (Black 2004: 19). Black further explicates that terrorism arises inter-collectively and upwardly across long distances in multidimensional social space (ibid.19). In other words, terrorism in its most destructive form is most likely to occur when perpetrators are as socially removed from the victims as possible. Black formulates this as follows (ibid.) and the greater the social distances, the greater their destructiveness. An excellent social location for highly destructive terrorism thus would be a grievance against a powerful nation-state by a group ethnically and otherwise extremely far away in social space, such as the indigenous people of a colonial society or members of another society.'

This theory applies to the current study in two ways: First, terrorist activities in Kenya have foreign roots thus making it transnational in nature. Its main source is the failed state of Somalia that has had no government since early 1990s. The terror group Al Shabaab has links with Al Qaeda terrorist group whose operational base is in



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the Persian Gulf region. In addition, targets of terrorism have involved non Moslems, thus emphasizing the religious divide. It is also important to state that Kenyan recruits into the terror group have emanated mainly from Coast and North Eastern regions that have perennial grievances of deprivation, oppression and exploitation. Recruits from other parts of Kenya are mainly recent converts to Islam that are radicalized to advance the interests of the Al Shabaab.

**The contagion theory of terrorism:** This theory emanates from the psycho-sociological research tradition. It holds the view that terrorism is 'contagious'. A number of studies have demonstrated that the occurrence of terrorist attacks is far from random, rather, there is a clear trend of periodical cycle in the occurrence of terrorist attacks, or waves of terrorism (Redlick 1979; Midlarsky et al 1980; Weimann and Brosius 1988; Bjørge 1997). A high level of terrorism in one month is likely to be followed by few incidents in the next month, suggesting that the decision by terrorist groups to launch an attack is influenced by similar attacks elsewhere, hence, the 'concept of contagion'. These periodic 'waves' of terrorism may be partly explained by the desire of terrorists to guarantee newsworthiness and consequently, media access (Weimann and Brosius 1988: 500). According to Weimann and Brosius (1988), there is 'accumulating empirical evidence pointing to the contagiousness of terrorism' with regards to the timing of terrorist attacks.

This theory is relevant with regard to development of counter terrorism measures that ought to be responsive to patterns, rhythm and intensity of terror attacks. Knowledge of the contagious nature of terrorism will assist in preparedness, pre-emptive and prevention measures as well as defensive readiness to mitigate on impact of likely attacks.

### Research Methodology

This section encompasses subsections including research paradigm, research design, methods, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a set of beliefs or assumptions that guide research. In this study, qualitative research paradigm was adopted since the study will be confined to non-statistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomenon. Qualitative data refers to some collection of words, symbols, pictures or other non-numerical records, materials, or artefacts that are collected by a researcher and is data that has relevance to the social group under study. The use of these data goes beyond simple description of events and phenomenon; rather they are used for creating understanding, for subjective interpretation, and for critical analysis as well (McNabb, 2005). Qualitative research involves inductive, theory- generating, subjective and non-positivist processes.

#### Research Design

The research design for this study was explanatory research design. According to Schwandt (1997), explanatory research studies are conducted to develop a causal explanation of some social phenomenon. A researcher identifies a social event or circumstance such as crime or terrorism for investigation. The researcher then seeks to identify characteristics or variables that can be explained. This design aims at building theories that researcher can use to explain a phenomenon, and predict future behaviour or similar circumstances. Therefore, the ultimate goal of explanatory research is the control of natural and social events (White, 1999). This design is suitable for this study because the focus has to do with a social phenomenon with cause and consequence relationships. On the one hand, the study investigated trends of terrorist attacks in Kenya and on the other hand, examined counter terrorism measures put in place to respond to these attacks. In order to determine the effectiveness of the counter terrorism measures, the researcher utilized elements of interpretive and critical designs, only to the extent that they aided in clarifying and interrogating them.

#### Research Methods

The study was basically Library based. Typical of library research, the step-by-step process used to gather information included the search, identification and perusal of written documents. The selection of documents was dictated by the research topic, objectives and theoretical framework of the study. In the process of reading



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the documents, it was imperative to back up/save, revise, add additional material while ensuring that the data/information gleaned from the documents sufficiently addressed the objectives of the study.

The research process itself involved identifying and locating relevant information, analysing the materials, arranging the data according to themes and the scope to which the data responded to the objectives of the study.

As it is normal with library research, focus was on **secondary sources of data meaning; the information had already been generated and documented.**

The study opted to rely on secondary sources because such sources usually describe, analyse, and/or evaluate information found in primary sources. By repackaging information, secondary sources make information more accessible. Examples of secondary sources are books, journal and magazine articles, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, handbooks, periodical indexes, and reviews.

In the study, library research approach was preferred was due to several reasons: The study was historical in the sense that the phenomenon examined took a historical perspective. Terrorism and counterterrorism measures put in place by the government of Kenya covered a time period starting from 1998 up to 2018. Also, the phenomenon of terrorism is rather sensitive and risky to undertake empirical research on. The perpetrators tend to be highly secretive and dangerous to interact with, victims of terrorism tend to be fearful and traumatized and security operators seldom disclose the strategies personnel and equipment deployed to counter terrorism.

In addition, the study was conceptualized within the ex post facto category, meaning; the focus of research was on terrorism realities that had already occurred and the government's response to terrorism. The researcher therefore was not able to manipulate variables. In simple terms, the independent variable in the study context comprised acts of terror while depended variables included the various forms of responses and mechanisms put in place to contain terrorism. Overall, the nature of the study as well as the objective and study question was inclined towards library based and historical approach. As such, the source materials for the study were gleaned from text books, journal articles, thesis, research reports, Computer search engine sources, and newspapers.

Two specific methods were used in the study. These were historical research method and document analysis. Historical research method requires gathering of data, evaluation of data, and the presentation of the facts, in interpretations and conclusions that the researcher draws from the facts (Hockett, 1958). McDowell (2002), spells out specific steps that historical researcher must observe. He categorizes the steps into three:

First, planning of the research (selection of subject, precise definition of subject, identification of source materials, identify methods, background reading

Second, gathering and interpretation of data: draft outline, peruse source materials, review research notes, draft outline of chapters, and complete the survey of sources of materials. Third, involves writing and presentation of the findings.

This method was suitable for this study because the study predominantly involved the study of a historical phenomenon that has had great negative impact on security. The study befitted adoption of a historical analysis of counterterrorism measures in Kenya since 1998 in the light of the responses mounted at every stage: structural, defensive and offensive measures.

With regard to document analysis method, it is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment of a topic (Bowen, 2009). Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed. (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis requires that the researcher must go through a detailed planning process in order to ensure reliable results. O'Leary (2014) outlines an 8-step planning process that should take place not just in document analysis, but all textual analysis. The steps include creating a list of texts to explore, consider how texts will be accessed with attention to linguistic or cultural barriers, acknowledge and address



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biases, develop appropriate skills for research, consider strategies for ensuring credibility, know the data one is searching for, consider ethical issues (e.g., confidential documents) and have a backup plan. In document analysis method, the questions of how many documents the researcher should gather usually arise. Bowen (2009) suggests that a wide array of documents is better, but more attention should be more about quality of the document rather than quantity,

O'Leary (2014) also introduces two major issues to consider when beginning document analysis. The first is the issue of bias, both in the author or creator of the document, and the researcher as well. The researcher must consider the subjectivity of the author and also the personal biases he or she may be bringing to the research.

### Data Collection Procedure

The researcher focused on the following sources for data collection: journals, internet data bases on terrorism, newspaper articles, text books, position papers on the subject, government policy documents, status papers on terrorism from the national counter terrorism centre, thesis and projects related to the study.

Bearing in mind the import and criteria of using historical and document analysis methods, the researcher identified and categorized various written documents according to themes as they related to objectives of the study. The content of each of the written documents was examined while noting down the relevant data that answered the research questions responded to the objectives of the study. The data was then organized in a logical manner with regard to categories and time lines within which the terror attacks took place and what counter terrorism measures were put in place by the Kenya government.

Internet based documents were downloaded and filed appropriately in a manner that would make retrieval easy. Some were printed and filed appropriately for reading, analysis and interpretation. The research process involved careful, focused reading and re-reading of data, as well as coding and category construction as articulated by (Bowen, 2009). The researcher also paid close attention to a high level of objectivity and sensitivity in order for the data collected to be credible and valid.

While storing the source texts, attention was put on the authors and citation details to ensure that citations and final referencing was made possible as expected for a scholarly piece of work.

### Data Analysis

Data was critically analysed and cross examined so as to render a logical discussion on the trends of terrorism and how Kenya government has responded to these phenomena. Themes were derived from the data and presented according to the objectives of the study. Analysis also involved identification and discussion of the trends in terror attacks in Kenya, discussion on Government of Kenya responses, examination of international support, critical assessment of effectiveness of counter terrorism measures, an elucidation of the gaps in the counterterrorism measures and making of logical recommendations.

### Ethical considerations

The study was undertaken with special consideration to the fact that terrorism is a sensitive national security subject that is not easily open to primary data from security agencies. In cases where access is granted, information is supposed to be kept secret lest security is compromised. In addition, the central actors involved in the phenomenon are difficult to access – and extremely difficult to access in a systematic manner: be they security personnel or combatants. For these reasons, the researcher relied on secondary data sources that are accessible and permissible to the public.

### Research Findings, interpretation and Discussions

The first line of counterterrorism measures that governments tend to put in place is use of military force. Security organs tend to swing into action to detect, disrupt and dismantle the terrorist capabilities. Military action is one of the tools available to counterterrorism and is the most effective measure to physically eliminate terrorists. Military action as witnessed in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan where Al Qaeda



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structures were dismantled and many terrorists were killed or captured tends to minimize and weaken terrorist networks.

However, military actions are at times counterproductive. Instead of serving as deterrents, such strikes serve to advance some of the political and organizational purposes of terrorist leaders; increase publicity for their cause; bolster their sense of importance; and reinforce the message that the United States is an evil enemy that knows only the language of force. In the final analysis, such strikes are almost always message-sending exercises rather than a means of significantly crippling terrorist capabilities (Aden, 2005).

Between 1998 and 2002, Kenya government considered itself a victim of transnational terrorism that targeted foreign interests in the country. It viewed terrorist operatives as foreigners targeting Israeli and Western interests in Kenya. It considered its primary responsibility to be maximum cooperation with America's FBI and Israel's Mossad plus other western intelligence networks in hunting down suspected terrorists. For instance, after the 1998 US Embassy bombing, the GoK fully cooperated with the US government in intelligence sharing and in giving US investigators access to investigate the incident. The government also helped apprehend and hand over the suspects to US investigators to stand trial in the United States. Apart from the United States, the GoK approached the Israeli government to obtain its assistance in rescue operations. This was followed by the dispatch of rescue teams and intelligence agencies to help track those responsible for the attacks (Aden, 2005).

During this period, Kenya's intelligence network was ill-equipped to detect and track down terrorist suspects. There were also major weaknesses in the immigration department that allowed foreign nationals of questionable character to enter the country on fake documents and even acquire citizenship. Such individuals assimilated themselves into the local communities at the coast of Kenya due to common religious affiliations, and in the process promote their terrorist activities. Because of institutional corruption that has persisted in the country, a person could easily obtain Kenyan national identity cards, passports, birth certificates, or other documents through Kenya's black market. Terrorists can exploit such loopholes to enter the country disguised as immigrants, tourists, or businessmen.

Another area exploited by terrorists was the lack of security awareness at the country's entry points. The ease with which Mohammed Saddig, a terrorist who was traveling on a fake passport, left Nairobi via the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on 6 August 1998 (later arrested at Karachi airport in Pakistan), is evidence of inefficiency on the part of the Immigration Department. Corruption within the Kenyan police force in the 1990s was rampant; failure of effective law enforcement also contributed to the problem. The police force was so ill-equipped it could not respond to emergencies because of a basic lack of transportation and communication resources (Aden, 2005)

Lack of appropriate and effective domestic legislation on terrorism-related issues, hindered initial post 1998 terror attack period. It was until parliament came up with the Suppression of Terrorism Bill 2003 that a semblance of proposed legislation came to be. The bill was similar to the US Patriot Act. It was vehemently opposed by individuals, human-rights organizations, Muslim organizations, and some parliamentarians who feared it would infringe on basic human rights and target specific communities, especially the Muslim community (Aden, 2005). The delayed process of formulating legislation delayed fully fledged war against terrorism in the country. Terrorist suspects of foreign origins who were arrested tended to be extradited to other jurisdictions for prosecution. Suspects of Kenya citizenship were prosecuted using the general criminal law. It was until 2012 that the Kenya government enacted the prevention of terrorism act. It is surprising that the country took fourteen years since 1998 to come up with legal frame work to combat terrorism. Kenya's counterparts in the region enacted antiterrorism laws way back in 2002. Tanzania adopted its Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2002 and Uganda enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2002 (Kagwanja, 2015). The delay to put in place legal architecture is indicative of the governments' reluctance to swiftly address the threat of terrorism. The enactment of the act of parliament came long after terror networks had become deep rooted not only in the country but also in the region. It is worth noting that counterterrorism legislation is an important instrument of an effective counterterrorism strategy, and any government confronted with the threat of terrorism should enact such legislation as soon as possible.



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The legislation framework in place to counter terrorism include: The 2012 Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2011 Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act, and 2010 Prevention of Organized Crime Act together provides a strong legal framework under which to prosecute acts of terrorism. Also, the Security Laws (Amendment) Act of 2014 (SLAA) amended 20 laws to strengthen Kenya's legislative framework to fight terrorism, including: criminalization of participating in terrorist training; establishing a framework for a coordinated border control agency; strengthening the mandate of Kenya's National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC); and broadening evidentiary standards to allow greater use of electronic evidence and recorded testimony in terrorism prosecutions (US Department of State, 2017).

With regard to security measures put in place to secure essential installations, the government has improved on security screening of people entering into strategic/ government/ institutional buildings and business premises. Checks must be undertaken before access is granted to individuals. Gaps in border security still exist due to expansiveness of the border lines. However, national identification and immigration systems have been put in place to prevent potential terrorists entering and leaving Kenya. Terrorist screening watch lists, biographic and biometric screening, and other measures are largely in place at major Kenyan ports of entry, but screening procedures are sometimes inconsistently or minimally applied, particularly at smaller border posts and airports (US Department of State, 2017).

Due to the process of strengthening their capacity, Kenyan security services have been able to detect and deter several terrorist plots and respond to dozens of claimed, or presumed, terrorism-related incidents.

Another measure that the government put in place to combat terrorism was the establishment of a task force on anti-money laundering and on the financing of terrorism (Khadiagala, 2004). The task force was to review existing legislation and come up with a draft of a national policy on combating the financing of terrorism. It was until 2011 that the proceeds of crime and anti-money laundering Act was legislated. The delay in putting in place this legal instrument can be said to have given room for the entrenchment of terror activities since undetected avenues of finance to such groups is dangerous to state security.

In terms of operations of security agencies in countering terrorism, for a long time there was lack of coordinated command of the security organs until 2015. Government counterterrorism functions were divided among the three branches of the National Police Service – the Kenya Police (including the paramilitary General Service Unit), the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (including the investigative Anti-Terrorism Police Unit, the Bomb Disposal Unit, and the Cyber Forensics Investigative Unit), and the Administration Police (including the Rural Border Patrol Unit) – as well as non-police agencies, such as the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and elements of the Kenya Defence Forces.

In May 2015, the government relocated NCTC, NIS, and the National Security Council to the Office of the President. As a result, interagency coordination improved, particularly in information sharing; however, shortages in resources and training, corruption among some personnel, and unclear command and control hindered operational effectiveness (US Department of State, 2017). The move to establish some form of crisis response command centre arose as a result of lessons learned from the 2015 attack at Garissa University College in which al-Shabaab terrorists killed at least 147 people. The siege and massacre continued for several hours since early morning till late afternoon when specialized police unit arrived from Nairobi to neutralize the militants. The delay in response was appalling given the fact that security agencies in Garissa including KDF were unable to neutralize and rescue the students.

The government has through the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) developed a comprehensive National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE). The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) is a multi-agency instrument primarily of security agencies built to strengthen coordination in counter terrorism. The NCTC was established in law by the Security Law Amendment Act 2014; however it had existed since 2004 when it was created by a decision of the Cabinet. The NSCVE strategy is geared to ensure that a holistic approach is put in place to support and supplement military and security operations. It is meant to add the





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critical dimensions of preventing, countering and reversing radicalisation, and engaging the public so that every Kenyan, and every community, resists violent extremism. The strategy is intended to coordinate the government and the broad spectrum of stakeholders in the design and implementation of CVE initiatives.

The CVE initiatives will add the critical dimensions of preventing, countering and reversing radicalisation, and engaging the public so that every Kenyan, and every community, resists violent extremism. Reflecting its public focus, this strategy has been developed through an inclusive, consultative process involving government agencies and county governments, religious leaders, civil society, the private sector, the research community, and regional and international partners. This strategy will coordinate the government and the broad spectrum of stakeholders in the design and implementation of CVE initiatives.

One significant gain in the development of the strategy was the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, whose views and suggestions have been taken on board. The national government and county government, including local community based organizations ensures that countering terrorism is not exclusively a military affair. Similarly, since the promulgation of the new constitution, and the coming to force of the two levels of government structure, county governments tended to keep off matters of security as a preserve of the national government. This scenario has proved injurious to national security. Local communities, particularly in opposition led counties, which happened to include the terrorism prone counties, tended to withhold cooperation and support to the security sector. The NSCVE therefore is a panacea to the problem since it requires each county to develop a customized implementation strategy of the action points of the NSCVE.

Another significant gain achieved by the NSCVE is the policy to have NCTC coordinate all activities related to CVE, including pooling together of resources, both national and development partners, and ensure that all actors are coordinated in their various CVE engagements. This approach is tenable since it prevents duplication as well as myriads of actors who attract donor funds, but fail to put them to intended use.

The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism has broad-based priorities such as countering violent extremist ideologies; promote patriotism for Kenya's nationhood; enhance GOK support to local communities that are targeted by violent extremists; develop radicalisation early warning and early intervention measures; rehabilitation and reintegration support for individuals who disengage from violent extremism; develop expertise in non-coercive approaches to CVE in the Government of Kenya; effective utilisation of law enforcement to deter and prosecute radicalisers; research on the evolution of violent extremist ideologies, organisational models, and radicalisation methodologies; and stakeholder action that offers clear pathways and guidelines for stakeholder engagement in CVE.

The merits of the CVE programs as envisaged in the NSCVE is the appreciation of the use of soft power approaches to counterterrorism. It recognises the truism that incorporating and mobilising societies affected by terrorism and other conflicts in finding lasting solutions to the problems is crucial. This approaches when utilized to complement military and judicial approaches is bound to realize better results in the war against terror. CVE also plays a significant role to enlighten Islamic communities' doctrinal and interpretational points of departure between mainstream and radicalised Muslims. In any case, the voluntary and informed buy-in by the mainstream groups is key in isolating harmless Islam and terror prone Islam that must be contained. The approach also helps to reduce possible recruitment pools of terrorists.

The various counterterrorism measures put in place have greatly contained large scale terrorist attacks within the country. Coupled with the ongoing AMISOM operations in Somalia, the terror group is greatly weakened. However, small pockets of the terrorists have continued to wage small scale attacks on communication masts, police patrol vehicles using IEDs, and attacks on civilian transport in Lamu County. The terrorists' attempt to create a foothold in Boni forest, Lamu County is the current threat that requires urgent but conclusive action. Left for too long, it may lead to regrouping of the terror group and energize them to spread havoc across coast region and beyond.



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### Conclusion

This paper has examined Kenya's counterterrorism measures put in place since 1998. It has been explicated that the government has made major strides in combating terrorism. It has put in place sufficient prevention of terrorism legislative architecture. Also, the military and other security capability has been greatly enhanced. This is not without enormous investments in hardware and skills at the expense of other competing expenditure needs. The government also tightened acquisition of Identifications and registration of people's procedures to weed out terror elements. Besides, immigration procedures and screening processes have been upgraded and tightened. Moreover, securities of institutions and installations have been tightened with CCTV cameras installed to aid in surveillance work. In addition, the government has greatly increased the number of security personnel through enhanced number of recruits trained annually. The training curriculum of security personnel has also incorporated counterterrorism tactics to ensure that all of them have capacity to respond.

The invasion of Somalia though noble in disorienting, uprooting and putting Al-Shabaab on the run, has had negative impact on Kenya's security due to increase in attacks, and change of style in attacks that have proved difficult to contain. Indeed 'Operation Linda Inchi'(Protect Nation) mission to Somalia can rightly be termed in the reverse as 'Operation HatarishaInchi' (Endanger Nation).

The initiative that has potential to reduce terrorism greatly is the holistic approach adopted through NSCVE. The strategy envisages participatory approach that is likely to bring to the fore the historical grievances that when addressed may reduce the intensity of terrorism threat. This may take time but ultimately will bear fruits.

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