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# POLICY BRIEF

Measuring Impact of CVE Efforts in Kenya

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CREATING  
A CVE INDEX

## SUMMARY

*The increase in terrorist attacks and the recruitment of individuals into terror gangs is one of Kenya's major security threats. These attacks have led to the death and injury of thousands and has had a negative impact on the economy. The result has been a flurry of activities to try and curb the spread of violent extremism and terrorism in the country. Measuring change and progress made by various stakeholders is an important element in the fight against terror. The creation of a CVE index is necessitated by increased interest in making Kenyan strategies more efficient and credible. The proposed CVE index seeks to provide a comprehensive framework to measure the influence of CVE efforts in the country. It is founded on the belief that the tracking and measuring of CVE activities should be conducted in the broader context of a region. The index works towards understanding the root causes of violent extremism and its contribution to the process of radicalization and recruitment. The tool seeks to understand and track change in the occurrence of violent extremism and terrorism in Kenya by looking at three key dimensions- the radicalization dimension, the resilience dimension and the cost of action dimension. The index works on the assumption that increased reliance on resilience factors will bare positive responses to reduce recruitment, increase rehabilitation and reintegration.*

## INTRODUCTION

Since 1975, Kenya has experienced a series of terror attacks which have resulted in over 900 fatalities and thousands of injuries.(1) The country has suffered a series of attacks conducted by an Al Qaeda affiliated organisation called Al-Shabaab. The Somali based terror group has staged militant attacks in different parts of the country since 2012. The attacks have become a significant security concern to the country leading to fear and apprehension. The economic sector has also significantly been impacted, as the attacks have caused considerable uncertainty in the investment climate. This has dissuaded foreign direct investment and has equally affected the vibrant Kenyan tourism sector.(2) The violent ideology propagated by the Al-Shabaab has also seen Kenyans joining the group. The recruited Kenyans have become an essential tool in assisting Al-Shabaab in carrying out attacks in the country. The radicalisation and recruitment of the Kenyan people, especially its youths in both urban and rural areas, has increasingly become a great concern to the Kenyan security forces.

In response to the Al-Shabaab threat, the Kenyan government has implemented a series of strategies that are both military and non-military. From a foreign policy approach, the Kenyan government decided to join the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2012 to assist in the fight against the terror group. Back at home, the government has carried out a series of arrests and detention of suspected Al-Shabaab members. In 2016, the Kenyan National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) was launched. Its goal is to rally all sectors to collaborate with government to continuously reject violent extremist ideologies and to assist in reducing the number of individuals whom terrorist groups can radicalise and recruit.(3) In this regard the government of Kenya has welcomed collaboration with various stakeholders in running activities and projects that will positively influence the fight against violent extremism and terrorism in the country. These stakeholders include the national leadership, private sector, civil society, Kenyan government ministries, departments and agencies, bilateral and multilateral partners, communities and citizens.

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1 Atallah, J. A Timeline of Terror Attacks in Kenya since 1975. Retrieved from:<https://www.theelephant.info/data-stories/2019/01/20/a-timeline-of-terror-attacks-in-kenya-since-1975/>, Accessed on 18th July 2019.

2 UNDP. Articulating the Pathways of the Impact of Terrorism and Violent Extremism on the Kenyan Economy: Policy Brief. Issue 1/2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/kenya/docs/SPAU/Policy%20Brief%20-%20impact%20of%20terrorism%20&%20violent%20extremism%20on%20economy.pdf> , Accessed on 18th July 2019.

3 National Counter Terrorism Center (2016). National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. Nairobi: Unpublished

## MEASURING CHANGE

A series of measures have been created globally to track the progress and effectiveness of CVE activities. Most of the techniques created to measure the impact of CVE efforts globally are not easily generalizable (4) and thus are created for specific contexts and regions around the world. For instance, *The Violent Extremism Risk Assessment Protocol*, (5) a risk-assessment instrument specifically designed to assess risks related to terrorism and violent extremism, has been criticised for being rigid and not flexible to the multidimensional nature of the problem(6). On the other hand, *The Global Terrorism Index*,(7) a critical tool that provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns, has been criticised for using variables that cannot be empirically measured. The dynamic nature of every region in the world calls for the creation of a unique index for each region to be able to measure change effectively.

In response to this, Scofield Associates has created a CVE index for measuring the dynamic Kenyan context and the impact of efforts on Violent Extremism and Terrorism. The CVE index is intended to work as a monitoring and evaluation tool to assist relevant stakeholders in being able to measure progress and thus effectively prioritises CVE activities in the country. This product should complement the work done by the National Counter Terrorism Centre and contribute to the progress on the County Action Plans. This index was piloted in Isiolo county in 2018 with support from the USAID funded Kenya NiWajibu Wetu (NIWETU). The findings from the pilot project are detailed in the Isiolo CVE-Index Report.

The index takes into consideration structural factors regarding terrorism and violent extremism such as the interest of the community and the nature of their governance process. It is founded on the belief that the tracking and measuring of CVE activities should be conducted in the broader context of a region. The index works towards understanding the root causes of violent extremism and its contribution to understanding the process of radicalisation and recruitment. It also considers the fluidity of the indicators in every region of the country and thus places emphasis on understanding the needs of a whole system rather than focusing on the traditional narrow view of CVE action from the radicalisation perspective. The frame assumes that increased reliance on resilience factors will bare positive responses to reduce recruitment, increase rehabilitation and reintegration in Kenyan societies.

The index provides a tool to understand and track change in the occurrence of violent extremism and terrorism in Kenya by looking at three key dimensions- the radicalisation dimension, the resilience dimension and the cost of action dimension. Each of the three dimensions is measured using proxy indicators that are determined through prior consultation with individuals living and working in the region where the tool will be used. A conceptualised formula is then used to account for the level of countering violent extremism in a region. The formula is;

$$CVE\ Index = \frac{Radicalization\ index \times Resilience\ index}{Cost\ of\ action\ index}$$

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4 Pressman, E. D. & J. Flockton. 'Calibrating Risk for Violent Political Extremist and Terrorist: The VERA 2 Structured Assessment,' *The British Journal of Forensic Practice*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 237-251.

5 Netherlands Institute for Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology. *The Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2*. Available at: <https://www.vera-2r.nl/>, accessed on 27th July 2019.

6 Ibid, Pressman & Flockton.

7 Institute for Economic Peace. *Global Terrorism Index Reports*, (New York: Institute for Economic Peace, 2018). Available from: <http://economicsandpeace.org/reports/>, accessed on 27th July 2019.

The indices are computed, after which an overall index is determined by calculating a median index from a Multi-Correspondence Analysis, emanating from the baseline data. The index is based on a scale of one to ten. In the radicalisation dimension, a high index would mean there is a higher threat to violent extremism and terrorism in a region. On the other hand, for the resilience component, a high index would be an indication that the region has a low vulnerability to violent extremism and terrorism.

## **RADICALIZATION DIMENSION**

Radicalisation is a precursor to violent extremism and thus an essential variable in monitoring and evaluating CVE action. When understanding radicalisation a majority of the studies have focused on the behavioural indicators of stage progression of an individual in becoming radicalised.<sup>(8)</sup> The psychological drivers of radicalisation are thus measured independently without putting into consideration the structural drivers that equally have an important role. This problem inspired the creation of a radicalisation index that puts into consideration both the behavioural and the structural indicators that are accepted as drivers of radicalisation in a region. The radicalisation indicators include the Vulnerability indicators, the Relational Activity indicators and the Ramification Indicators. These three indicators are intended to help in understanding further the multidimensional nature of radicalisation in Kenyan communities.

The vulnerability indicators look at weaknesses that Kenyan communities may experience that may make them susceptible to radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism. These vulnerabilities include; the level of inclusion and integration of a community to the greater society; the levels of development of the community when compared to others in the region; the question of victimisation and personal grievances of a community. These are the critical vulnerability indicators for understanding radicalisation.

On the other hand, relational activity indicators, are interested in looking at the influence of political trends in a region and how it could lead to the radicalisation of a people. Participation in political action and other related activities have been known to be pathways to radicalisation in Kenya.<sup>(9)</sup> In order to understand the influence of political action on the radicalisation of a people, one should look at elements such as the participation of youths in political activity. Finally, the ramification indicators provide insights into perceived impacts of radicalisation and recruitment in the community. For instances matters to do with disappearances of youth in a community will be considered. One can also question the perception of safety, security and the level of criminal activities in a community. The ramification indicators are interested in understanding how the community perceives certain elements that are essential for their safety and security.

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8 Sageman, M. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the 21 Century*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

9 Aningo, P. Kenya Should go Back to the Drawing Board to Find Realistic Solutions to the Threat of Terrorism, Radicalization and Extremism. Institute for Security Studies. Available from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/kenyas-current-probe-on-terror-why-operation-usulama-watch-wont-cut-it>, accessed on 27 July 2019.

## RESILIENCE DIMENSION

The term 'resilience' refers to the ability to cope successfully in the face of extreme adversity or risk.<sup>(10)</sup> It refers to common strategies that communities adopt, to mitigate activities that make them vulnerable to violent extremism. The processes of becoming a resilient community involve inherently reducing the potential vulnerabilities or risk factors. (11) The creation of a resilience index has put into consideration three essential dimensions which include; the social capital indicators, the Social Bonding Indicators/bridging indicators and the social linking indicators. Each of these indicators was selected based on the understanding that building social networks, identity and partnerships are needed for community resilience to deal with violent extremism.

Social capital indicators of resilience look at the nature of resources embedded in social networks, how they are accessed and their usage by communities.<sup>(12)</sup> There are different forms of social capital. It can be a tie among family members, neighbours, ties shared by experience or cultural norms. Social capital can have a group base, a network base or an institutional base. The higher the social capital in a group, the less likely persons from the group will be involved in terrorism and violent extremism activities. Social bonding indicators, on the other hand, are interested in understanding how attached individuals are to their conventional society. Studies have shown that persons who have strong and abiding attachments to conventional society are less likely to deviate to criminal activity.<sup>(13)</sup> By understanding the level of social cohesion in a community one can be able to judge their resilience capabilities. Social bonding allows for diverse groups to share and exchange information, ideas and innovations thus build consensus among the groups representing diverse interests. Finally, the resilience of a community can also be gauged based on its social links, which involves understanding the link between groups and positions of power & authority. This indicator is particularly crucial for socio-culturally disadvantaged or economically resource-poor communities. Studies have shown that the more communities are linked with sources of power and wealth, the greater their access to resources and thus the more likely they are to cope with adverse challenges such as terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>(14)</sup>

## COST OF ACTION DIMENSION

The cost of action involves the efforts and inputs that are implemented in preventing and countering violent extremism. The cost of action dimension involves evaluating the use of hard power strategies implemented in communities to deal with the spread of radicalisation and violent extremism. This includes the deployment of security officers and the use of force to deal with suspected criminal activity. On the other hand, it also involves the use of soft power techniques by both state and non-state actors to build the capacity of the community to challenge radicalization and recruitment into terrorism effectively. This dimension investigates material and non-material resources that are implemented to prevent and counter violent extremism. The significant components of cost of action include Government responsibility, Government response and external response.

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10 Carpenter, A. C. *Community Resilience to Sectarian Violence in Baghdad*. (New York: Springer Science and Business Media, 2014).

11 Dina, A. R. 'Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in Diaspora,' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4. (2013).

12 Nan, L. *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

13 Chriss, J. J. 'The Functions of Social Bond.' *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 48, Issue 4.

14 Wouter, P. 'Community Resilience and Health: The Role of Bonding, Bridging and Linking Aspects of Social Capital,' *Health & Place*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, (2012)

## CONCLUSION

Measuring the impact of CVE efforts in Kenya is an essential element of understanding the progress being made by both the government and the various stakeholders. In order to make credible decisions on which strategies to implement to eliminate violent extremism and terrorism in a region, decision-makers need to be guided by data and research on the progress of CVE activities. Tracking the changes will help assess the effectiveness of policies and suggest alternatives where necessary. The index assumes a comprehensive approach to understanding CVE. It is guided by earlier engagements that sought to set up indexes in social science research work.

The index is aware of the complexities associated with the context, availability of data, the fluidity of indicators and attribution to results. It is, however, not free from limitations and weaknesses. Firstly, since the index is meant to measure the influence of CVE efforts in a region, it cannot rely on the number terrorist attacks due to the infrequency of attacks in some regions despite high recruitment levels. The tool, therefore, uses different indicators depending on the context within which it measures change. Secondly, though the findings are an outcome of a representative sample, the perception data is not entirely conclusive due to the complexities associated with violent extremism. However, the methodology allows for categorisation and inclusion of other emerging issues that could affect a community's resilience against terrorism and violent extremism. Thirdly, cost of action information is based on secondary data from government agencies and development partners. The index may change with the inclusion of additional indicators and data from these secondary sources.



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