Turkana

Marsabit

Mandera

West Pokot

Wajir

Samburu

Isiolo

Baringo

Laikupia

Meru

GARISSA

Nandi

NAIROBI

Homa Bay

Bomet

Kitui

Migori

Machakos

Narok

Makueni

Lamu

Kajiado

Tata Taveta

MOMBASA

The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism and
the County Action Plans;
Lessons learnt from the CVE Programming process in Kenya

Executive Summary

In September 2016, Kenya launched her National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE) with the goal of "rallying all sectors of Kenyan social, religious, and economic life to emphatically and continuously reject Violent Extremist Ideologies (VEI) while shrinking the pool of individuals whom terrorist groups can radicalize and recruit." Led by the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), the strategy was developed through extensive collaboration at the government level, with the other non-state CVE implementing stakeholders claiming they were not sufficiently consulted. The strategy proposed to acknowledge the complexity and contested nature of defining Violent Extremism (VE) and explore the phenomenon of Terrorism; through its acts, the threats it poses, impact and its overarching significance; not just in security but social-political realm.

The strategy sought to promote patriotism for Kenya's nationhood, enhance the Government of Kenya's (GOK) support for at-risk communities, rehabilitate and reintegrate returnees, roll out non-coercive approaches to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), utilise law enforcement to deter and prosecute radicalisers and accommodate research on the evolution of Violent Extremist Ideologies. The president's statement during the launch of the National Strategy document in 2016 included a keen avoidance of an "insidious spread of an evil ideology," and identified Terrorism as a domestic challenge whose response included a multi-agency security operation, resulting to a sharp increase in operational tempo to "Detect, Deter and Disrupt" the activities of VEOs and Terrorists. It was a shift in policy, as earlier activities considered a response to an external threat that only affected Kenya as part of collateral damage.

The identification of the problem as domestic was a great starting point, as it provided the government with an opportunity of developing responses that targeted the internal drivers of Violent Extremism, while engaging local non-state implementing partners. However, the framework within the NSCVE was not keen enough to name and understand the local dynamics and context, as shown in the report. Though the document provided an agenda and thematic areas of dealing with VE and Terrorism, it lacked alignment to the acts of parliament and new policy skeleton to deal with the continually emerging phenomenon that is VE and Terrorism. Additionally, the document covered both Violent Extremism and Terrorism in its explanation, and specifically included a security pillar to respond to Terrorism as a phenomenon. It defined returnees and proposed the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration in the community, but it lacked a procedure to support this chronicle, and the outcome resulted in a public proclamation of amnesty on returnees that conflicted with the Suppression of Terrorism Act and Security Amendments bill. The need to protect the State from a faceless enemy resulted in actions and activities that were dependent on the possibility and not probability.

This report covers research work that was conducted between July and October 2018, documenting the lessons learnt from P/CVE programming in Kenya. This study provides; an understanding of the VE trends in Kenya, a review of the process adopted in the development of the NSCVE as well as for the County Action Plans(CAPs), and the interplay of the different statutes in place for VE related activities. The research covered a discourse analysis of Violent Extremism and Terrorism vis-à-vis its

interpretation and implementation through the NSCVE and the CAPs. The fieldwork included a qualitative stakeholder analysis with the lenses of investigating what works and in what context as guided by the NSCVE and the CAPs. It utilised data triangulation and mixed method in its analysis to incorporate fieldwork (Nairobi, Mombasa, and Garissa), desktop data from existing strategies (Kwale, Isiolo, and Lamu), a contextual view of the transnational threat, and lessons learnt in the region and globally. A tiered sampling method that focuses on purposive clustering was used to select respondents for the study. Based on the clusters that included government representatives (members of the county government, national government administration, district peace committees and law enforcement teams); non-state actors (Organizations and agencies implementing CVE programs, representatives of the business community) and the community members. The method focused on an ethnographic approach of in-depth interviewing through Participatory Systemic Inquiry (PSI), seeking to elicit lived experiences from those in the community.

This report is divided into seven chapters that critically review the conceptualization and operationalization of CVE, VE and other associated concepts in Kenya by supplying a context-specific historical term framing. It also reviews the consensus building process and coordination of various stakeholders and their competing interests in development and the resultant responses from the state, international partners, and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO). It affords an overview of the trends of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the country; while focusing on the change from collateral damage narrative, to direct target after the US Embassy bombings in 1998. It goes further to offer a clear sign on the understanding of community definitions of Terrorism, and Violent Extremism; an analysis of Kenya's state categorization of the two, and the responses taken in the past. The report also supplies a basic understanding and overview of the NSCVE while indicating some progress made since its launch, mentioning the gaps available and providing the opportunities for future engagement.

It incorporates a discourse analysis, as a prerequisite for describing, interpreting, examining, and critiquing P/CVE processes in Kenya. The argument made in the framing of terminology is premised on the notion that at times the spoken discourses leap forward and direct action faster than the written discourses that are the CAPs, and the NSCVE. The report shows the definition challenge VE and Terrorism that depends on the interests, actors, and responses needed. The NSCVE and CAPs do not account for context, boundaries of included parties, response options, and actor representation. The discourse analysis provides a historical grounding on the terms and the legal structure that governed the hard power approaches from the Government. The report also identifies the escalation of legal jurisprudence in the aftermath of the 2002 attacks in Kenya to include the 2006-Suppression of Terrorism Bill, the 2006-Witness Protection Act, and the 2009-Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Act, 2012- The Prevention of Terrorism Act in October, Security Laws Amendment Act in December 2014 and Kenya Defence Forces Amendment Bill 2015. The report acknowledges the fact that NCTC was in the process of reviewing the National strategy and may have taken some findings and recommendations into account.

This research has seven major findings:

1. *To start off, VE is not a priority issue from all the respondent categories in the counties researched, but structural conflicts that include access to, and sharing of resources, feature prominent as the main challenge for the communities. These challenges, however, supply the vulnerabilities for*

Violent Extremism. The report uses three county case studies to document the development of CAPs, the feeling of the NSCVE and the various responses seen.

    a. Through an analysis of Factor maps, the report references the major themes from the respondents in Nairobi to include politics, negative ethnicity, unemployment, religion, and corruption.

    b. Mombasa discussed the challenge of gangs across Mombasa but more so in Kisauni. These were the main issues in Mombasa, rather than VEO. The respondents mentioned that these groups were on the rise, with a number averaging 75 groups in total. It was mentioned as a significant challenge for insecurity due to the ease of access to light weapons by the gang groups. The respondents pointed to individual vulnerabilities associated with the rise but did not show specific links to VEO at the organization level.

    c. In Garissa, unemployment, unfair resource distribution, insecurity, poor governance, corruption, and politics, migration and movement were the prevalent issues. Both in Nairobi and Mombasa, the question of gangs and their relationship to the identity crisis. Identity crisis which also prominently highlighted in Garissa. Additionally, the respondents cite that the link to VE and Terrorism revolves around the structural conflicts featuring access to identity cards as an example, within the community.

    d. Even though the needs analysis is covered in all the CAPs being developed showing structural conflict as the significant challenge in the communities, the resolve from implementing partners including government, has a lot of concentration on the vulnerabilities associated with the challenges rather than the acknowledgement and resolution of the structural challenges themselves.

2. *Where VE occurs, religion is not a crucial driver but a framer of the radicalization and recruitment narrative.*

    a. Fieldwork data from the three sites do not show a direct link between Radicalization and Violent Extremism, neither does it show an increased threshold on religious ideology as a critical factor and driver to Violent Extremism.

    b. Individuals seek a sense of belonging in a system that marginalizes them. VEOs sometimes provide this. Further, religious identity provides a key component of the identity needed to fit within a given VEO.

    c. Religious factors are essential, but they serve as the framing of the narrative as a contribution of the new worldview in a new system of cosmic war of good versus evil. It, therefore, offers the framing of the narrative that appeals to the vulnerabilities specific to the communities in Nairobi, Mombasa, or Garissa. This finding, therefore, questions the massive bearing and leaning of the NSCVE on religious ideology as the overarching challenge for the Kenyan Society.

3. *Structural issues and a conducive environment are significant for radical narrative growth. This report shows that the process of dealing with Violent Extremism should be anchored on a system thinking that considers the context, resilience capacities within the community, and a review of the various actions from all the stakeholders.*

    a. The research shows that apart from the vulnerabilities associated with the structural challenges mentioned by the respondents, radicalization, and recruitment is anchored within a supportive system that is the family, friend, peers, and community.

b. The Aarhus model assumes, identity formation, and support structures in the community system and the role of the family, and peer relations as significant issues in P/CVE.

c. The feedback from the community shows that the process of radicalization was not limited to the vertical trajectory or centrally anchored on religious ideology but focused more on the horizontal nature through a peer-to-peer network and societal pressures.

4. *Monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy and the county plans is problematic.*

a. To start with, the NSCVE has no M&E plan while the CAPs have basic log frames that focus majorly on inputs vs outputs dependants on repetitive actions that cannot fit specific pillars.

b. Funding for the County Action plans is more than 80% dependent on development partner support based on the activity placement. The budgeting in the CAPs is arbitrary, with a figure that cannot be appropriately allocated.

c. The nine and above pillars in the NSCVE and the CAPs are not actionable and are difficult to measure. Findings from Mombasa show that civil society organizations choose activities based on their existing programs. They try to align to the pillars documented in the MCAP, but due to their cross-cutting nature, measurement becomes a problem.

5. *Lack of coordination at the community level is an outcome of similar processes at the government level. The NSCVE and CAPs implementation process (in Mombasa), show lack of proper coordination based on the actions from the national government.*

a. The report documents a general lack of awareness about the NSCVE and CAPs, which results in adverse impact on its implementation, based on the responses in Lamu and from the TSC.

b. Civil society respondents in Mombasa and Nairobi and government representative in Garissa detail the secretive nature of the NSCVE that has created a feeling of non-engagement/response from NCTC to the community.

6. *There is a mismatch between available law and their alignment to the NSCVE and the CAPs.*

a. *On the superiority of, Penal Code, POTA, and other security amendment laws, the report argues that the laws are disruptive, counter-productive and disjointed.*

b. *However, from a deterrent perspective, the laws are useful guidelines on how to tackle VE and terrorism. The report found that legislatively, VE and terrorism incidents are judged by using criminal law and therefore, the courts see the perpetrators as criminals.*

c. *The report also details lack of direction on the returnees' issue. As a new challenge, the reintegration and rehabilitation process does not a have a publicly acknowledged policy or law, and this exposes most implementing partners to risks.*

7. *Terrorism and Violent Extremism are terms that are used interchangeably by government and members of the community. Their use impacts, influences and determines the target population for programs, and may not translate to CVE gains in the communities due to the limits on the context.*

a. Across the counties, the respondents seemed to agree that VE and Terrorism are related, as both shows the use of violence for a politically motivated goal.

b. Regarding VE and Terrorism, the findings show that the non-state actors and government supply a critical source of information and the use of the terms. Fieldwork analysis as shown in Figure 5 in the report, available literature topped the list at 39% followed by Government definition at 27%, association of VEO 14% and CSO/NGO activity at 13%.

c. The data also showed that many projects in the communities focused on the ages between 18-26 years who got the framing of the terms from CSO/NGOs at 13%, Government at 16% and available literature at 23%. The county responses show the level of framing from the CSO/NGOs in Mombasa was higher than Garissa and Nairobi, as 12% out of the total 13% was information framing from the organizations in Mombasa.

While documenting the gaps in the plans, the report also highlights general recommendations from and to the community. The respondents believe that the NSCVE and CAPs will be developed across the country, but specific considerations need to be established. These considerations include; sensitization strategies which are capable of reaching larger population audience on NSCVE & CAPs processes, integrating the CAPs into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) for consolidated financing, the use of Kenya Police Reservists (KPR). Finally, the report includes six areas of learning, revision options and success for P/CVE. These areas include:

1. The Theory of Change and a suggestion on the pillars to be included:
    a. Though the report borrows from the lessons learnt from the UK Prevent program, it makes a case for contextualization of the issues to include Prevent, Protect, Coordinate, Pursue, and Respond. It, therefore, means that five Theory of Change (ToC's) should be developed while putting in mind, the assumptions of each pillar, actors to implement activities and their roles, some significant frames of proposed activities and guiding principles for measurement. The current revision of the NSCVE and the development of the M&E document for the strategy should harmonize and reduce the pillars into actionable, time-bound and measurable pillars.

2. Systems thinking as a proposed solution to the significant gap in the plans and the national strategy:
    a. This report, therefore, recommends, for the NSCVE and the CAPs to work, a shift to a systems approach that will document the different spheres of engagement (Macro; Messo; and Micro), the definitions and roles of different stakeholders. Additionally, the level of engagement should articulate where the P/CVE action will be focusing on; (either at the individual, family, or society level). This process would also ensure certain issues including returnees, and passive radicalizers and recruiters have a targeted approach in the activities. Additionally, systems thinking would also ensure the linkage of various structural issues addressed through programming, to reduce the vulnerability to Violent Extremism. The proposed systems approach also recognized that there is no *"one size fits all"* and introduces the "**Centre of influence"** where projects focus on the amount of contribution to resolving the challenges in the community. The approach proposes that projects should increase the "**Centre of influence"** to the community, making it difficult for VEO to radicalize and recruit.

3. Role definition to reduce repetition:
    a. The feedback from the respondents in the research and a review of the MCAP and other CAPs show a lot of repetition of roles and a spread-out general placement of activities, with assumptions on the level of engagement for the stakeholders. The NSCVE and CAPs need stakeholder engagement, role definition and role allocation, to ensure inclusion of activities in existing frameworks but tweaked to fit the contexts and not the development of new categories that run parallel with what partners and stakeholders can achieve. This process will ensure the allocation of resources is pegged to the CIDP and resolve some of the financing challenges that the CAPs currently face.

4. Alignment to legal jurisprudence. (more research required):
    a. The strategies and plans should have an alignment to legal jurisprudence. The laws passed to deal with VE, and Terrorism, continually increase. However, the placement of the actions from the government provides a contradiction. One critical challenge, however, features a public proclamation of amnesty on returnees that conflicts with the Suppression of Terrorism Act and the actions of the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU).
    b. Some responses were contrary to the spirit of the NSCVE and the CAPs. Though anecdotal, top-level analysis show that the laws do not necessarily serve to the purpose of P/CVE. More research is needed for concrete action on this recommendation.

5. A financing proposal that adopts five pillars:
    a. A proposal on financing proposes the adoption of only five pillars that have a clear sign of responsible persons, level of entry and budget allocation. A distinction should be made on activities that have direct funding from the National government and those that will have support at the county using the County Integrated Development Plan that guides the Annual budgets in the counties. This distinction process will also reduce the security lens associated with the CAPs in the different counties. The case from analysis of the MCAP and the CIDP for Mombasa provide guidance.

6. A monitoring and Evaluation that concentrates on the "Centre of Influence:"
    a. The report recommends that monitoring and evaluation should start with a conceptual framework and focus on enhancing engagement with analysis of the drivers of VE and the use of conflict and conflict systems analysis tools to further understand VE drivers and the system in which they exist and are inter-related. This process would result in improving coordination and support for the development of holistic strategies that conceptualize how individual efforts add up to more substantial P/CVE impacts, possibly through whole-of-government approaches and coordination among local, national, and international actors and funders involved in P/CVE work.

The report concludes by reiterating the systems approach to P/CVE while supplying areas for further research and learning by encouraging the state to push further in a human-centred approach to security, that involves role definitions to members of the community. It suggests future areas of research on how the NSCVE, and the CAPs, can align to existing acts and laws of the land. Additionally, more work would be needed to provide a transition between the Counter Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism processes, considering the government is mandated to operationalize and facilitate the two processes, respectively. It also takes note that the strategy and the plans do not capture or make assumptions on the unintended results for the projects set in the documents.

This is not only a monitoring and evaluation flaw, but a counterproductive way of making an impact on the system that is the community. The report documents the importance of using action words/pillars to the category and evaluate responses. Though the suggested pillars are borrowed from the UK Prevent program, the report suggests a contextualized, localized, and aligned to the priorities of the nation based on the drivers and other structural conflicts. The reduction of the pillars from nine in the NSCVE to five would ensure ease of measurement, funding, and cross-fertilization of responses.

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