

April 2022

Religious Cover and the Success of Violent Extremist Narratives in Garissa, Tana River and Isiolo Counties.

About the Authors

Muliru Yoni is the Head of Research at Scofield Associates Limited.

Dr. Halkano Abdi Wario is a researchers and a lecturer at Egerton University in Nakuru, Kenya.

Dr. Fathima Badurdeen Azmiya is a researcher and a lecturer at the Technical University of Mombasa, Kenya.

Executive Summary

Northern and Coastal Counties have prominently featured in the conversation about violent extremism (VE) and terrorism. Their presence, often foreshadowed by attacks, as in the case of Garissa University, local community targeting in Tana River, and local identified recruiters in the case of Isiolo. The three Counties not only share vulnerabilities with other bordering Counties, Garissa and Tana River shares a porous border with Somalia, thereby increasing the vulnerability to violent extremism engagement.

This County brief provides insights from a ten-county study funded by the Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi and carried out by Scofield Associates. The study, conducted between June and December 2021, sought to understand the vulnerabilities that link the offline and online narrative pushing individuals into violent extremism (VE). This County brief covers the summary from three Counties of Garissa, Isiolo and Tana River.

The overall findings from the ten-county study developed a vulnerability targeting framework that provided a categorization of Counties based on the narratives developed, the resonance factors, the level of socialization in the VE spectra, and the possibility of specific medium use to encourage their uptake.

It makes the case that while the narratives are important in the processes leading to VE and terrorism, the socialization levels to specific conflict determine their development, and utility by the target populations in the three Counties. The findings from the three counties show the following:

1. While the geographical risks present some vulnerabilities to VE, it is the symbiotic relationship that is modelled, presented and shared via narratives; that determine the level of engagement by the local population into Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs).
2. Socialization just like cultural process encourage learning. For the three Counties, the geographical proximity to other vulnerable Counties including Lamu, and Marsabit, influences learning, making it easier to relate to the rhetoric that advances the socialization to VE. The resonance-factors then provide the anchoring and commonality of the messages developed. Specifically, the marginalization and suffering narratives link the northern to part of the Coastal Counties, make it easy to a broader reach.

3. Similarly, the narratives developed can be challenged by using the local realities or so-called resonance-factors that packaged them in the first place. The respondents from Garissa confirm that VEO agents are struggling to encourage engagement after the Garissa University attack that dealt a blow to the narrative formulation and expectations, vs the reality of the terrorist activity to the local community. This is a lesson to those planning to develop alternative narrative as a means of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE).

4. Across the counties, the conversation around online/offline spread and use of narratives remains critical. However, it should be noted that a couple of issues determines the frequency of use. As a start, the online engagement has minimal use because most of the dipper level information is shared in Arabic, which may be difficult to transcribe for younger recruits. Additionally, the advancement in the socialization process to online space is dependent on passing loyalty tests at certain levels of offline engagement with an agent before the progression to closed groups online.

5. Sympathizers appear in many forms. Questions remain on what certain media stations have in common with VEO. There is evidence of local media stations passing Al-Shabaab (supporting), as part of their programs, and these programs seem to support their activities locally and in Somalia.

6. Finally, while the narratives that pull and push the youth into jihadi materiality appears to be related to structural conflicts, community and individual factors, with strong disposition toward lack of job, economic marginalization plays a critical role. Additionally, the herders are now coming up as a new target population for recruitment or for narrative sharing.

Religious Cover and the Success of Violent Extremist Narratives in Garissa, Tana River and Isiolo Counties.

By Muliru Yoni, Halkano Wario and Fathima Azmiya

Garissa County is the headquarters of the former Northeastern Province and current seat of the national government's regional administration. The county borders the Republic of Somalia to the east, Lamu County to the south, Tana River County to the west, Isiolo County to the north-west and Wajir County to the north. Ogaden sub clans and so-called small 'corner tribes' predominate the county.

Other smaller groups include Orma, Wardey, Munyo, Malakote from neighbouring Tana River County. The County hosts two refugee camps that host thousands of Somalis who found haven for over three decades since the break-up of Siad Barre regime in 1991. The ethnic Somalis are the main occupants and share similar social, linguistic, cultural, religious and livelihood styles with communities in Somalia. Because of such similarities, cross border trade, visits to families and friends, migration searching for water and pasture is common.

Tana River County derives its name from the river Tana. The County comprises the following major ethnic groups: Dagodie, Ogaden, Pokomo, Orma, Wardey and Gadsan. With Hola being the largest town, the County has seven constituencies: Bangale, Bura, Garsen, Galole, Kipini, Madogo, and Wenje. The County struggles with its periodic droughts, erratic rainfalls and floods. Ethnic clashes between the Pokomo and Oromo are evident during seasons of drought and during elections.¹ Such clashes were witnessed in 2012 where 52 people lost their lives in ethnic violence between the Orma, Wardey and Pokomo groups in August 2012.²

Isiolo County is one of the two counties in the upper Eastern part of Kenya, alongside Marsabit. Popularly described as the gateway to the Northern Kenya, Isiolo County borders Marsabit County to the north, Samburu and Laikipia Counties to the west, Garissa County to the south-east, Wajir County to the north-east, Tana River and Kitui Counties to the south and Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties to the south-west.

Isiolo is regarded as a cosmopolitan County, home to five major ethnic groups namely Borana, Somali, Turkana, Meru and Samburu. It also hosts small numbers of other Kenyan ethnic groups. While the Turkana, Meru and Samburu follow various Christian denominations as well as traditional practices. There is significant Christian population among the Borana, especially in Merti sub-county and Isiolo town.

1. Peter, Kagwanja. (2003). Globalizing Ethnicity, Localizing Citizenship: Globalization, Identity Politics and Violence in Kenya's Tana River Region. *Africa Development*, 28(1/2): 112-152.

2. Human Rights Watch (2013). *High Stakes: Political Violence and the 2013 Elections in Kenya*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch.

Garissa County suffers frequent violent extremist attacks. Most of the attacks are low-keyed and carried out in areas close to the border. The most horrific of these attacks was the 2015 Garissa University college massacre, in which 147 students lost their lives in a siege by Al-Shabaab. Other VE preferred targets include police stations, national government administration officers' homes and offices, communication masts, quarry sites, churches, hospital and dispensaries, schools and water points.

Al-Shabaab specifically targets non-locals who work as teachers, nurses, national government officials, traders and civil society workers in a bid to make them leave the county by force and to ignite inter ethnic/inter-religious animosity. It seems easy for the group to recruit new members, especially from youth in refugee camps and within the County. The pronounced grievance within the County includes conversations of historical injustices committed by past regimes, discrimination, and loss of processing of identity documents and vetting, underdevelopment, lack of employment opportunities, poor infrastructural investment over the years and general apathy towards the government due to feeling of marginalization and neglect.

The pronounced grievance within the County includes conversations of historical injustices committed by past regimes, discrimination, and loss of processing of identity documents and vetting, underdevelopment, lack of employment opportunities, poor infrastructural investment over the years and general apathy towards the government due to feeling of marginalization and neglect.

Similar to other Counties in the Coastal region, Tana River County faces the challenge of VE. A host of attacks in the coastal region, such as in Lamu, has trickled to the Tana River County.³ However, Tana River County is a secure compared to the neighboring Counties and has not faced lethal Al-Shabaab attacks. The County faces specific incidents which reveal its space for mobilization, recruitment as well as a hiding ground, after attacks in the other Counties.⁴

Few incidents have raised concerns on the militant group Al-Shabaab in Tana River County. In August 2017, two motorists lost their lives in an attack by Al-Shabaab militants in Lango la Simba area. The other attack, staged by the terrorists, on two vehicles along Garsen-Lamu road before escaping.⁵ In January 2020, Fred Ochieng, County police commander of Tana River County reported that 11 young Al-Shabaab suspects who were wounded were found at the thicket in Kilengwani in Tana Delta. He noted that the 11 young militants were speaking in Swahili, suspected to be Al-Shabaab operatives, who had later moved to the Bonni Forest.⁶

The County's proximity to Garissa, Lamu, Kilifi has made the region a hotspot for recruitment, aiding the planning of attacks as well as a base for violent extremist networks. The County Action plan (CAP) for Tana River has identified the following areas as hotspots: Nyangoro, Kipao, Kipini, Boji, Bula, Bura, Chewani ward, Chisiri, Gafuru, Galole, Gamba, Garsen, Kalkacha, Kilelengwani, Lango la Simba, Laza, Madogo, Makere, Malindi ya Ngwena, Matengeni, Mikinduni, Moa, Nago, Ozi, Riketa, Wayu ward, Wema and Witu.

3. Human Rights Watch (2015). *Insult to Injury: The 2014 Lamu and Tana River attacks and Kenya's abusive response*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch.

4. Tana River County Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent extremism, 2019.

5. Cyrus, Ombati. (2017). Two motorists shot dead by suspected Al-Shabaab militants at Lango la Simba, Tana River. Standard Media, August 17, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001253189/two-motorists-shot-dead-by-al-shabaab-militants-in-tana-river-county>.

6. Xinhua (2020). Kenyan police pursue Al-Shabaab militants in vast coastal forest. January 04, 2020. Retrieved from: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/04/c_138678200.htm

The County's proximity to Garissa, Lamu, Kilifi has made the region a hotspot for recruitment, aiding the planning of attacks as well as a base for violent extremist networks. The County Action plan (CAP) for Tana River has identified the following areas as hotspots: Nyangoro, Kipao, Kipini, Boji, Bula, Bura, Chewani ward, Chisiri, Gafuru, Galole, Gamba, Garsen, Kalkacha, Kilelengwani, Lango la Simba, Laza, Madogo, Makere, Malindi ya Ngwena, Matengeni, Mikinduni, Moa, Nago, Ozi, Riketa, Wayu ward, Wema and Witu.

Isiolo County has not reported a case of violent extremist attack. However, about 200 local youths have joined VEOs, with a bulk of them being in Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Proximity to and cultural and linguistic similarities with communities in Northeastern Kenya make it easy for youth to travel to and cross over to Somalia undetected. The County also has long-standing historical grievances against the government due to injustices committed during the irredentist periods in the 1960s and 70s.

In addition, the County has a particularly pronounced problems of substance abuse, idle youth who often are co-opted as fighters into frequent inter ethnic clashes, heightening their vulnerabilities to the lures of VE recruitment and radicalization. The County is, hence, disproportionately represented within VE discourses, with some of its young people identified as key VE operatives.

Salim Gichunge, who was one of the masterminds of the Dusit D2 Complex terror attack, grew up in Isiolo and was radicalized and recruited through online networks while still residing in Isiolo. In sum, the County, though free from terror attacks so far, it is a region that has heightened VE related activities and with structural and personal factors that pushes and pulls youth into VEOs.

This County brief provides findings from a study that sought to understand the process of narrative formation, spread, and linkages to VEO's in ten Counties. The respondent selection was also as representative as possible, with conscious efforts to include gender and diversity considerations. The respondents included 24 individuals from Garissa, 24 individuals from Tana River and 24 individuals from Isiolo County. Altogether, the fieldwork in the three counties included 72 participants: representing fifty-two males and twenty female respondents across the three Counties. Religious demographic grouping included, fifty-two Muslims, and twenty Christians.

The study used purely qualitative, using a purposive sample and a snowballing technique, to target respondents that included individuals from the Maskanis (Bazes, Youth hangout), Returnees, those directly affected, mothers of those that traveled to Somalia, university students, religious leaders, and those incarcerated over VE related incidences. The study also borrowed a lot from a desktop review of existing research materials on narrative development and spread from the global space to the local communities in Kenya.

Existing literature on terrorist use of the online space in radicalization and recruitment in Kenya is rare⁷, however, there are narratives that show progression on the process. The guiding questions for the research included the following:

I. What are the messages available in the counties, and how are these messages assessed?

The findings from Garissa support the classification of the messages as documented in the main report. The classifications included: Messages/Narratives of retribution of perceived injustices, exclusion, marginalization, underdevelopment, liberation; Messages/Narratives of Self-determination; and Messages/Narratives of rewards for engaging in jihadism. Some of those messages include:

“We need self-governance, we need to liberate our lands, we need to live in a land of Muslims only (Dar ul Islam) free from non-believers, we must be governed by Sharia only.” – Respondents Garissa.

“Virgins await the martyrs, direct entry into paradise, we shall live in Utopian Islamic polity under sharia and not human laws, jihadism is the right path of Allah.” — Respondent Garissa.

Of the narratives shared by individuals within the community, most of these messages aligned to conversations about social exclusion, poverty, and unemployment for young people. VEO agents target young people in areas such as DSTV dens and Miraa chewing places in Garissa and Isiolo.

“Some time back in Shangailu Ward (Hulugho Sub-County) they dropped the leaflets at night and when people woke up in the morning, they found them.” — Respondent Garissa.

In Isiolo, the messaging and narrative sharing is carried-out in private place, high-end hotels or very low traffic hotels, around Mosques or Madrassa. In Garissa, the message contents between VEO and other stakeholders such as community leaders and others are similar, except VEOs use religious text to reinforce their point.

In Tana River, the messaging is in the form of religious sermons and mostly through face-to-face engagement/physical contact. Recruiters use physical contact to evaluate the individual’s readiness for absorption or an assignment. VEO agents ‘uses reverse psychology’ to place the recruits as victims of an unjust and oppressive system who must find a way out, even if it means waging war (Jihad) and undertaking hijra to countries that are sharia-compliant and moving towards being an Islamic caliphate.

Muslim are suffering and are oppressed, and our places of worship desecrated – Respondent Tana River

In Isiolo, most narratives are on jihad, Shaheed (martyrdom) and about hijra (relocation to at least a Muslim country). The messages are shared under deep secrecy. The agents target individuals new to mosques and often present their narratives as Tabligh Jamaat.

Recruiters use physical contact to evaluate the individual’s readiness for absorption or an assignment. VEO agents ‘uses reverse psychology’ to place the recruits as victims of an unjust and oppressive system who must find a way out, even if it means waging war (Jihad) and undertaking hijra to countries that are sharia-compliant and moving towards being an Islamic caliphate.

7. Badurdeen, F. A. (2018). Online Radicalization and Recruitment: Al-Shabaab Luring Strategies with New Technology. In Ruteere, M. and Mutahi, P. (Eds). *Confronting Violent Extremism in Kenya: Debates, Ideas and Challenges*. Nairobi: Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies; Odhiambo, E.O.S., Maito, T.L., Kassilly, J., Chelumo, S., Onkware, K. and Oboka, W.A. (2013). Al-Shabaab Terrorists Propaganda & the Kenya Government Response. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science*, 3, 125-131.

The narratives generally speak about the beauty of Islam and the luck of being born a Muslim; the nusra (Allah's benevolence) to have joined Islam and how right the religion is; how you will be supported to marry and enjoy a good life with uninterrupted funds flow. Additionally, narratives from Isiolo contain messages around Qisas (revenge).

Across the three Counties, the respondents say the first encounter is physical, and a gradual process of socialization introduces them to videos of Aboud Rogo (for example), and other videos which show the torture to Muslims.

The call in the process focuses on the need for action to protect/defend Muslims and Islam; to receive Allah's pleasure here on earth and in a life hereafter. The placement of individual and community benefits imbue messages, including the placement in an eternal bliss (Jannah). The key emphasis is that it's a 'sin' on Muslims who do nothing to help the Muslim Ummah.

"Kaffir are undermining the Ummah" – Respondent Isiolo.

The narratives provide imagery to place the resonance-factors that include photos that show the conflict between Israel vs Palestine, police raiding Masjid Musa with full crowd dispersal gear and with shoes; police touching women casually during Eastleigh operations to repatriate refugees.

The need for youth to volunteer to the ways of Allah and get his glad tidings – Respondent Isiolo.

II. What influences a decision to continue as an engagement or to seize the engagement?

This question alludes to the phenomena of choice and human preferences. The decision to engage or not to engage is based on the vulnerabilities associated with the local context in the three counties, the level of socialization that influenced narrative framing and use. However, most of the respondents in Garissa and Tana River, mention that the results from the terrorist acts influence their non-participation, as those actions are contrary to the narratives shared.

As an example, there are those who seized engagement based on the realization that killing innocent people is wrong. In Garissa, the respondents mentioned that the University attack dealt a blow to narratives of recruitment, as the VEOs are struggling to salvage that action by rephrasing their narratives to targeted individuals. Most of the respondents posit that Isiolo is cosmopolitan, and Islam encourages co-existence, resulting in non-participation in VE activities. This theory is yet to be tested.

The physical and one-on-one engagement continually happen. In Isiolo, there are local sheikhs who advocate 'us' -vs- 'them' arguments as a new narrative that is also linked to political violence and part of placing the resonance factors.

One critical resonance factor is that of the injustices committed in the Northern part of Kenya. These issues reverberate with local vulnerable individuals and form the larger part of the framing for the narratives developed and use across the three Counties.

Overall, the respondents from Garissa, Isiolo and Tana River contend that the motivation for engagement or non-engagement is based on a framing that calls for the righting of a wrong committed to the community.

III. What and how are they linked to online platforms, if any?

The majority of the respondents seem to suggest that the VE group use online platforms, though their frequency of use is determined by the progression evaluation from the offline engagement. Limited knowledge of online use can also be because most of the messaging for dipper engagement is in Arabic, which may be linguistically challenging for younger recruits. While there are options for translated material from the online spaces, it is important to explore who prefers these, what kinds of materials are accessed and why. It is also significant to investigate if this sign of elitism and advanced learning of language and religion is a marker of scholarship and class.

The respondents cite Al-Khatib page found on YouTube and other materials (videos and audio) are shared on flash disks, CDs, as examples of materiality. Except for some sources on public platforms, other materials are strictly delivered once considered a trusted recruit by assigned agents. Majority of the respondents in Garissa and Tana River agree that they can still access these VE related materials online if they wanted to. This indicates that these materials are still available to those who know where to look.

Others, however, point out that the VE groups are somewhat careful to share their material and only share within a small circle of sympathizers and operatives. In such instances, the respondents got notified of these platforms through YouTube by investigative journalist documentaries and reports, during dialogue sessions on CVE, reporting from the herders (feedback from the herders from the water points), through friends and families, madrasas, football clubs, mosques, and peer to peer engagement.

These spaces are said to be moderated by the VE operatives. At times, it seems like the local sympathizers appear to work for VEOs and the government. In Garissa for example, it would be important to explore where does Al – Furqan/Furkan Radio broadcast from, who owns it, who listens to it, its language of broadcast, its reach within the county or neighboring counties and Somalia. This is because the respondents mentioned that information shared from this station serves as sympathy messaging to Al-Shabaab activities.

The narrative circulation in Garissa is packaged with a lot of religious cover. For instance, a mosque in Galmagala was mentioned to be targeting of young people with religious narratives; providing online linkage for information through dark websites; and has a network of local sympathizers, agents, and messengers. In Isiolo, VE messaging has been going on for quite some time using different forms of communication such as Whats App, Facebook, and other video sharing platforms such as YouTube which are easily accessible.

The majority of the respondents seem to suggest that the VE group use online platforms, though their frequency of use is determined by the progression evaluation from the offline engagement.

It appears that VE communication is also done over Airtel and Telkom rather than Safaricom, indicating a preferred less scrutinized channels of mobile telephony. Whats App and Telegram have high encryption and messages and calls are not easily intercepted by security agents. On Facebook, for instance, respondents observed that a VE related content will come to one's page or when one searches within the platform, but such VE contents is inaccessible except by admission into such a page by its administrator.

Connectivity between offline and online platforms is present in Isiolo. VE messaging starts offline with a youth's exposure to informal talks, watching of video clips with others in social spaces such as miraa bases, football fields, markets and video dens. Thereafter, such a youth may have their peer share such clips on Whats App or other platforms. With improved trust and loyalty, a VE agent contact him/her and allows access to more materials online.

Most beginner online messaging has the objective of win the trust of their potential users, directed them to specific sites, send them links and gradually graduate the VE content from basics to advance levels. Those who consume such online content get notification through calls or physical engagement; a process coordinated from Somalia.

The callers from Somalia can use simple and unsuspecting language, just in case the call is 'tapped' by government. Sometimes to avoid attention, potential recruits and sympathizers cluster themselves into a cohort and given one account, where each will access all manner of VE content using the same password and communications on drafts. Finally, there are websites/publications, such as Gaidi Mtaani, still in circulation in Isiolo.

IV. How are the vulnerable individuals targeted or involved, and what influences them at an individual or even county level?

The answers pointing to the observation that the problem of engagement and expose to jihadi narratives is generational, meaning the younger members of the Garissa community appear to particularly vulnerable rather than the elderly residents. While the narratives that pull and push the youth into affinity for jihadi materiality appears to be related to structural conflicts, community and individual factors, with strong disposition toward lack of job, economic marginalization plays a critical role.

These provide the resonance for the narratives to the everyday vulnerabilities and predicament, and also play out across the Counties of Isiolo and Tana River. Socialization to VE is higher in these Counties, as the use of religious cover can be countered with advanced religious knowledge to strengthen resilience.

While it is a commonly held assumption that the knowledge of jihadism only comes from jihadists, one often forgets the extent to which non-state actors such as those engaged in CVE do to sensitize communities on the subject. At times a considerable amount of information comes not from VEOs but sensitization campaigns by state and non-state actors who are part of the prevention strategy.

However, the bulk of messaging about jihadism come from jihadists themselves or their agents, accomplices, returnees, unintentional social circles of respondents, herders, at water points, through their online and offline media.

A recurring theme regarding the environment in which the jihadi messaging is shared appear to allude to its rurality or rurality. It seems from the respondents that the herders, those near the porous international border, far-flung water points or direct contact with VE operatives in these spaces rather than of it being an urban phenomenon. Within the urban setting again, the respondents speak of the level of secrecy and discretion that VE operatives and their accomplices and sympathizers would engage in not to be seen as they are acutely aware of the criminality of their activities.

While the targeting across the three Counties is on the vulnerable youth, a new category that includes the herders is becoming the conveyor and consumer of narratives from VEOs.

Conclusions:

There is a need to address specific vulnerabilities mentioned by the respondents in rural areas bordering the Kenya-Somalia border. These areas witness frequent visitations by VE operatives. They face threats, intimidation, and coercion to support the VE agenda by force. Their resilience is low. CSOs involved in CVE should identify appropriate stakeholders to engage in these border areas without risking their lives and livelihoods.

The herders, in Garissa and Isiolo, face a particularly high level of exposure to VE messaging and contact with VE operatives as they often move within the county searching for water and pastures. One of the spaces that they often meet VE operatives are at water points. It is important to reach out to these herders to build their capacities to not fall into VE, as their information gathering network. Through appropriate state and non-state stakeholders should be identified to reach out to the herders. This intervention requires prompt action.

The narratives in Tana River borrow from the neighboring Counties, including Lamu. While these borrowed narratives align to the religious cover providing the linkage beyond the County, local contextual issues still play a critical role as they provide the resonance with the vulnerable individuals.

Recommendations:

- It is important to monitor Somali-based TVs and radios that are either broadcast via satellite or online, such media platforms should be monitored to ensure that they do not promote VE cause or churn out anti-state narratives and sow seeds of mistrust between local and non-local residents.
- There is a need to bring far-flung communities, especially nomadic pastoralists, into implementation of the County Action Plan. An inclusion of non-local residents in the implementation of the CAP will boost its credibility and effectiveness. The policy formulation should be customized to cushion herders and communities near the borders from VE vulnerabilities.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the Netherlands Embassy in Kenya for their support for this study.

- Development partners should support programmes that address online VE narratives consumption and circulation, including how to curb encrypted messaging and dark web. Programmes that address herder vulnerabilities, youth vulnerabilities and redress of discourses of marginalization and discrimination should be given priority.
- The Online and Media Pillar committee of Isiolo CAP should particularly discuss the findings and address how key stakeholders can track and classify online and offline contents in circulation in Isiolo, related online and offline spaces they circulate it, producers, distributors, and consumers of such VE contents and craft appropriate local solution to this VE challenge
- There is need for further empirical research on emerging VE online behavior and their impact on radicalization and recruitment of youth. This includes use of encrypted social media platforms for calls, texts and digital contents, use of alternative mobile telephone lines, use of dark web, use of single email/social media accounts by multiple persons, dynamics of nexus, interfaces, and processes of online and offline VE engagements.
- CVE policies should be able to address terrorist content online by understanding the various themes promoted online. The CVE County Action Plan should be strengthened by an evidence-based assessment on the online means of radicalization and recruitment, where specific digital platforms are used, should be the key focus in PCVE efforts. The policy should enable programmes focused on groups most vulnerable to the harms of radicalization and recruitment, such as school dropouts and other youth subgroups in Tana River County.
- Donors should serve as an enabler to develop and expand programmes to create awareness and spread information about online radicalization and recruitment among CSOs and community members. Periodic reviews need to be conducted on the online and offline extremist messaging to strengthen policies by the government on cyber laws and other prevention and countering related laws in Tana River County.
- The donor community should facilitate opportunities for local development partners in Tana River County to build capacities of community-based organizations and relevant community members to carry credible messages online to counter extremist narratives.