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A Review of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism: The Case for Reform

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Abstract

This study reviews Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism and makes a case for reform. The strategy's main features and strengths, including its multi-agency and whole-of-society approaches, are analyzed. However, the study identifies key weaknesses in the strategy, including limited awareness and comprehension, and a failure to address related crime. To improve the strategy, the study draws lessons from national and international jurisdictions, including the African Union's Regional Strategy, the European Union's Strategy, the United States Strategic Framework, and the United Kingdom's CONTEST Strategy. Kenya can learn from these strategies and develop a more comprehensive and effective approach to preventing and countering terrorism in the country.

Key Words: Kenya; Counter violent extremism; Strategy; Reform; Lessons

1. Introduction

Violent extremism has become a pressing issue across the world, with many countries grappling with the challenge of how to prevent and counter it.[1] Violent extremism refers to the use of violence, often in the name of a political or religious ideology, to achieve goals that are

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[1] Horgan, J. (2017). What is 'violent extremism'? The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

typically extreme and radical.[2] Kenya has not been immune to this phenomenon, with the country experiencing a rise in violent extremism in recent years. [3] To address this issue, the Kenyan government has developed a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, which aims to prevent and counter the spread of radicalization and violent extremism in the country. [4] This paper reviews Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, highlighting its main features and strengths, as well as its key weaknesses. The study also analyzes the possibility of integrating other strategies as a way of reforming the current approach. By drawing on lessons from national and international jurisdictions, the study identifies ways that Kenya can improve its strategy and develop a more comprehensive and effective approach to preventing and countering violent extremism in the country.

2. Background on Radicalization to Violent Extremism in Kenya

2.1 Brief history

Kenya has faced a growing threat of violent extremism since the early 2000s[5]. The roots of this threat can be traced back to several factors, including political, economic, social, and religious grievances.[6] One of the earliest instances of violent extremism in Kenya occurred in 1998, when Al Qaeda bombed the US embassy in Nairobi, killing over

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[2] Ibid

[3] Makinda, S. M., & Okumu, W. A. (2017). The security-development nexus in countering violent extremism in Africa: Lessons from Kenya. Africa Development, 42(1), 1-22.

[4] Kimani, N. W. (2018). Kenya's national strategy to counter violent extremism: A critical appraisal. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 11(4), 1-22.

[5] Ibid

[6] Ibid

200 people.[7] This attack marked a turning point in the country's history, as it exposed the vulnerability of Kenya to external terrorist threats. In the years that followed, Kenya experienced a rise in domestic radicalization, with several incidents of terrorism occurring within the country.[8] These incidents included the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, which killed 13 people, and a series of grenade attacks in Nairobi in 2011, which were attributed to the Somali Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab.[9]

Al-Shabaab has been the most active and visible extremist group operating in Kenya in recent years.[10] The group has been responsible for several high-profile attacks, including the 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, which killed 67 people, and the 2015 Garissa University College attack, in which 148 people were killed[11]. The factors driving radicalization in Kenya are complex and multifaceted. They include political and economic marginalization, corruption, ethnic tensions, and religious extremism.[12] The Kenyan government has responded to the threat of violent extremism by implementing various measures, including the development of a national strategy to counter radicalization and the establishment of a specialized police unit to combat terrorism. However, these measures have faced criticism for being ineffective and for potentially exacerbating the problem of radicalization.[13]

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[7] Mwangi, K. (2017). The Evolution of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Kenya: A Historical Perspective. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1-12.

[8] Ibid

[9] Ibid

[10] Ibid

[11] Ibid

[12] Mwenda, K. (2015). History of Terrorism in Kenya: A Perspective. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(5), 42-53.

[13] Ibid

2.2 Rise of Terrorism and Gang Culture

The rise of terrorism and gang culture has been a significant challenge for Kenya in recent years. While terrorism is primarily driven by extremist ideologies and political grievances, gang culture is often driven by economic and social factors[14]. Terrorism in Kenya has been primarily perpetrated by the Somali Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab, which has carried out a series of attacks targeting civilians, government officials, and security forces.[15] Al-Shabaab has been able to recruit Kenyan youths, particularly those from marginalized communities, by exploiting their grievances and promising to provide them with a sense of purpose, belonging, and financial rewards[16].

Gang culture, on the other hand, is driven by a combination of economic and social factors, including poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, and the breakdown of family and community structures.[17] In urban areas such as Nairobi, criminal gangs known as "chokoras" have emerged as a major source of violence and insecurity.[18] These gangs often engage in activities such as robbery, drug trafficking, and extortion, and they have been known to use violence to intimidate their rivals and enforce their dominance.[19] The rise of terrorism and gang culture in Kenya has had a significant impact on the country's social, economic, and political fabric. It has contributed to a sense of insecurity and fear among the population, undermined the rule of law, and damaged Kenya's reputation as a

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[14] Ibid

[15] Ibid

[16] Ibid

[17] Nduta, E. (2018). An Analysis of Gangs and Their Activities in Nairobi, Kenya. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences,* 13(1), 16-28.

[18] Ibid

[19] Ibid

safe and stable country in the region.[20] The Kenyan government has responded to these challenges by implementing a range of measures, including increased security operations, community policing initiatives, and social welfare programs aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of radicalization and gang culture.[21]

2.3 Current Situation

The situation on Radicalization to violent extremism in Kenya remains a challenge, although there have been some positive developments in recent years.[22] While the number of terrorist attacks in Kenya has declined in recent years, the threat of violent extremism remains high, particularly in the northeastern part of the country and along the border with Somalia.[23]

One of the key factors contributing to the ongoing threat of radicalization is the persistence of political, economic, and social grievances, particularly among marginalized communities[24]. These grievances include feelings of exclusion, discrimination, and inequality, which can be exploited by extremist groups to recruit and radicalize individuals.[25] Another factor contributing to the ongoing threat of radicalization is the continued presence and activity of Al-Shabaab in the region.[26] While the group has suffered significant setbacks in recent years, including the loss of territory and leadership,

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[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid

[22] Mwenda, A. (2021). Radicalization to Violent Extremism in Kenya: The State of the Nation. Nairobi: Institute for Security Studies.

[23] Ibid

[24] Ibid

[25] Ibid

[26] Ibid

it remains a potent force in the region, with the ability to launch high-profile attacks.[27]

The Kenyan government has responded to the threat of radicalization through a range of measures, including the implementation of a national strategy to counter violent extremism, the establishment of specialized security units to combat terrorism, and the adoption of community-based approaches to preventing radicalization. [28] However, there is still significant work to be done in addressing the underlying drivers of radicalization, including political, economic, and social grievances.[29]

The study posits that the situation on Radicalization to violent extremism in Kenya remains challenging, and continued efforts will be needed to prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and to address the underlying drivers of radicalization in the country.

3. An Analysis of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism

3.1 Main Features and Strengths

3.1.1 The Ten (10) Pillars
Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism consists of ten pillars that outline the various areas of focus for the strategy. These pillars are:

Ideological: Take a strong stance in defending the core Kenyan principles of constitutional rule, democracy, inter-faith harmony,

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[27] Ibid

[28] Ibid

[29] Ibid

respect for religious freedom, and secular government in the face of violent extremist ideologies. It is also important to acknowledge and protect those who bravely speak out against violent extremism and terrorism.[30]

Political: Create strong and inclusive citizenship through civic awareness, promoting Kenya's unique and positive qualities.[31]

Education: Utilize education, critical reasoning, sports and the promotion of arts and culture to build the resilience of Kenyans.[32]

Economic: Utilize livelihood training and resourcing for economic empowerment to strengthen a sense of belonging amongst Kenyans, particularly the youth.[33]

Psychosocial: Disengage, rehabilitate and re-integrate risk-assessed extremists and provide psychosocial support to their families and social networks[34].

Media and Online: facilitate Prevention/Countering Violent extremism (P/CVE) practitioners with tools and skills to carry out innovative and context-based P/CVE campaigns on relevant media and online platforms.[35]

Gender: mainstream gender equality, equity and sensitivities in all P/CVE work as the drivers and interventions are different between men, women, boys and girls.[36]

Victims of Terrorism: Aligned with the UNSCR 2331 (2016), it is important to address the needs of victims in a comprehensive manner while also respecting their right to privacy and security. This includes

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[30] National Counter Terrorism Center. (2017). The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Nairobi: Government Printer.

[31] Ibid

[32] Ibid

[33] Ibid

[34] Ibid

[35] Ibid

[36] Ibid

providing or facilitating access to medical and psychosocial assistance as well as legal aid.[37]

Law Enforcement: Pass appropriate legislation and facilitate its enforcement; develop and put into action effective and proactive policies, and enhance institutional frameworks to support efforts in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) at all levels.[38]

Research: Conduct and encourage research and surveys based on evidence for P/CVE to promote effective interventions and programs.[39]

3.1.2 The Multi-Agency Approach

Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism takes a multi-agency approach to address the challenge of violent extremism in the country, which is a key strength of the strategy. The strategy recognizes that addressing violent extremism requires a collaborative effort among various government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.[40]

The multi-agency approach brings together multiple stakeholders to identify and address the underlying drivers of violent extremism, and to implement coordinated and integrated responses to prevent and counter it.[41] The strategy leverages the expertise and resources of various stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, religious leaders, and community-based organizations, among others.[42]

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[37] Ibid

[38] Ibid

[39] Ibid

[40] Sitienei, E. K. (2019). The role of multi-agency approach in enhancing security in Kenya: A case study of Nairobi County. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 7(2), 131-139.

[41] Ibid

[42] Ibid

By taking a multi-agency approach, the strategy can draw on the strengths and capabilities of different stakeholders to address the complex and multifaceted challenge of violent extremism. [43] This approach also helps to promote a shared understanding of the problem and to build consensus around the most effective solutions[44]. Furthermore, the multi-agency approach ensures that the strategy is not siloed in any one government agency or sector. Instead, it promotes cross-sectoral collaboration and information sharing, which is essential for effective prevention and counter-radicalization efforts.[45]

The study avers that the multi-agency approach of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism is therefore a key strength of the strategy, as it allows for a more coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive response to the challenge of violent extremism in the country.

3.1.3 The Whole-of-Society Approach

Another key strength of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism is its whole-of-society approach. The strategy recognizes that preventing and countering violent extremism requires the involvement and support of all segments of society, including government, civil society, private sector, religious and community leaders, and individuals. [46] This approach encourages active participation and collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities to create a shared

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[43] Ibid

[44] Ibid

[45] Ibid

[46] Gitari, W., & Mwangi, E. (2020). Assessing the Whole-of-Society Approach in Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 13(2), 1-18.

understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and to develop effective prevention and response measures.[47]

By engaging all segments of society, the strategy helps to promote greater social cohesion and to build community resilience against violent extremism. [48] It also encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility among individuals and communities in addressing the problem, which is critical for the sustainability of prevention efforts.[49] Moreover, the whole-of-society approach ensures that the strategy is not solely dependent on government efforts. Instead, it leverages the resources, expertise, and networks of a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, and community groups, among others.[50] This helps to promote greater innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness in preventing and countering violent extremism.[51]

The study postulates that this approach is a key strength of the strategy, as it encourages active participation and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, promotes greater community resilience, and helps to build sustainable prevention efforts.

3.1.4 The Possibility of Integrating Other Strategies

Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism has the main feature and strength of integrating other strategies to enhance its effectiveness. The strategy recognizes that the challenge of violent extremism is complex and multifaceted, and requires a

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[47] Ibid

[48] Ibid

[49] Ibid

[50] Ibid

[51] Ibid

comprehensive and integrated approach to address it effectively.[52] The strategy integrates various existing policies and strategies, such as the National Counter Terrorism Strategy and the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, among others.[53] This integration allows for a more coordinated and cohesive approach to preventing and countering violent extremism, leveraging the strengths and resources of different strategies.[54]

Additionally, the strategy is adaptable to changing circumstances and can be updated to incorporate new knowledge and emerging threats. This ensures that the strategy remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving nature of violent extremism.[55]

By integrating various strategies and policies, Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism can draw on a wide range of resources, expertise, and networks to address the underlying drivers of violent extremism and to implement effective prevention and counter-radicalization efforts. [56] This approach helps to promote greater collaboration and coordination among different stakeholders, which is essential for a successful response to violent extremism.[57]

Indeed, the integration of other strategies is a key feature and strength of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, as it allows for a more comprehensive and adaptable approach to

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[52] Kisangani, E. M. (2018). Countering violent extremism and the role of national security organs in Kenya. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 13(1), 43-58.
[53] Ibid
[54] Ibid
[55] Ibid
[56] Ibid
[57] Ibid

preventing and countering violent extremism, leveraging the strengths of different strategies to address the challenge effectively.

3.2 Key Weaknesses

3.2.1 Limited Awareness and Comprehension

One of the key weaknesses of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism is limited awareness and comprehension among the target audience. The strategy aims to prevent and counter violent extremism through community engagement and public awareness campaigns. However, the success of these efforts largely depends on the ability of the target audience to understand and comprehend the messaging.[58] In some cases, there may be limited awareness among the general population about the threat of violent extremism, the drivers of radicalization, and the appropriate response measures.[59] This may be due to a lack of information or misinformation about the issue, as well as low levels of education and awareness.[60]

Moreover, the messaging may not be tailored to the specific needs and concerns of the target audience, which may limit its effectiveness in preventing and countering violent extremism. For example, the messaging may not effectively address the concerns of marginalized communities or may not resonate with the cultural and religious beliefs of the target audience.[61]

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[58] Gitari, Mugambi. "Countering violent extremism in Kenya: Current policies, gaps and opportunities." *Journal of Terrorism Research* 8, no. 2 (2017): 21-32.
[59] Ibid
[60] Ibid
[61] Ibid

This limited awareness and comprehension among the target audience can undermine the effectiveness of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in preventing and countering violent extremism. [62] Therefore, it is important for the strategy to prioritize effective communication and outreach efforts, including targeted messaging, community engagement, and public education campaigns, to ensure that the target audience fully understands the threat of violent extremism and the appropriate response measures.[63]

3.2.2 Failure to Address Related Crime.

Another key weakness of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism is its failure to adequately address related crimes. While the strategy aims to prevent and counter violent extremism, it may not effectively address related crimes such as organized crime, corruption, and human trafficking, which may fuel or exacerbate the problem of violent extremism.[64] For example, terrorist groups may engage in criminal activities such as smuggling and trafficking of weapons, drugs, and people, which provide them with the resources and means to carry out attacks.[65] Similarly, corruption and organized crime may undermine the rule of law and promote grievances and disillusionment among marginalized communities, which may increase the risk of radicalization.[66]

Therefore, it is important for Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism to address related crimes as part of its overall

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[62] Ibid

[63] Ibid

[64] Kamunge, E., & Mbote, D. (2019). The Effectiveness of the Kenyan National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in Disrupting Radicalization and Recruitment. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 7(1), 125-140.

[65] Ibid

[66] Ibid

approach. This can be done by strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems, promoting good governance and accountability, and addressing socio-economic grievances and inequality [67] . By addressing related crimes, the strategy can help to disrupt the flow of resources and support to violent extremist groups and to address the underlying grievances that may fuel radicalization. This can help to reduce the risk of violent extremism and promote greater stability and security in Kenya.[68]

The failure to address related crimes is a key weakness of Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, and addressing this issue should be a priority in order to effectively prevent and counter violent extremism.

4. The Case for Reform: Lessons from National and International Jurisdictions

4.1 African Union

4.1.1 Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

The African Union's Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism is a comprehensive framework that seeks to address the root causes of violent extremism in Africa.[69] The strategy focuses on five key pillars: promoting good governance and the rule of law, addressing socio-economic grievances, countering extremist propaganda and ideology, enhancing security and military

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[67] Ibid

[68] Ibid

[69] Kassam, A., & Mairiga, L. (2019). African Union's evolving counter-terrorism agenda. Institute for Security Studies

measures, and strengthening regional and international cooperation.[70]

One of the key strengths of the African Union's strategy is its emphasis on addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism, such as poverty, inequality, and political marginalization.[71] By addressing these root causes, the strategy seeks to prevent radicalization and promote greater stability and security in the region.[72] Moreover, the strategy recognizes the importance of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches, which involve the participation of civil society, communities, and other actors in preventing and countering violent extremism.[73] This approach helps to build trust and legitimacy in the strategy and promotes greater ownership and sustainability of the initiatives.[74]

However, one of the key challenges of the African Union's strategy is the limited capacity and resources of member states to implement the strategy effectively. Many African countries face significant socio-economic and political challenges, which may limit their ability to implement the strategy comprehensively.[75]

Therefore, there is a need for greater investment in building the capacity of member states to prevent and counter violent extremism, including through the provision of technical assistance, training, and financial support. By strengthening the capacity of member states, the African Union's strategy can be more effective in addressing the root

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[70] Ibid
[71] Ibid
[72] Ibid
[73] Ibid
[74] Ibid
[75] Ibid

causes of violent extremism and promoting greater stability and security in the region.[76]

4.1.2 Key Lessons

Kenya can learn several key lessons from the African Union's Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. One is addressing root causes. Kenya can adopt a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of violent extremism, such as poverty, inequality, and political marginalization. This can help to prevent radicalization and promote greater stability and security in the country.[77] Second is the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach. Kenya can adopt a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to preventing and countering violent extremism. This approach involves the participation of civil society, communities, and other actors in preventing and countering violent extremism, which helps to build trust and legitimacy in the strategy and promote greater ownership and sustainability of the initiatives.[78] Capacity building is also a key lesson. Kenya can invest in building the capacity of law enforcement agencies, government institutions, and civil society organizations to prevent and counter violent extremism. This includes the provision of technical assistance, training, and financial support to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives.[79] Finally, is Regional and international cooperation. Kenya can strengthen regional and international cooperation to prevent and counter violent extremism. This involves working with other countries and regional

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[76] Ibid

[77] Aning, K., & Atuobi, S. K. (2017). The African Union and its strategy for countering violent extremism. In countering violent extremism in Africa (pp. 29-46). Springer, Cham.

[78] Ibid

[79] Ibid

organizations to share best practices, exchange information, and coordinate efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism.[80]

By adopting these key lessons from the African Union's Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, Kenya can develop a more effective and comprehensive strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism, which can promote greater stability and security in the country.

4.2   European Union

4.2.1 The European Union's Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism

It is a comprehensive framework aimed at preventing radicalization and addressing the root causes of violent extremism in Europe. The strategy is built around four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and response.[81]

One of the key strengths of the European Union's strategy is its emphasis on a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, which involves various actors such as government agencies, civil society, communities, and religious organizations.[82] This approach aims to build trust and partnerships between these actors to prevent radicalization and promote greater social cohesion. [83]The strategy also recognizes the importance of addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism, such as discrimination, marginalization, and socio-economic grievances.[84] It emphasizes the need to address these

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[80] Ibid

[81] Bures, O. (2019). The EU's approach to counterterrorism: A critical appraisal. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57(1), 19-36.

[82] Ibid

[83] Ibid

[84] Ibid

factors through targeted initiatives and policies, such as promoting education, employment, and social inclusion. [85] Furthermore, the strategy emphasizes the importance of early detection and intervention to prevent radicalization. It focuses on strengthening community resilience and promoting the involvement of families, friends, and other trusted individuals in detecting and reporting signs of radicalization.[86]

However, one of the challenges of the European Union's strategy is the limited resources available to implement the initiatives effectively.[87] Additionally, there are concerns about the potential for stigmatization and discrimination of certain communities, particularly Muslim communities, which may undermine the effectiveness of the strategy.[88]

4.2.2 Key Lessons

Kenya can learn several important lessons from the European Union's strategy for combating radicalization and recruitment to terrorism. One is the importance of a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach. [89] Like the European Union, Kenya can adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to preventing and countering violent extremism. This approach involves the participation of various actors such as government agencies, civil society organizations, communities, and religious organizations.[90] It aims to build trust and partnerships between these actors to prevent

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[85] Ibid

[86] Ibid

[87] Ibid

[88] Ibid

[89] Mugambiwa, S. S., & Chikulo, B. C. (2017). The European Union's Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Its Implications for Africa. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 4(2), 1-21.

[90] Ibid

radicalization and promote greater social cohesion.[91] Second involves addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism. The European Union recognizes the importance of addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism, such as discrimination, marginalization, and socio-economic grievances.[92] Kenya can adopt a similar approach by implementing targeted initiatives and policies that promote education, employment, and social inclusion to address these drivers of violent extremism.[93]Early detection and intervention is also another key lesson. The European Union emphasizes the importance of early detection and intervention to prevent radicalization. This involves strengthening community resilience and promoting the involvement of families, friends, and other trusted individuals in detecting and reporting signs of radicalization.[94]

Kenya can learn from this approach by implementing similar initiatives that empower communities to prevent and counter violent extremism.[95] Finally, Balancing security and human rights is a vital lesson for Kenya. The European Union recognizes the importance of balancing security concerns with respect for human rights and the rule of law.[96] Kenya can adopt a similar approach to ensure that its efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism do not violate human rights or undermine democratic values.[97]

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[91] Ibid
[92] Ibid
[93] Ibid
[94] Ibid
[95] Ibid
[96] Ibid
[97] Ibid

By adopting these lessons from the European Union's strategy, Kenya can develop a more effective and comprehensive strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism in the country.

4.3. United States

4.3.1 Strategic Framework

The United States Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence is a comprehensive framework aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and targeted violence within the United States. The framework is built around four pillars: understanding the threat, prevention and disruption, mitigation and response, and cross-cutting areas.[98]

One of the key strengths of the United States' strategic framework is its emphasis on a comprehensive and collaborative approach to preventing and countering terrorism and targeted violence[99]. This approach involves the participation of various actors such as government agencies, law enforcement, civil society organizations, communities, and private sector stakeholders.[100] It aims to build trust and partnerships between these actors to prevent radicalization and promote greater social cohesion.[101] The framework also recognizes the importance of addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism and targeted violence, such as hate, intolerance, and discrimination. It emphasizes the need to address these factors through targeted initiatives and policies, such as promoting

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[98] Ibrahim, A., & Smith, C. (2018). An analysis of the US government's strategy for Countering Violent Extremism. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 41(5), 345-362.

[99] Ibid

[100] Ibid

[101] Ibid

education, community engagement, and social inclusion. [102] Furthermore, the framework emphasizes the importance of early detection and intervention to prevent radicalization and targeted violence. It focuses on strengthening community resilience and promoting the involvement of families, friends, and other trusted individuals in detecting and reporting signs of radicalization and targeted violence.[103]

However, one of the challenges of the United States' strategic framework is the potential for stigmatization and discrimination of certain communities, particularly Muslim and other minority communities. This can undermine the effectiveness of the strategy and further fuel resentment and distrust towards the government and law enforcement agencies.[104]

4.3.2 Key Lessons

Key lessons that Kenya can learn from the United States Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence are quite a number. One is Comprehensive and Collaborative Approach. Kenya can adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and targeted violence by involving various actors such as government agencies, law enforcement, civil society organizations, communities, and private sector stakeholders.[105] This can help to build trust and partnerships

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[102] Ibid

[103] Ibid

[104] Ibid

[105] Kimathi, M., & Kamau, J. (2017). Countering Violent Extremism: A review of the US strategy and lessons for Kenya. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 10(2), 16-34.

between these actors to prevent radicalization and promote greater social cohesion.[106]

Addressing Underlying Drivers is also a key lesson for Kenya. Kenya can address the underlying drivers of violent extremism and targeted violence, such as hate, intolerance, and discrimination through targeted initiatives and policies.[107] This could include promoting education, community engagement, and social inclusion to address these factors.[108]Another lesson is Early Detection and Intervention. Kenya can focus on early detection and intervention to prevent radicalization and targeted violence by strengthening community resilience and involving families, friends, and other trusted individuals in detecting and reporting signs of radicalization and targeted violence.[109] Finally, is avoiding Stigmatization and Discrimination. Kenya should avoid stigmatizing and discriminating against certain communities, particularly Muslim and other minority communities, which can undermine the effectiveness of the strategy and further fuel resentment and distrust towards the government and law enforcement agencies.[110]

By adopting these lessons, Kenya can develop a more effective strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism and targeted violence in the country.

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[106] Ibid

[107] Ibid

[108] Ibid

[109] Ibid

[110] Ibid

4.4   United Kingdom

4.4.1 CONTEST Strategy

The United Kingdom's CONTEST Strategy is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to preventing and countering terrorism.[111] The strategy has four key pillars: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare.[112] The "Pursue" pillar focuses on detecting, prosecuting, and disrupting terrorist activities. The "Prevent" pillar aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism in the first place, by addressing the root causes of radicalization and extremism. The "Protect" pillar seeks to strengthen the country's protection against terrorist attacks, by improving physical security measures and increasing public awareness. Finally, the "Prepare" pillar focuses on building resilience and preparedness among individuals, communities, and institutions to deal with the impact of a terrorist attack.[113]

4.4.2   Key Lessons

Some key lessons that Kenya can learn from the UK's CONTEST Strategy include: A full throng Multi-Agency Approach. Kenya can adopt a multi-agency approach, involving various government departments, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organizations, to implement a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy;[114]Community Engagement: Kenya can increase community engagement and partnership-building initiatives with vulnerable and at risk communities, to prevent radicalization while building mutual

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[111] Tarek Younis and Amina Easat-Daas (2018).A critical assessment of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy and its implications for Islamophobia

[112] Ibid

[113] Ibid

[114] Ngau, P., & Kisiangani, E. W. (2018). The United Kingdom's Contest strategy: Implications for countering violent extremism in Kenya. *Journal of Terrorism Research*, 9(1), 1-12

trust and cooperation with law enforcement agencies; [115] Early Intervention: Kenya can develop programs to identify and intervene likely individuals, who are at risk of radicalization, through a combination of education, mental health support/psychosocial support, and including other social services; Addressing Root Causes: Kenya can prioritize addressing the root causes of radicalization and extremism, including social, economic, and political grievances, as a key component of its counter-terrorism strategy.[116]

By adopting these lessons, Kenya can develop a more comprehensive and effective strategy to prevent and counter terrorism in the country.

5. Conclusion

Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism has made important strides in preventing and countering the spread of radicalization and violent extremism in the country. The strategy's multi-agency and whole-of-society approach are notable strengths, as they recognize the importance of collaboration and community engagement in addressing this complex issue. However, the strategy has several key weaknesses, including limited awareness, comprehension and a failure to address related crimes. To improve the strategy, Kenya can learn some lessons from regional and international jurisdictions, including the African Union's Regional Strategy, the European Union's Strategy, the United States Strategic Framework, and the United Kingdom's CONTEST Strategy. These examples provide useful insights on how, Kenya can strengthen its approach to countering violent extremism. Ultimately, reforming and improving Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism

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[115] Ibid

[116] Ibid

is essential to ensure that the country can effectively prevent and counter the spread of radicalization and violent extremism, and create a safer and more secure society for all Kenyans.

References

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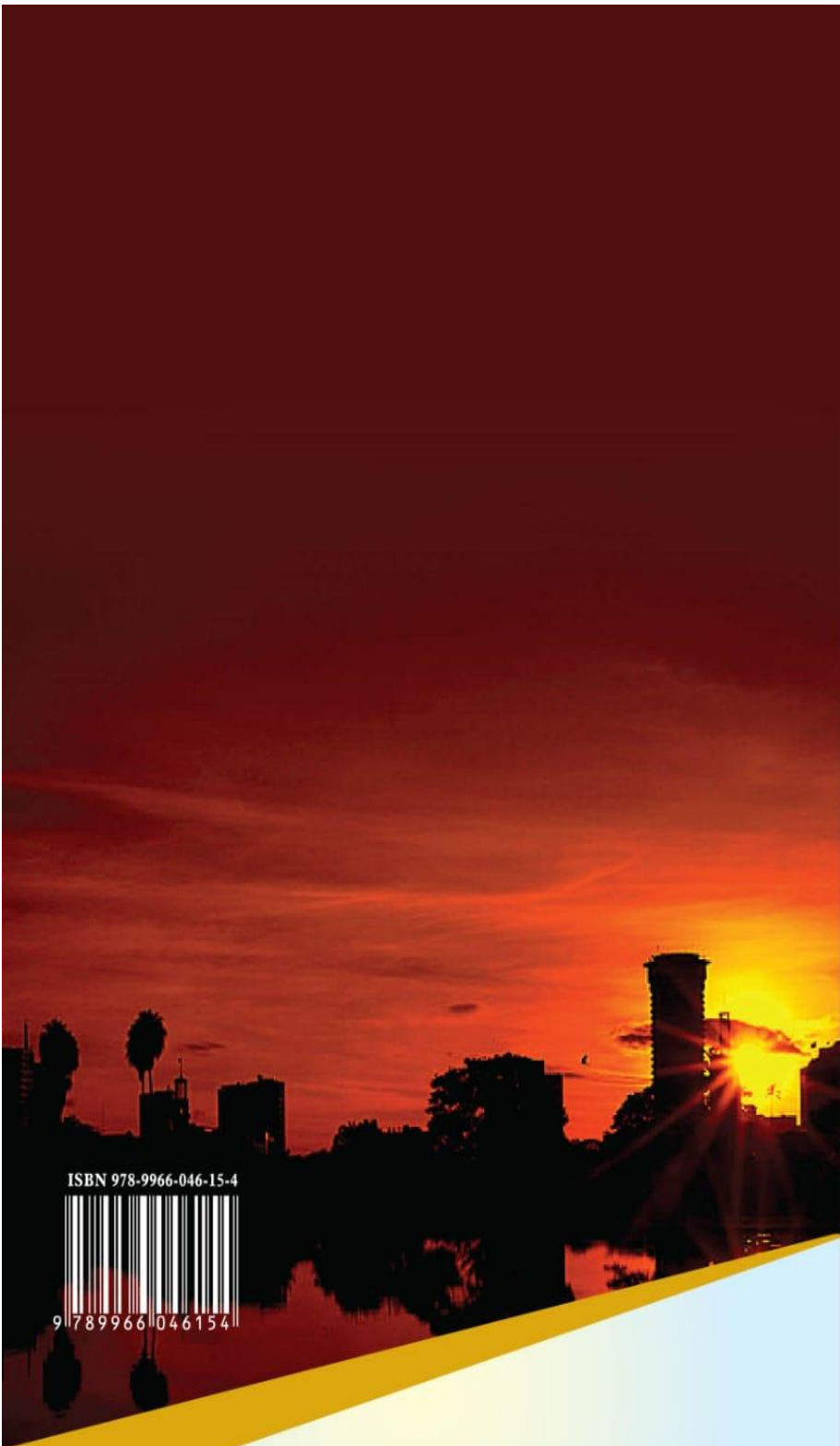
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