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Mapping Perceptions of Violent Extremism

Pilot Study of Community Attitudes in Kenya and Somaliland

BY LIAT SHETRET, MATTHEW SCHWARTZ,
AND DANIELLE COTTER

CGCC 
CENTER ON GLOBAL
COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

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About the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC)—a project of the Fourth Freedom Forum—is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research institute. We work with governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations, and regional organizations to strengthen partnerships against terrorism. Since 2008, CGCC has worked closely with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Capacity Building Programme Against Terrorism (now the IGAD Security Sector Program [ISSP]) to strengthen partnerships against terrorism in East Africa and the Horn. For the past few years, CGCC and the ISSP have helped IGAD member states Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda to develop and improve their counterterrorism-related capacities and their cooperation, as well as to contribute to broader regional security that underpins social and economic development. In particular, CGCC has focused on evidence-led programming and research with regard to East African law enforcement capacities, to countering violent extremism in the region, and on strengthening regional and national anti-money laundering capacities.

For further information, please visit www.globalct.org and www.fourthfreedomforum.org.

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About the Project Partners

INTEGRITY RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

Integrity Research and Consultancy is a multidisciplinary team of project implementers, researchers, trainers, analysts, project evaluators, and research anthropologists with expertise delivering projects across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Integrity specializes in the provision of insightful research and localized consultancy in conflict, postconflict, and fragile environments while building trust and giving voice to local people. For more information, please visit Integrity's website at <http://www.integrityresearch.co.uk>.

THE KENYA MUSLIM YOUTH ALLIANCE

The Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) incorporates 153 youth-led, community-based organizations, student movements, and young imams and madrasa teachers. KMYA engages in a range of activities, including community forums for Muslim youth leaders, publication of a semimonthly newspaper (*The New Dawn*), and promotion of civic education programming on democracy, human rights, participatory governance, peace building, and human security. For more information, please visit KMYA's website at <http://www.kmya.org>.

OBSERVATORY OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Based at the University of Hargeisa in Somaliland, the Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP) works to develop and implement evidence-based programming to enhance community safety in all regions of Somalia. It aims to develop a harmonized approach to community safety through supporting grassroots initiatives in partnership with a loose consortium of local and international nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and UN agencies. For more information, please visit the OCVP's website at <http://www.ocvp.org>.

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We wish to express deep gratitude to our project implementation partners at Integrity Research and Consultancy, including Anthony Ellis, Martine Zeuthen, Andrew Cleary, and James Khalil; Hassan Ole Naado and the entire KMYA team in Nairobi and Mombasa; and Abdullahi Odowa and his colleagues at the OCVF in Hargeisa.

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Acronyms

CGCC	Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation
CVE	Countering violent extremism
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ISSP	IGAD Security Sector Program (formerly IGAD Capacity Building Programme Against Terrorism)
KMYA	Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCVP	Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNSAS	UN Somalia Assistance Strategy



Executive Summary

The greater Horn of Africa subregion faces a number of security and development challenges. These are further amplified by conditions of endemic sociopolitical and economic marginalization, political instability, and weak institutional capacity. The history of violent conflict in the subregion has offered an enabling environment for numerous domestic and subnational militant groups, many of which have engaged in acts of terrorism throughout the subregion for more than a half-century.

Over the past few years, the international community has increasingly sought to develop effective measures and on-the-ground programming to prevent terrorism and counter violent extremism. Some multilateral organizations and donor countries have prioritized providing support for countering violent extremism (CVE) to certain developing countries and regions and their respective diasporas, which are perceived as being particularly vulnerable to violent radicalization and terrorist sympathies, support, or recruitment. In light of the general state of underdevelopment and fragility that characterizes the subregion, ongoing instability in Somalia, and heightened concern over the threat posed by the al-Qaida–affiliated, Somali-based terrorist group al-Shabaab, the greater Horn of Africa subregion has come to be a main geographic focus of such assistance.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This report presents the findings of a pilot demonstration project of the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC) titled “Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Violent Extremism and the Impact of International Prevention Programming,” undertaken in Kenya and Somaliland. In accordance with the core objectives of the project, this report offers insight into understanding

- how local community members perceive relevant international actors and their interventions in coastal Kenya and Somaliland,
- how these community members perceive the extent and impact of violent extremism, and
- how relevant international actors are contributing or can best contribute to context-sensitive CVE programming in partnership with local communities.

The pilot demonstration project was designed and implemented throughout 2012. It was led by the CGCC East Africa team, based in New York, along with researchers from Integrity Research and Consultancy; the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), an independent nonprofit organization based in Nairobi that works to empower youth across Kenya through capacity building, community dialogue, and civic development; and the Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP), an independent academic institution based in Hargeisa, Somalia, that conducts research, analysis, and community training on issues of safety and security. As part of this pilot project, the project team spoke with a variety of community stakeholders in parts of Kenya and Somaliland to capture firsthand their perspectives on security and insecurity, including violent extremism and terrorism. The views expressed over the course of this project were compiled into a “perceptions mapping.” Additionally, the project team compiled a short film portraying local anecdotal perceptions on violent extremism in Kenya. To view this film, visit www.globalct.org.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Project team discussions with interlocutors in Kenya and Somaliland and accompanying desk research overwhelmingly suggest that a range of unmet fundamental needs in the areas of citizen security, economic opportunity, and equitable justice are perceived as the primary drivers of insecurity among local communities. Ultimately, neither violent extremism nor terrorism figured highly into their daily security concerns. Violent extremism was viewed as an external threat, and acts of violent extremism within Kenya and Somaliland were discussed within the context of ideological manipulation of local socioeconomic and political grievances. Perceptions of community insecurity revolved around local conditions of safety and human security, economic development and access to public goods, and community expectations and perceptions of local and international institutions.

As socioeconomic and political conditions across coastal Kenya and Somaliland are not identical, interlocutors in Nairobi, Coast Province, and Hargeisa raised a range of specific concerns reflective of unique local conditions.

In Kenya, perceptions revolved around a number of socioeconomic and political grievances. Among the marginalized communities of coastal Kenya, the counterterrorism agenda is perceived to have contributed to what they see as a series of repressive practices by state security forces. Despite ongoing reform initiatives, many Kenyans seemed unconvinced of their impact on current law enforcement practices. Discussions in Kenya revealed a range of grievances against the government in Nairobi. Relative economic deprivation has long been the subject of local dissent, dissatisfaction, and opposition to the national government. The general socioeconomic and political marginalization of local youth, a lack of gender inclusivity, and ethnic discrimination against Muslim communities also figured highly in the grievances of local communities.

Discussions in Somaliland suggest that insecurity and violence are perceived as being driven more by economic factors rather than politics or religious ideology. For example, while criminality among unemployed and uneducated youth was commonly discussed as a serious security concern among Somalilanders, associated violence was not attributed to political or ideological motivations. Despite what some saw as the increasing capacity of local security forces, a number of community members perceived that the benefits were not felt everywhere in the country and that security forces were unable to curb the prevalence of violent crime in some parts of the region. Concerns over clan-based conflict and positive disposition toward traditional dispute resolution, the insensitivity of international programming to accommodate local needs, and limited employment opportunities, particularly among youth, were commonly cited as well. Many participants expressed concern that international security and development programming taking place in their communities is designed and implemented without sufficient local input or buy-in. Although perceptions of international assistance in Kenya and Somaliland were mixed, many felt that programming did not always address local needs. At the same time, local and international counterterrorism and related CVE agendas were viewed with distrust and, in some cases, outright contention.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING CVE PROGRAMMING

CVE interventions should be conducted in a manner consistent with established principles and best practices in the provision of assistance, including local ownership, transparency, and coordination. Although there is widespread consensus regarding these principles with regard to the provision of aid, the views expressed by local communities in Kenya and Somaliland suggested a number of recommendations for improving the effectiveness of CVE programming and addressing the skepticism with which much CVE programming is regarded.

- 1. Design a context-sensitive approach** to programming based on local needs and community perceptions. Prioritize local perceptions in designing counterterrorism and CVE programming by supporting initiatives that address local conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. These initiatives need not be labeled as such to have an impact, which can be measured by ongoing perception surveys as part of donor due diligence in program implementation.
- 2. Strengthen local ownership** by integrating community participation in the inception, design, implementation, and evaluation of local programming. Partner with locally credible nongovernmental organizations with a view to increasing their capacity. Vet partner organizations to ensure local legitimacy, financial accountability, and transparency.
- 3. Deepen and share the regional knowledge base on violent extremism.** Support networks of local experts on cross-cutting issues related to violent extremism to guide and coordinate programming. Map lessons about the role of civil society and the media in mitigating and preventing violent radicalization in the region.
- 4. Design and evaluate programming** based on desired impacts using principles and best practices in measurement and evaluation from related fields, including the use of baseline perception surveys.
- 5. Develop national-level communication and coordination platforms** to improve collaboration among local and international partners, articulate shared goals, and capitalize on comparative advantages. Support implementation of cross-cutting security development activities in Kenya in the spirit of its new constitution. Support the delivery of tailored socioeconomic and security assistance to Somaliland in accordance with local context.
- 6. Improve communication and cooperation among key donors and multilateral bodies,** including members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the United Nations, for example, by establishing a donor coordination mechanism to allow embassy representatives to meet before and after GCTF meetings to inform coordinated action.

THE WAY FORWARD

Local perspectives must be taken into account when considering approaches to counter violent extremism. The conceptual ambiguity and lack of programmatic focus of the CVE and terrorism prevention discourse increases the risk that program designers and implementers will support or impose programming in sensitive contexts based on incomplete assumptions and a limited evidence base. The findings of this pilot demonstration project suggest that, in the context of marginalized communities in coastal Kenya and Somaliland, a “hearts and minds”-based approach to countering violent extremism focused on countering extremist narratives is no substitute for fulfilling local needs and addressing community grievances. Additionally, a concerted effort to strengthen donor coordination of project design and programming implementation is crucial. Going forward, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the GCTF are central to the development of an effective donor coordination mechanism to inform more-harmonized programmatic activities.

In the long run, a broader, more holistic conceptualization and approach to countering violent extremism as reflected in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy offers a truly sustainable approach. Gathering local perspectives on the sources of insecurity within their communities and prioritizing programming that includes those inputs is a good start to address violent extremism more directly in a localized context.

Introduction

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE INTERNATIONAL community has increasingly sought to develop effective measures and on-the-ground programming to prevent terrorism and counter violent extremism. This agenda has often been discussed in the context of a shift away from narrower “hard” security measures to a broader strategic approach that includes “softer” measures to countering terrorism.¹ This more-comprehensive policy now seeks to prevent recruitment and radicalization of potential terrorists as well as to pursue those who have already committed acts of terrorism. It is often couched in the need to win the “battle over hearts and minds.”²

This report offers a snapshot of local community perceptions related to violent extremism in parts of Kenya and Somaliland in order to inform a context-sensitive approach to programming. The first section of the report introduces the project objectives, methodology, and limitations. The second and third sections consist of a “perceptions mapping” of Kenya and Somaliland. Each context-specific perceptions mapping presents the views expressed by local community members on a range of socioeconomic and political factors that affected their sense of well-being over the course of interviews and focus groups with the project team. The final section offers some key observations based on the

evidence discussed in the perceptions mapping and presents a perceptions-driven sample programming matrix. The matrix identifies key considerations and programmatic entry points for the United Nations and other relevant actors in the international community interested in pursuing an integrated approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) in the subregion.

When considering the extent of international programming’s potential contribution to or engagement in countering violent extremism, the project team took a holistic approach, which is largely articulated in the first pillar of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The first pillar of the Strategy calls on member states to adopt “measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism,” including but not limited to prolonged unresolved conflicts; dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; the lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights; ethnic, national, and religious discrimination; political exclusion; socioeconomic marginalization; and a lack of good governance.³

Multilateral organizations and donor countries generally have prioritized CVE support to developing countries and regions perceived as particularly vulnerable to violent radicalization and terrorist recruitment, as well

¹ See Jason Rineheart, “Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4, no. 5 (2010).

² Daniel P. Aldrich, “First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds? USAID’s Countering Violent Extremism Policies in Africa,” 26 June 2012, <http://www.purdue.edu/research/gpri/publications/documents/AldrichFirstStepstowardHeartsandMindsendnotes.pdf>.

³ See UN General Assembly, A/Res/60/288, 8 September 2006.



Kibera slum, Nairobi.

as to diaspora communities, which have potential to provide support for or opposition to terrorist activities in their susceptible home countries.⁴ The greater Horn of Africa subregion has become a main geographic focus of such assistance, largely as a result of ongoing conflict in Somalia, the general state of underdevelopment and fragility that characterizes the subregion, and heightened concern over the threat posed by the al-Qaida-affiliated, Somali-based terrorist group al-Shabaab.⁵ In addition, three-fourths of the subregion's population was under the age of 34 in 2010, with this ratio expected to further increase by 2030. This "youth

bulge" contributes to the formation of a large, increasingly marginalized population, which renders the subregion particularly vulnerable to insecurity.⁶ The future stability and prosperity of the subregion will rest on the ability of local communities, civil society, and governments to integrate and empower younger citizens and address their needs.

Major actors in the subregion include the European Union and its member states, the United Nations, and the United States, all of which contribute significant resources and political capital to strengthen states'

⁴ See Ken Menkhaus, "African Diasporas, Diasporas in Africa, and Terrorist Threats," in *The Radicalization of Diasporas and Terrorism*, ed. Andreas Wenger and Victor Mauer (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, 2009), p. 83; Bruce Hoffman, "Radicalization, Terrorism, and Diasporas" (presentation at conference titled "The Radicalization of Diasporas and Terrorism," Zurich, 30 March 2006), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/conf/proceedings/2007/RAND_CF229.pdf.

⁵ The countries of East Africa and the Greater Horn of Africa subregion are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen.

⁶ Society for International Development, "The State of East Africa 2012: Deepening Integration, Intensifying Challenges," 2012, p. 13, http://www.sidint.net/docs/SoEAR2012_final.pdf.

capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremism. The United States allocated \$10 million in fiscal year 2012 to support the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism and pledges \$10 million in 2013, with an additional \$8.9 million promised to support counterterrorism efforts in Kenya. The evolving complexity, scope, and diversity of foreign security and development assistance has led to the elaboration and refinement of country- and context-specific strategies meant to guide the delivery of coordinated, multisectoral donor support packages.⁷

Informed by the growing international discourse on the mutually reinforcing nature of development and security, these aid strategies are commonly guided by key principles such as local ownership, evidence-based programming, stakeholder coordination, and the incorporation into program design of specific indicators to measure impact.⁸ These principles have been used in the elaboration of a more holistic and context-sensitive approach to international and bilateral assistance to combat terrorism and counter violent extremism.⁹ There continue to be opportunities for engagement among the countries and regional bodies in the greater Horn of Africa subregion as well as a willingness to engage on this issue among key regional states such as Kenya and Uganda. There is also a significant opportunity and need for the United Nations and other key actors to play a crucial role in coordinating and implementing initiatives that seek to address conditions conducive to terrorism tailored to local contexts and needs.¹⁰ Although diverse sources of international support for the subregion are welcome contributions, a

more concerted coordination of resources and programming initiatives, along with a greater commitment to local ownership, will be necessary to demonstrate the full value of this aid.

About This Project

This report presents the findings of a pilot demonstration project of the Center for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC) titled “Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Violent Extremism and the Impact of International Prevention Programming,” undertaken in Kenya and Somalia. This project is a component of a Dutch-sponsored, four-part program implemented by CGCC titled “Enhancing and Supporting the Implementation of United Nations Efforts to Prevent Terrorism.” Additional components of this program include (1) a best practices colloquium held in Ottawa in 2012, bringing together expert practitioners to identify effective programming in terrorism prevention; (2) an independent evaluation of UN strategic communication on terrorism prevention, providing recommendations for improved performance; and (3) analytical support to UN headquarters, particularly the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, designed to assist in developing a coherent position and message on terrorism prevention.

The pilot demonstration project was designed and implemented throughout 2012. It was led by the CGCC East Africa team, based in New York, along with

⁷ For example, see U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), “Horn of Africa: Multi-Sectoral Interventions in Pastoralist Communities,” 30 September 2005, http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/horn_of_africa/fy2005/hoa_mipc_fs02_09-30-2005.pdf.

⁸ These principles and related guidance are derived from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and subsequent development aid policy. OECD, “The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action 2005/2008,” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>. See World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, 2011, p. 222, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf.

⁹ See EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, “EU Counter-terrorism Action Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen,” 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012JC0024:EN:HTML>; Global Counterterrorism Forum Horn of Africa Working Group, “Co-Chairs’ Summary: Way Forward,” 8–10 February 2012, [http://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/19594/CoChairs%2720Summary+of+Inaugural+Horn+of+Africa+Region+Working+Group+Meeting+\(inaugural+meeting\)](http://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/19594/CoChairs%2720Summary+of+Inaugural+Horn+of+Africa+Region+Working+Group+Meeting+(inaugural+meeting)).

¹⁰ For further discussion, see Matthew Schwartz, “Criminal Justice and Rule of Law Capacity Building to Counter Terrorism in Fragile Institutional Contexts: Lessons From Development Cooperation,” *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Policy Brief*, December 2012, http://www.globalctc.org/images/content/pdf/policybriefs/MS_policybrief_1217.pdf.

researchers from Integrity Research and Consultancy; the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), an independent nonprofit organization based in Nairobi that works to empower youth across Kenya through capacity building, community dialogue, and civic development; and the Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP), an independent academic institution based in Hargeisa, Somalia, that conducts research, analysis, and community training on issues of safety and security.

The core objectives of the perceptions mapping presented in this report are understanding

- how community members perceive relevant international actors and their interventions in Somaliland and coastal Kenya,
- how these community members perceive the extent and impact of violent extremism, and
- how relevant international actors are contributing or can best contribute to context-sensitive CVE programming in partnership with local communities.

This report is based on a mixed-methods research approach and focused on a select sampling of target communities in Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya, research was focused on community perceptions in the area surrounding Mombasa in Coast Province, located along the southeastern coast of Kenya. In Somalia, the project team focused on Somaliland, in northwest Somalia.

The development of this report coincided with an effort to convey the voices heard by the project team more intimately through the incorporation of an audio-visual component. The images presented here were taken during a fieldwork visit to Kenya in Octo-

ber 2012 specifically for this report. They are meant to reflect the richness of local cultures and more vividly capture the context of local perspectives discussed.

Additionally, a number of interviews with community activists, religious and civil society leaders, and local experts in Nairobi and Coast Province were captured on film for the composition of a short documentary on local perceptions of violent extremism in Kenya titled “Local Perceptions on Violent Extremism in Kenya.”¹¹

Methodology and Project Design

The project design and research methodology were developed during a preliminary meeting in Addis Ababa in May 2012. During this meeting, the project team developed its research objectives, mapped a series of study questions, and laid the groundwork for the field component of the pilot project. Additionally, the team discussed definitional and analytical challenges of concepts such as countering violent extremism and terrorism prevention, considered local sensitivities and potential risks in conducting related fieldwork, developed a broad overview of the programming related to countering violent extremism being pursued in the vicinity of the sample communities, and determined the best way to convene focus groups of relevant demographics at each field location.

In July 2012, two team members conducted a series of focus groups in Mombasa and Hargeisa, facilitated by KMYA and the OCVP.¹² In accordance with advice from local community interlocutors in Mombasa, focus groups were organized with youth activists, community elders and leaders, and civil society representatives. In Hargeisa, focus groups were arranged with women, traditional and religious leaders, and youth.

¹¹ See http://www.globalct.org/resources_publications_pilotstudy_eastafricaprevention.php.

¹² Andrew Cleary and Martine Zeuthen of Integrity Research and Consultancy spent 1–15 July conducting fieldwork in study locations.

These semistructured focus groups were conducted via simultaneous English-Somali interpretation.

All focus group discussions covered the same areas of inquiry.

1. International actors. Each discussion began with an assessment of participant awareness and perceptions of any international actors that may be working in their communities, including their partners, target populations, and motivations.

2. Security and safety. Due to local sensitivities discussed in detail later in this study, this portion of the focus group discussion was structured to elicit community views on security and safety. Participants were asked to share their understanding of what security means to them and their perception of security in their own communities. They were then asked a series of questions regarding their perspectives of sources of security and insecurity in their communities and groups that they perceive as contributing to security and insecurity.

3. Groups contributing to insecurity. Based on responses to this point, the discussion then focused on the groups mentioned as contributing to feelings of insecurity within participants' communities. The discussion included questions regarding participants' perspectives on the values, social status, motivations, and other characteristics of individuals that join these groups.

4. Actors contributing to security. The discussion shifted back to participants' perceptions of the role of local and international organizations in alleviating security concerns. The discussion included questions regarding participants' perspectives of the roles played by governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in maintaining security, including law enforcement actors and agencies such as the police and military.

The project team conducted further contextual interviews with a selection of local community activists, religious leaders, academics, and expert practitioners, as well as representatives of local and international organizations. Interviewees included representatives from the United Nations, NGOs, aid and development organizations, and embassy staffers based in the region.¹³

Study Challenges and Limitations

The findings presented in the perceptions mapping sections are derived from a small sample size. During focus group and interview discussions, project participants provided anecdotes and observations of their personal experiences with national governments and international programming organizations and partners. This map is therefore not comprehensive.

Although the project design primarily focused on community members and civil society perceptions, the project team had hoped to receive more input from local governments and agencies in Kenya and Somaliland. The project team had limited opportunities to include official perspectives within the scope of this report.

Furthermore, the project team encountered the challenge of complex and diverse interpretations of the CVE agenda. The discourse surrounding the conceptual understanding and definitions of "terrorism" and the related concepts of radicalization and violent extremism is complex, controversial, and sometimes extremely contentious.¹⁴ This is particularly true for certain local communities in the Horn of Africa subregion. What does it mean to counter violent extremism and prevent terrorism? How are these concepts measured and assessed? Some actors, including grassroots and community activists, understood that the work they are doing relates to countering violent extremism and prevention, but actors do not necessarily perceive themselves as actively pursuing a CVE agenda.

¹³ Individual identities of interviewees and their organizational affiliations have been kept confidential.

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion on drivers of violent extremism, see Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," USAID, February 2009, http://transition.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/publications/docs/guide_to_drivers_of_ve.pdf.



Young boys look into community meeting in Kikambala.

Community Perceptions in Kenya's Coast Province and Nairobi

STANDING AS THE MAJOR FINANCIAL HUB OF the East African Community and home to numerous international organizations working in the Horn of Africa subregion, Kenya has been considered a bastion of relative stability in an otherwise troubled area. Yet, the wave of intercommunal violence that gripped the country following the contested reelection of President Mwai Kibaki in December 2007 highlighted the country's underlying fragility and the extent of long-endured socioeconomic and political frustrations among Kenya's marginalized and impoverished masses.

Kenya has long been contested with threats posed by localized identity conflicts, terrorism, and violent crime. In recent years, Kenya has been subject to frequent terrorist attacks by militants, including Somali-based, al-Qaida-affiliated al-Shabaab, a group of ongoing concern to Kenyan authorities. In October 2011, responding to a spate of kidnappings along the northern coast and mounting evidence of al-Shabaab's clandestine recruitment efforts, including among Kenya's

Somali diaspora, Kenya sent troops into southern Somalia. Despite the key role of the Kenyan military in what many observers hail as an effective campaign against al-Shabaab there, the terrorist group and its sympathizers appear to have stepped up efforts to strike back at Kenya from within.

Some security experts suggest that marginalized youth in the Horn of Africa subregion offer groups such as al-Shabaab a "large pool of potential recruits" outside their traditional base in south-central Somalia.¹⁵ Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the relatively established local infrastructure and security of Somalia's neighbors offer an environment more conducive to terrorist activity.¹⁶ Although al-Shabaab is clearly engaging in outreach in the predominantly Somali districts of Eastleigh in Nairobi and in Muslim communities in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, there is little indication that they have achieved anything more than minor success in recruitment among the region's vast population of disaffected Muslim youth.

¹⁵ See Christopher Anzalone, "Kenya's Muslim Youth Center and Al-Shabaab's East African Recruitment," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 10 (October 2012): 9–13; International Crisis Group, "Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation," *Africa Briefing*, no. 85 (25 January 2012), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/kenya/b085-kenyan-somali-islamist-radicalisation.aspx>; Soufan Group, "Kenya: Bringing Terror Home," *TSG IntelBrief*, 19 October 2012, http://soufangroup.com/briefs/details/?Article_Id=409.

¹⁶ Combating Terrorism Center, "Al-Qaida's (Mis)adventures in the Horn of Africa," 2 July 2007, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/al-qaidas-misadventures-in-the-horn-of-africa>. For further discussion, see Volker Krause and Eric E. Otenyo, "Terrorism and the Kenyan Public," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005); Mark Bradbury and Michael Kleinman, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship Between Aid and Security in Kenya," Feinstein International Center, April 2010, pp. 50–51, <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/download/attachments/34807224/WinningHearts.pdf?version=1>; Jan Bachman, "Governmentality and Counterterrorism: Appropriating International Security Projects in Kenya," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 6, no. 1 (2012): 46.



A Kenyan Administration Police officer stands watch in Kikambala, Coast Province.

Below is the perceptions mapping of key themes in Kenya that the project team gathered throughout this study.

‘Police and Army Behaving Badly’: Perceptions of Kenyan Security Services

Among the marginalized communities of coastal Kenya, the counterterrorism agenda is perceived to have

contributed to what they see as a series of repressive practices by state security forces.¹⁷ As a result, the counterterrorism agenda and the related lexicon of “counterradicalization” and “countering violent extremism” are not only viewed as controversial, but are subjects of considerable contention among local communities throughout Kenya and East Africa.

Despite ongoing reform initiatives, many Kenyans seemed unconvinced of their impact on current law

¹⁷ For further discussion, see George Kegoro, “The Effects of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Human Rights: The Experiences of East African Countries,” in *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: In Search for an African Voice*, ed. Wafula Okumu and Anneli Botha (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2007), pp. 51–57, <http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/AFRITERRO071106.PDF>; Human Rights Watch, “‘Why Am I Still Here?’ The 2007 Horn of Africa Renditions and the Fate of Those Still Missing,” 2008, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/09/30/why-am-i-still-here-0>; Task Force on Legal Cooperation Against Terrorism in the IGAD Subregion, “Fighting Terror Through Justice: Implementing the IGAD Framework for Legal Cooperation Against Terrorism,” May 2012, pp. 37–38, http://www.globalct.org/images/content/pdf/reports/TaskForce_Report_May2012.pdf.



Kikambala, Coast Province.

enforcement practices.¹⁸ Concerns over police professionalism and related distrust of local law enforcement were fed by a number of factors. Many respondents perceived that local police often acted with little regard for human rights. “The capacity of the police officers is very bad,” stated one interlocutor, and their actions are characterized by a “failure to uphold human standards completely.”¹⁹ Specific criticisms centered around the issues of prolonged detentions without

trial or for “belonging to a certain group.” Allegations of torture and abuse at the hands of the police were specifically cited. One participant raised the example of women who have been arrested often being put in cells with males and even raped by policemen as a show of force and superiority.²⁰ Another major concern expressed by community interlocutors revolved around an inherent “Muslim bias” evident in daily operational activities of various security agencies. As one

¹⁸ For background and the current status of police reform in Kenya, see the Usalama Reforms Forum, “Police Reforms Monitoring Project,” June 2012, <http://www.usalamaforum.org/ReformsReport.pdf>; James Ndung’u and Manasseh Wepundi, “Transition and Reform: People’s Peacemaking Perspectives on Kenya’s Post-2008 Political Crisis and Lessons for the Future,” Saferworld, March 2012, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/642>; Irene Ndungu, “Police Reforms in Kenya Crucial to Restore Public Confidence,” Institute for Security Studies, 20 October 2011, http://www.issafrica.org/iss_today.php?ID=1374%2623; International Center for Transitional Justice, “Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice in Kenya,” January 2010, <http://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Kenya-Security-Reform-2010-English.pdf>; Kenyan Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector Reform Programme, <http://www.gjlos.go.ke/>. See also Hassan Ole Naado, “Bad Attitude of Police Is Undermining Our Security,” *Star*, 11 October 2011, <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-46126/bad-attitude-police-undermining-our-security>; Clar Ni Chonghaile, “Kenyan Muslims Fear the Worst Over Proposals to Boost Police Powers,” *Guardian*, 27 September 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/27/kenya-muslims-fear-anti-terrorism-bill>.

¹⁹ Local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

²⁰ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012. See U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Kenya,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154352.htm>.

local religious leader complained, the police “automatically label the Muslims as the terrorist,” and crimes committed by Muslim suspects are often automatically spun into Muslim issues.²¹

Kenyan interviewees also emphasized a general lack of professionalism among the police force, pointing to its limited capacity to investigate and prosecute criminal cases. As a religious leader and scholar explained, “The Kenyan police force is the most underequipped security organization in the country. I think it also suffers a crisis of confidence.... Many of the cases that are taken to court are thrown out for lack of evidence.”²² One interlocutor suggested that security services are a reactive force rather than a proactive one.²³ Wanting to see the Kenyan police prevent terrorist attacks rather than react to them after a bombing or grenade attack has been launched, another noted, “I want the [National Security and Intelligence Service] to warn me in advance that this is going to happen.”²⁴

At the same time, negative perceptions of police in local communities contribute to a disconnect in information sharing between community members and police investigators. Although community members may have a great deal of useful information and insights to share with police, a lack of trust makes it “very difficult for the community to share this information,” which further exacerbates police deficiencies.²⁵ The Kenyan police have worked to connect with citizens through a community engagement poli-

cy, but its efficacy has been limited, as participants described the policy as “poorly implemented” and shared their belief that it was meant to serve as a public relations campaign “but in reality is ineffective because there is no system in place.”²⁶

Economic Deprivation: Local Grievances Against the Government

Discussions in Kenya revealed a range of grievances against the government in Nairobi. Relative economic deprivation has long been the subject of local dissent, dissatisfaction, and opposition to the national government.²⁷ The average incidence of poverty in the Coast Province was 62 percent in 2006, with pockets around Mombasa upward of 70 percent.²⁸ The level of economic disparity is perceived as being particularly acute among the province’s large concentration of Muslims who feel increasingly marginalized by broken promises of deeper government commitment to equitable development in the region.²⁹

Some Kenyans were keenly aware of the role of local socioeconomic deprivation and antigovernment sentiment on conditions conducive to violent extremism. Reflecting on these conditions, one local civil society representative expressed concerns over the inability of local institutions to address local needs in education, employment, and security, providing an opportunity

²¹ Director of civil society organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

²² Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

²³ Civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

²⁴ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; director of civil society organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

²⁵ Youth community organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

²⁶ Director of religious youth organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

²⁷ Bradbury and Kleinman, “Winning Hearts and Minds?” pp. 23–26. See generally Mwandawiro Mghanga, *Usipoziba Ufa Utajenga Ukuta: Land, Elections and Conflicts in Kenya’s Coast Province* (Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2010).

²⁸ UN Development Programme (UNDP), *Kenya National Human Development Report 2006*, 2006, p. 51, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/africa/kenya/KENYA_2006_en.pdf.

²⁹ Civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012; local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; Alex Harneit-Sievers, “Misleading Quiet: An Introduction to Coast Province During and Beyond Kenya’s Post-Election Violence,” in *Usipoziba Ufa Utajenga Ukuta: Land, Elections and Conflicts in Kenya’s Coast Province* (Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2010), p. viii.

“[Al-Shabaab] owes me nothing. This government owes me everything. ... I think if al-Shabaab were to recruit my son today, I would point my finger at the government. The government would have thrown the first stone.”



Mathare slum, three miles east of Nairobi's business district, is home to more than 700,000 people.

for violent extremists to capitalize on widespread feelings of hopelessness and marginalization among local communities.³⁰ Organizations such as al-Shabaab “latch on to any grievance that anybody might have” and use the tailwinds of related frustrations to rally individuals, particularly youth, to their cause. As one local religious leader and community activist dramatically exclaimed, al-Shabaab “owes me nothing. This government owes me everything. So it is up to them to behave in a manner that does not allow al-Shabaab any room to get to my son. I think if al-Shabaab were to recruit my son today, I would point my finger at the government. The government would have thrown the first stone.”³¹

There was a consensus that unemployment and a general lack of economic opportunity was a major source of general insecurity and can potentially contribute to opening pathways to violent extremism among individuals in vulnerable local communities. High levels of unemployment, reported at 40 percent in December 2011, were commonly cited as a grievance around which violence may be incited.³² A youth community organizer from Mombasa noted that “the issue of unemployment is rampant here at the coast” and “citizens do not feel that the government is making an effort to [improve job growth] even though it is seen to be in the best position to alleviate this issue.”³³

³⁰ Civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012; religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

³¹ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

³² African Economic Outlook, “Kenya 2012,” *African Economic Outlook 2012*, 2012, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/PDF/Kenya%20Full%20PDF%20Country%20Note.pdf>.

³³ Youth community organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

BOX 1. MOMBASA REPUBLICAN COUNCIL

Graffiti supporting the Mombasa Republican Council.

The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is a sociopolitical movement rooted in Kenya's Coast Province arguing for secession of the province in light of what supporters perceive as a history of social, political, and economic marginalization and dispossession perpetuated by the government in Nairobi. At the center of the movement's grievances is the unequal distribution and ownership of local land, although frustrations over economic inequality and youth unemployment also exist. Most interviewees in Mombasa agreed that despite the tremendous amount of revenue generated through tourism and other lucrative local industries, impoverished local commu-

nities reap little benefit in the way of development, infrastructure, security, or access to basic public services.^a

The MRC asserts historical legitimacy of their claim for independence based on references to an unjust agreement between the British Empire and Sultanate of Zanzibar when the British took up administration of the 10-mile strip of coastal Kenya. Ultimately, the coast fell under the control of newly established Kenya following Kenyan independence from the United Kingdom in 1963.^b In response to the MRC's calls for secession, conflicting reports implicating its leadership in promoting and engaging

in acts of violence, and recent calls for its approximately 100,000 followers to boycott the upcoming March 2013 general election, the Kenyan government declared the MRC to be an organized criminal group and has included it in a list of illegal organizations with the likes of al-Shabaab, a declaration that has since been ruled unconstitutional by the Kenyan High Court.^c The MRC maintains that it is a nonviolent movement.^d

A majority of interviewees did not perceive the MRC as a direct threat to Kenyan security, with participants in the youth group in Mombasa acknowledging that the MRC "has genuine issues" and it has a "good way of dealing with their priority issues" through the courts system.^e Participants in youth and civil society groups in Mombasa empathized on some level with the work of the movement, and many were supportive of the MRC's cause.^f One local Mombasa youth stated that, informed or not, "everyone is MRC."^g

Participants stressed there were "no links between the MRC and radical religious groups," but they did acknowledge the MRC has been used by some of its leaders to further their own interests.^h Some in Mombasa expressed concern over reports of a "somewhat violent" MRC disruption of a mock election as well as a raid on a police station, noting that such actions can be a trigger for violence among the misinformed.ⁱ

^a Integrity Research and Consultancy, "Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Violent Extremism and the Impact of International Prevention Programming," 2012 (copy on file with authors) (hereinafter Integrity report) (Mombasa youth focus group response).

^b Mark Agutu, "How the Coastal Strip Was 'Saved,'" *Daily Nation*, 11 September 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201109110113.html>.

^c Cyrus Ombati and Ngumbao Kithi, "MRC Threatens to Stop National Exams," *Standard*, 6 October 2012, http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000067750&story_title=Kenya-MRC-%E2%80%98threatens-to-stop-national-exams%E2%80%99.

^d Maureen Mudi, "Government Declares Mombasa Republican Council Illegal Group," *Star*, 20 October 2012, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201210210068.html>; "Kenya: Uproar Over the Unbanning of Secessionist Movement," Institute for Security Studies, 30 July 2012, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207311045.html>.

^e Integrity report (Mombasa youth focus group response).

^f Ibid. (Mombasa youth focus group and civil society focus group responses).

^g Ibid. (Mombasa youth focus group response).

^h Ibid.

ⁱ Ibid.

Many Kenyans on the coast shared the perception that local economic deprivation was the result of government mismanagement of resources. They commonly cited discrepancies in the quality of infrastructure between central and coastal Kenya to illustrate this disparity.³⁴ The Coast Province generates a significant amount of income for the country, but the community representatives feel they see little in return by way of government investment in local infrastructure and public services. Instead, the revenue is invested elsewhere in the country.³⁵ A local human rights expert in Nairobi identified “a general lack of infrastructure in many rural parts” of Coast Province as a “very real grievance and economic deficiency.”³⁶ Another stated that the Coast Province “attracts tourism.... You find the beach is very developed, but when you go further inward into where the people live, there is lack of infrastructure.”³⁷

A number of local interviewees identified land ownership as a primary grievance contributing to a broader sense of marginalization and inequity among communities in Coast Province. These land-related grievances date to the time of Kenya’s independence, when the lands of the British colonists were redistributed disproportionately in favor of particular ethnic groups from other parts of the country. “Most of the lands that belonged to the coastal people were taken by the ruling elite using their political positions,” stated a community organizer in Mombasa. Land owners and their heirs are viewed as “nonindigenous Kenyan farmers” who profit from the dispossession of native people from the coast.³⁸ As a result of land redistribution, many indigenous of the coast are “squatters” on the land they believe to be

rightfully theirs but that belongs to absentee landlords who can evict them at any time.³⁹

Participants in the youth focus group in Mombasa agreed that frustration over this landlessness can easily lead to tension.⁴⁰ A religious leader and scholar in Nairobi noted that young men become resentful of “foreigners and aliens coming in to their territory, getting land, and getting that land recognized legally through registration” while community elders who have lived and worked this land are left powerless.⁴¹ The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), a local political movement calling for the secession of the coast from the rest of Kenya, was discussed in the context of local grievances over land and other aspects of marginalization on the coast (box 1).

Socioeconomic and Political Marginalization of Youth in Kenya

With youth unemployment comprising 70 percent of the country’s total unemployment rate,⁴² the lack of opportunity among Kenya’s rapidly growing youth population⁴³ has been associated with a growing sense of socioeconomic and political marginalization. Interlocutors repeatedly expressed concerns related to marginalized and frustrated youth in their communities, whom they categorized as “easily influenced” and “idle” with a greater propensity to engage in behaviors that create insecurity within the community.⁴⁴ Some Mombasa elders and traditional leaders mentioned

³⁴ Integrity Research and Consultancy, “Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Violent Extremism and the Impact of International Prevention Programming,” September 2012 (copy on file with authors) (hereinafter Integrity report) (elders and leaders focus group response).

³⁵ Director of religious youth organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; youth community organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012; civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

³⁶ Local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Harneit-Sievers, “Misleading Quiet,” p. xi.

³⁹ Civil society organizer, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

⁴⁰ Integrity report (youth focus group response).

⁴¹ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁴² African Economic Outlook, “Kenya 2012.”

⁴³ Kenya’s constitutional definition of youth is all Kenyans between the ages of 18 and 35.

⁴⁴ Integrity report (youth focus group response).



Young boys in Kikambala, Coast Province.

unemployment and a lack of education as the primary reasons for youth frustration. They noted the frequency with which they encounter aimless youth with “nowhere to go.” One participant recalled that “there used to be opportunities for young people, opportunities that no longer exist.”⁴⁵

A local religious leader and scholar in Nairobi cited the gaps between the coastal region and other areas of the country regarding access to education as disadvantaging coastal youth seeking employment. As a result, “you end up having a workforce in the coastal region from other areas of the country, and this makes the young people of that particular area ... really an-

noyed.”⁴⁶ In addition, the unjust manner in which youth are often treated by police exacerbates their frustrations. A local human rights expert in Nairobi stated that police interaction with coastal province youth and “their treatment while in police custody ... causes them to feel very disenfranchised and to come out more angry and more upset.”⁴⁷

Several community members spoke regarding al-Shabaab targeting Kenyan youth for recruitment, especially in the coastal regions. One view of many by a religious leader and scholar in Nairobi suggested that because al-Shabaab’s agenda “has no content,” it must manipulate local grievances to appeal to potential

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁴⁷ Local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

recruits. “The majority of the people who run organizations” such as al-Shabaab “are not well versed in Islam to begin with. They latch onto any grievance that anybody might have and remove from it any intellectual content and become rabble rousers.... They will use exaggerations, they use lies to do that.”⁴⁸ One participant in the youth focus group in Mombasa cited al-Shabaab’s youth-targeted recruitment as a threat to Kenyan security, as there have been instances of youth who “run away, come back, and ‘experiment on our areas.’”⁴⁹

Although al-Shabaab recruits youth and has a presence in coastal Kenya, elders in the Mombasa focus group cautioned against generally characterizing al-Shabaab as the only militia group that targets and recruits youth. Participants listed the “many” militia groups in Kenya, including the MRC, although whether it constitutes a militia was disputed; the Kaya Bombo; and the Baghdad Boys, ultimately concluding that “it’s all militia, we can’t just focus” on al-Shabaab.⁵⁰

Lack of Gender Inclusivity

Participants noted a lack of gender inclusivity from a governmental and cultural standpoint and emphasized that government systems ought to be more inclusive across various elements of the political process, including elections. “[B]oth genders must be represented within government systems, and you must also have those of the different age brackets, the youth.”⁵¹ Even though the Kenyan constitution includes measures to improve female representation in public service, government institutions are still perceived as “traditionally male places.”⁵²



Young girl looks into a community meeting in Kikambala, Coast Province.

Focus groups mentioned women as one of the target groups for international organizations operating in Kenya, but they noted a need for a space for women to express their grievances. In relation to gender in a Muslim context, a religious leader and scholar raised the importance of “creating structures and mechanisms that allow the Muslim women themselves [to] come in front, to promote their voices,” perhaps through a platform that is locally focused.⁵³ He emphasized the importance of international organizations partnering with local Muslim organizations when working with the Muslim community on women’s issues, citing the necessity to work with Salafists to end female genital mutilation as an example.

⁴⁸ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁴⁹ Integrity report (youth focus group response).

⁵⁰ Ibid. (elders and leaders focus group response).

⁵¹ Former government official, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁵² Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁵³ Ibid.



Prayers at Jumai Mosque, Nairobi.

Marginalization of the Muslim Community

Kenya is a predominantly Christian country, but Muslim citizens constitute a significant minority, with more than half of the country's four million Muslims residing in Coast Province.⁵⁴ Many Kenyan interlocutors talked about their perceptions of the discrimination Muslims face when attempting to secure government jobs, official documents, or public services. One interviewee attributed the origins of this marginalization to the predominant system of civic education based on Christianity put in place under British colonial rule. As one local religious leader explained, there is a mismatch between the national educational quali-

fications sought for public office and the type of education offered in local Muslim schools. Ultimately, non-Muslim government officers who "come to preside over your affairs at home would be a graduate of the colonially inspired system of education, inevitably Christian."⁵⁵ Such issues contribute to feelings of structural inequality among local Muslims.

When the conversation turned to violent extremism, Christians and Muslim interviewees alike agreed that violent extremism is often framed in a Muslim context, especially by governmental actors. A religious leader and scholar perceived governmental bias against Muslims in terms of when the label "violent extremism" is

⁵⁴ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, "Population and Housing Census," n.d., <http://www.knbs.or.ke/Population%20by%20Religious%20Affiliation%20and%20Province.php> ("Population by Religious Affiliation and Province").

⁵⁵ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

applied, stating, “[T]he tag ‘radicalization’ and perhaps ‘violent extremism’ is always used in relation to subjects expected or thought to be Muslim. Crimes committed by persons who are not Muslims are just crimes.”⁵⁶ The director of a Mombasa-based civil society organization expressed concern over the tendency to scapegoat the Muslim community in the wake of a terrorist attack.⁵⁷ Many participants shared these perceptions.

The media was cited for its role in exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions. One religious leader and scholar noted, “[U]nless we fix the media in Kenya, we shall not fix our problems. . . . [T]hey are not trained journalists. They promote agendas they are not supposed to promote.”⁵⁸ Interviewees in Mombasa commonly cited the misuse and misapplication of the “counterterrorism” label as contributing to the demonization of the Muslim community in general and of what they see as legitimate political opposition.⁵⁹ A civil society representative perceived that the “media is choosing to highlight inflammatory situations over others, hence painting a picture to the citizen that is actually biased. . . . This perpetrates the radicalization and the extremism or validates unfair counterterrorism activities.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Director of civil society organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Mombasa, October 2012.

⁵⁸ Religious leader and scholar, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

⁵⁹ Integrity report (Mombasa focus groups responses).

⁶⁰ Director of religious youth organization, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012; local human rights expert, interview with Liat Shetret, Nairobi, October 2012.

Community Perceptions in Somaliland

IN MANY WAYS, THE SITUATION IN SOMALILAND STANDS in stark contrast to the fragility and chaos that characterize the Federal Republic of Somalia. One week following Somaliland's independence from British colonial rule in 1960, it entered into a political union with the formerly Italian-administered Somalia. During the 1980s, a number of clan-based militias throughout the country rose up against the government of President Siad Barre in response to years of repression and misrule. Northern opposition to the Barre regime peaked in 1981 with the formation of the Somali National Movement, which sought greater autonomy from the central government in Mogadishu. Barre responded with brute force, and Somaliland was utterly destroyed.

Through an internally driven series of traditional peace-building conferences among local clan elders and the support of an enthusiastic diaspora, peace was established among local communities in Somaliland. Citing irreconcilable political differences with southern Somali clans, Somaliland declared its indepen-

dence in May 1991, only months after the collapse of the Barre regime. Through a modest infusion of international aid, the contributions of a large and energetic diaspora community, and service delivery of a range of local and international organizations, Somaliland "emerged as a polity increasingly capable of providing for its citizens"⁶¹ despite its lack of official recognition within the community of states.

Somaliland's unique brand of governance, which blends a range of governmental and nongovernmental institutions across local governance levels, provides a structure for a rule-based system of democratic governance and mediates peaceful relations between citizens and the state.⁶² Its hybrid institutional framework, allocating diffuse responsibilities among traditional authorities and governmental institutions, has succeeded in earning widespread support and legitimacy among local populations and the diaspora.⁶³ Despite Somaliland's impressive, locally driven progress, however, state capacity remains very weak, particularly in its ability to drive internal economic development.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Dan Harris and Marta Foresti, "Somaliland's Progress on Governance: A Case of Blending the Old and the New," Overseas Development Institute, 2011, p. 7, http://www.developmentprogress.org/sites/developmentprogress.org/files/resource_report/somaliland_report_-_master_0.pdf.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 7, 10; Daniel R. Forti, "A Pocket of Stability: Understanding Somaliland," *ACCORD Occasional Paper Series*, no. 2 (2011), p. 21, http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/op/op_2011_2.pdf; Mary Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong* (London: Zed Books, 2012), p. 134; Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 240–241.

⁶⁴ Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, p. 241.



Kenyan Administration Police, Kikambala, Coast Province.

Below is the perceptions mapping of key themes in Somaliland the project team gathered throughout this study.

Perceptions of Security Versus Insecurity

Discussions in Somaliland largely revolved around local perceptions of security and insecurity. The information relayed and accompanying research suggest that insecurity and violence are perceived as being driven more by economic factors rather than politics

or religious ideology.⁶⁵ At the same time, others acknowledged the presence of what some observers may consider “extremism and extreme groups,” a reference to the small but growing influence of fundamentalist Islam in Somaliland, but said that “they are harmless and not armed in comparison to those who exist in South Somalia.”⁶⁶ On the contrary, some affirmed that those who “strongly practice different religious doctrines like Salafi, Sunni, Sufi, and others ... have no effects on people’s lives and security.” Perhaps most tellingly, some insisted that extremism is not a region-specific issue and “extremists can come from everywhere,” including the United States and Western countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid.; Integrity report (Somaliland focus groups responses).

⁶⁶ Integrity report (Hargeisa focus groups responses).

⁶⁷ Ibid. (Hargeisa traditional and religious leaders focus group response).

The concerns expressed by focus groups in Hargeisa reflect a growing but tempered level of expectations of the capability of government institutions.⁶⁸ Ultimately, politics and governance did not feature prominently as sources of insecurity, violence, or conflict during discussions in Somaliland.⁶⁹ The few, direct terrorism-related perspectives shared revolved around al-Shabaab, which was considered more a threat that characterizes the prevailing insecurity in southern Somalia than the comparative security and stability of Somaliland.⁷⁰ Although al-Shabaab's coordinated 2008 bombings in Hargeisa may be a subject of lingering anxiety among some Somalilanders,⁷¹ increased local awareness, improved criminal justice measures, and "intense scrutiny by a proud and nationalistic populace" are considered by others an effective bulwark against terrorist infiltration.⁷²

Limited Police Capacity to Prevent Violent Crime

A number of interviewees in Somaliland felt that "security has improved in recent times because the government has increased the security forces as well as their monthly salary." Local police were generally viewed as a reasonably credible provider of security in Somaliland, with a number of interviewees citing the local police as an important group that creates security in their communities.⁷³ Yet, some participants were critical of the extent to which the local police forces could defend and protect. They cited limited police patrolling at night as one such example and noted a

need for an increase in the number of police stations and officers as well as improvements in police methods of transportation. Participants specifically praised the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) ongoing work to improve police capacity and performance (box 2).⁷⁴

Despite what some saw as the increasing capacity of local security forces, a number of community members perceived that the benefits were not felt everywhere in the country. Some cited the prevalence of armed criminal bands engaging in robbery and murder in certain parts of the country. "It is common that people carry small and light weapons, and this can influence the security," said a member of the women's focus group in Hargeisa, citing a recent ambush by armed assailants against government security forces.⁷⁵ Similarly, concerns were raised over an increase in muggings and rapes and that "the police had no capacity to secure the needs of its people."⁷⁶ A religious leader in Somaliland noted that, "[i]n order to improve the security situation on the ground," international organizations could improve the "quality and the quantity of Somaliland police force in terms of capacity building" and increase the number of police stations.⁷⁷

Additionally, the prison environments were raised as an area of concern in Somaliland. It was noted that the "lack of separation of juvenile and male adult prisoners ... was dangerous for children. Children housed with adults are more likely to be raped, beaten, and exploited, while others may learn new criminal techniques from the adult prisoners," which juveniles may put to harmful use following their release.⁷⁸

⁶⁸ Ibid. (Hargeisa focus groups responses).

⁶⁹ Ibid.; Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP), "Safety and Security Baseline Report: Burao," 2011, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Integrity report, p. 22.

⁷¹ BBC News, "Deadly Car Bombs Hit Somaliland," 29 October 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7696986.stm>; Integrity report, p. 41.

⁷² OCVP, "Safety and Security Baseline Report: Burao," p. 25.

⁷³ Ibid. (Hargeisa focus groups responses).

⁷⁴ Integrity report (Hargeisa OCVP women's focus group response).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Integrity report (Hargeisa traditional and religious leaders focus group response).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

BOX 2. THE UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN SOMALILAND

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is one of 20 UN entities active in Somalia. It plays a significant role across three broad areas of programming within the UN Somalia Assistance Strategy (UNSAS) specific to Somaliland:^a (1) enhancement of equitable access to basic social services, (2) poverty reduction and equitable and sustainable economic development, and (3) promotion of good governance, human security, and the rule of law.

Among project interlocutors in Somaliland, UNDP was the most widely cited agency of the UN system and one of the most well-recognized international organizations. In discussions regarding the work of international actors in their communities, focus group participants recognized UNDP's assistance across all three areas of the UNSAS. Among UNDP activities, participants listed improvements in access to justice, for example, its provision of free

legal services to local communities, the Youth at Risk Program,^b police training and the provision of uniforms and facilities, training of local judiciary, and encouragement of girls' education.^c Youth interlocutors deemed UNDP "the leading organization that promotes and creates security in the community," citing its collaboration with local government and its engagement at the national and grassroots levels.^d

^a United Nations in Somalia, "Overview of the United Nations Somalia Assistance Strategy: Summary of the UNSAS in Somaliland," 2011, <http://www.so.undp.org/unctsom/documents/Overview%20of%20the%20UNSAS%20in%20Somaliland.pdf>.

^b Integrity Research and Consultancy, "Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Violent Extremism and the Impact of International Prevention Programming," 2012 (copy on file with authors) (Hargeisa women focus group response).

^c Ibid. (Hargeisa youth focus group response).

^d Ibid.

Mismanagement of International Resources

A number of community members in Somaliland viewed international actors as outsiders with limited understanding of and access to communities in which they have programming. Although international organizations were attributed credit for promoting relevant programming, some focus group participants indicated that many of these activities did not adequately account for local needs and that locals were not fully consulted or involved in the design and implementation of local projects.⁷⁹ The Hargeisa women's focus group also stressed the need to tailor programming based on the needs of the community, rather than providing aid under a specific mandate. One participant

emphasized this, stating that if she had it her way, "I would ask the community itself what are their needs and where I can intervene rather than imposing my own project.... [T]he idea should come from the community itself."⁸⁰

One interlocutor perceived that Western-funded programs are particularly insensitive to local needs, stating that "70 percent of international grants are misused and spent simply on workshops, flights, hotel accommodations, traveling, et cetera, while the 30 percent remaining goes directly to local community."⁸¹ Arab-funded organizations working in the region reportedly better manage their resources and provide more-targeted assistance based on local needs.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid. (Hargeisa OCVF women's focus group response).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. (Hargeisa traditional and religious leaders focus group response).

⁸² Ibid.



Youths scavenge on a rubbish pile in the hills above Mombasa.

Clan- and Resource-Based Conflict

Focus group discussions commonly touched on the issue of clan-based conflict as influencing the security situation in Somaliland, noting that “clannism” is also a mechanism whereby people join the groups that threaten security in the region.⁸³ Participants emphasized that land disputes in Somaliland are one of the primary sources of clan-based violence. As communities in Somaliland are predominantly nomadic pastoralists, competition over access to grazing land can easily exacerbate interclan tensions.⁸⁴ Participants in the women’s focus group in Hargeisa cited land disputes in the Baligubadle district as “creating insecurity.”⁸⁵ “Revenge killings” were another commonly cited aspect of interclan conflict dynamics, but some said that

this form of violence has recently been in decline due to improved ability to bring perpetrators to justice and an increasing disapproval of the use of violence as a legitimate tool for settling disputes.⁸⁶

Additionally, all focus groups cited external border disputes based in clan identities as threatening security, attributing “a recent worsening of the security situation” to tensions over the contested borders of Somaliland and Puntland, as well as disputes between clans straddling the border between Somaliland and Ethiopia.⁸⁷ In addition to land disputes, other resource-based conflicts in Somaliland that were perceived as impacting the security of local communities occur over access points to water, such as dams and reservoirs, as well as charcoal.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid. (Hargeisa focus groups responses).

⁸⁴ See Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, p. 52.

⁸⁵ Integrity report (Hargeisa OCVF women’s focus group response).

⁸⁶ Ibid. (Hargeisa youth focus group response).

⁸⁷ Ibid. (Hargeisa focus groups responses).

⁸⁸ Ibid. (Hargeisa youth focus group response).



Community leaders meet with members of the Kenyan Administration Police in the coastal region to discuss security issues.

Preference for Traditional Dispute Resolution

Focus group participants conveyed a preference stemming from strong clan identities for the traditional dispute resolution system, which makes use of elders rather than the civil court system. Although elders, religious leaders, and local police forces were all cited as playing a key role in promoting security in Somaliland, elders were emphasized as the “top security keepers and promoters.”⁸⁹ One religious scholar indicated that, in his experience over the past 10 years, “there has not been a case that has been solved by courts” rather than by elders.⁹⁰

Traditional dispute resolution was cited as an effective and legitimate form of justice across a variety of areas, including interclan and property disputes, marriage and divorce, revenge killings, and even unemploy-

ment. Traditional and religious leaders in Hargeisa acknowledged that they have mediated resource-based conflicts between Isaaq and Ogadeni clans in the border region of Ethiopia and Somaliland.⁹¹ A number of women and youth in Somaliland, however, expressed concerns over rape, mugging, and banditry. In these instances, interlocutors were less confident in the effectiveness of traditional dispute resolution. They attributed the inability of the state to check dangerous crime to weak police capacity to extend security to the entire population.⁹²

Limited Economic Opportunity

Most Somalilanders cited unemployment as a contributing factor to insecurity among local communities. As of 2012, the labor force participation rate in Somaliland stood at 63 percent, with an unemployment rate of 70 percent.⁹³ Indeed, the common denominator shared by most Somalilanders in the realm of security is a lack of economic opportunity.⁹⁴ In addition, some Somalilanders believe that positions of paid employment are often disproportionately occupied by foreigners.⁹⁵

Unemployed Youth in Somaliland as a Source of Insecurity

All Somaliland interviewees cited youth as a potential source of insecurity. Youth constitute the bulk of Somaliland’s unemployed, and many participants suggested that unemployment was the primary driver of youth criminality.⁹⁶ A 2011 study conducted by the

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid. (Hargeisa traditional and religious leaders focus group response).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. (Hargeisa women and youth focus groups responses).

⁹³ UNDP, *Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development*, 2012, p. 63, <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/Arab%20States/HDR-Somalia-2012-E.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Integrity report (Hargeisa OCVF women’s focus group response).

⁹⁵ UNDP, *Somalia Human Development Report 2012*, p. 60.

⁹⁶ Integrity report (Hargeisa focus groups responses).



Predominantly inhabited by Somali immigrants, Eastleigh has been described as ‘Little Mogadishu.’

Somaliland National Youth Organisation corroborates this perception of high youth unemployment, citing a 75 percent unemployment rate among youth in Somaliland. UNDP places Somali youth unemployment at 84 percent in a country in which 70 percent of all Somalis are considered youth.⁹⁷ Participants did not explicitly state “lack of education” as a driver toward criminality among unemployed local youth, but a number of community interlocutors perceived that problematic youth were school dropouts, drug addicts, and sometimes members of sport teams.⁹⁸ Although criminality among unemployed and unedu-

cated youth was commonly cited as a serious security concern among Somalilanders, associated violence was not attributed to political or ideological motivations.

Participants in the Hargeisa youth focus group cited a number of additional grievances, including frustrations over the inability to marry because of the expense involved and “limited recreation centers.”⁹⁹ Unemployment and drug addiction were perceived as important factors for youth joining organized gangs, some of which, they felt, may have connections to the drug trade.¹⁰⁰ Community members in Hargeisa

⁹⁷ The Somaliland national youth policy defines youth as people between the ages of 14 and 35. UNDP defines youth as people between the ages of 14 and 29. UNDP, *Somalia Human Development Report 2012*, pp. xix, 61.

⁹⁸ Integrity report (Hargeisa youth focus group and traditional and religious leaders focus group responses).

⁹⁹ Ibid. (Hargeisa youth focus group response).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.



Children in Mathare slum, Nairobi.

expressed an awareness of the potential for youth to commit crimes as a result of their frustrations. Participants in the women's focus group were concerned over the prevalence of armed youth in their communities, explaining, "Most of the youth residents in Burao carry light weapons such as knives and hard sticks, so it is easy for them to commit crimes such as rape and robbery."¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Ibid. (Hargeisa OCVF women's focus group response).

Observations and Recommendations

ALTHOUGH SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL conditions across coastal Kenya and Somaliland are not identical, interlocutors in Nairobi, Coast Province, and Hargeisa all raised a number of similar observations and insights with regard to poor access to public services and employment opportunities, which they perceived as the key drivers of community insecurity, as they directly contribute to a sense of disenfranchisement and marginalization, particularly among youth.

In Coast Province and Hargeisa, interviewees generally viewed violent extremists as threats emanating from outside their local communities. Violent extremism was not seen as a significant problem impacting their daily lives, but rather as the result of outside influence and infiltration playing on individual responses to highly localized socioeconomic and political grievances.¹⁰² Indeed, neither violent extremism nor terrorism figured highly into locals' daily security concerns.

Rather, the views expressed by communities in coastal Kenya and Hargeisa in relation to violent extremism were keenly contextual. Perceptions reflected local conditions of safety and human security, economic development and access to public goods, and communi-

ty expectations and perceptions of local and international institutions. The perspectives expressed in coastal Kenya and Hargeisa demonstrated a marked difference in confidence in local governance, pace of economic development, and related expectations for the future.

At the same time, the attitudes and inclinations of local stakeholders toward the international community are very much indicative of their personal experience and engagement with international organizations. Perceptions of a broader policy agenda pursued in the international arena by powerful Western states, as well as their underlying intentions, also figure into the level of trust in the efforts of bilateral donors.

Many Kenyan respondents cited their distrust and lack of confidence in police capabilities as a common concern, as well as their perceptions of isolation and marginalization on the coast. Interclan disputes over land, as well as drug abuse and criminality among gangs of marginalized youth, were frequently raised as significant drivers of insecurity in Somaliland.

Although the sample size of the study was small, this pilot study provides qualitative data that could be

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 21, 25; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," 15 April 2010, <http://features.pewforum.org/africa/question.php?q=29> ("How Concerned Are You About Extremist Religious Groups in Your Country?"); Bradbury and Kleinman, "Winning Hearts and Minds?," pp. 29–30.



Construction workers in the Somali slum of Eastleigh, which overlooks Nairobi's business district.

used to inform analysis and future programming on a host of issues, including justice and security sector capacity building and reform. Below are key recommendations for CVE programming and targets for such programming.

Recommendations for Improving CVE Programming

CVE interventions should be conducted in a manner consistent with established principles and best practices in the provision of assistance, including local ownership, transparency, and coordination. Although there is widespread consensus regarding these principles with regard to the provision of aid, the views expressed by local communities in Kenya and Somaliland suggest a number of recommendations for

improving the effectiveness of CVE programming and addressing the skepticism with which much CVE programming is regarded.

- 1. Design a context-sensitive approach** to programming based on local needs and community perceptions. Prioritize local perceptions in designing counterterrorism and CVE programming by supporting initiatives that address local conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. These initiatives need not be labeled as such to have an impact, which can be measured by ongoing perception surveys as part of donor due diligence in program implementation.
- 2. Strengthen local ownership** by integrating community participation in the inception, design, implementation, and evaluation of local programming. Partner with locally credible NGOs with a view to increasing their capacity. Vet partner organizations

to ensure local legitimacy, financial accountability, and transparency. Draw on ongoing community monitoring of perceptions as an early-warning tool to analyze the dynamic in the field to inform programming and interventions on a rolling basis.

- 3. Deepen and share the regional knowledge base on violent extremism.** Support networks of local experts on cross-cutting issues related to violent extremism to guide and coordinate programming. Map lessons about the role of civil society and the media in mitigating and preventing violent radicalization in the region.
- 4. Design and evaluate programming** based on desired impacts using principles and best practices in measurement and evaluation from related fields, including the use of baseline perception surveys.
- 5. Develop national-level communication and coordination platforms** to improve collaboration among local and international partners, articulate shared goals, and capitalize on comparative advantages. Support implementation of cross-cutting security development activities in Kenya in the spirit of the new constitution. Support the delivery of tailored socio-economic and security assistance to Somaliland in accordance with local context.
- 6. Improve communication and cooperation among key donors and multilateral bodies,** including members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the United Nations, for example, by establishing a donor coordination mechanism to allow embassy representatives to meet before and after GCTF meetings to inform coordinated action.

Matrix: Sample Areas for Perception-Based CVE Programming

THE PERCEPTIONS OUTLINED ABOVE SUGGEST A number of general targets and thematic areas for further perceptions-based CVE programming. Below is a nonexhaustive list of targets for programming.

Perception	Sample Program Areas	Target Constituency
Lack of mutual trust between government and civil society and about the role of the media	<p>Devote resources and structure programming around dialogue between government and civil society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• through “market of ideas” forums, which include facilitated discussion of community marginalization issues targeting vulnerable communities• through establishment of community-driven early-warning systems to inform possible interventions by authorities• through locally developed sensitization workshops with civil society and government partners• by refining approaches toward community and civil society partnerships with local law enforcement and criminal justice agencies <p><i>continued</i></p>	Kenya, Somaliland

Perception	Sample Program Areas	Target Constituency
	<p>Provide support for ethical media initiatives and grassroots journalism projects to enhance credible local voices and promote press freedom, including an Internet-based component</p> <p>Study the freedoms and limitations of social media tools and the virtual space in target countries as a forum of youth empowerment and as a potential tool for violent radicalization</p> <p>Strengthen political will for change through negative and positive incentives to foster political will among senior leadership</p>	
Lack of governmental inclusiveness and sensitivity to gender and religious constructs	<p>Research proactive and inclusive policies of national partner governments that incentivize for inclusiveness</p> <p>Partner with local organizations to organize women's groups, in which they can express grievances in a neutral setting</p> <p>Study and develop common metrics for success and impact of interventions in at-risk communities, including prisons, youth groups, and religious minorities</p>	Kenya, Somaliland

Perception	Sample Program Areas	Target Constituency
Weak law enforcement and criminal justice capacity	<p>Support national law enforcement, criminal justice, and rule of law reform initiatives with a focus on enhancing professionalism, integrity, community policing and human rights standards, and access and service delivery among local police and judicial officers</p> <p>Reform, strengthen, and expand access to criminal justice institutions through raising awareness of legal support services through a public information campaign, as well as by hosting “know your rights and obligations” workshops in target communities</p> <p>Provide technical support to law enforcement to enforce counterterrorism laws and all criminal legislation, in accordance with human rights standards and the rule of law</p>	Kenya, Somaliland
Limited employment opportunities	<p>Address structural unemployment by supporting microfinance programs and business entrepreneurship for youth, women, and other vulnerable communities</p> <p>Provide training workshops that teach marketable skills for employment in such fields as agriculture, infrastructure, and small business</p> <p>Partner with local NGOs to identify a listing of apprenticeships and match youth with these opportunities</p>	Kenya, Somaliland

Perception	Sample Program Areas	Target Constituency
Feelings of marginalization and frustration among youth	<p>Consider local definitions of “youth” when designing programming in accordance with national context</p> <p>Partner with local NGOs to develop and implement youth empowerment programs that focus on concepts such as civic leadership, social mobilization, and change</p> <p>Set up and support “Youth Advisory Boards” and dialogue mechanisms to facilitate periodic exchanges between youth and government officials and allow youth to air views regarding policy directives</p>	Kenya, Somaliland

Perception	Sample Program Areas	Target Constituency
Feelings of marginalization among vulnerable groups	<p>Apply political pressure for the integration of coastal representation on committees and in meetings related to land governance and with regard to the timely and transparent publication of inquiry reports and summations</p> <p>Develop and disseminate tools to design and produce documentary media to empower local people and convey local problems and solutions that educate for religious and ethnic tolerance</p> <p>Enhance access to public services in marginalized Muslim communities</p> <p>Provide programmatic support to credible Muslim scholars within vulnerable communities and host interfaith dialogues with credible religious leaders for communities to express grievances</p> <p>Promote and support the formation of Muslim youth groups to discuss issues of religious diversity, which can also serve as a way to identify and reach out to youth vulnerable to violent extremism within their communities</p> <p>Create elections-centric programming focused on sensitive security and human rights issues as well as the improvement of electoral integrity processes</p>	Kenya

The Way Forward: Toward Local Ownership

CONCEPTS SUCH AS VIOLENT EXTREMISM, radicalization, and terrorism prevention can have wide-ranging connotations, and this study acknowledges the implications of the potentially negative consequences of misapplying this terminology in sensitive contexts. This study primarily con-

centrated on gathering and interpreting local perceptions broadly in the context of applicable international efforts to counter violent extremism.

In Kenya, much will hinge on the peaceful, free, and fair execution of national elections in early 2013.



Women attending a KMYA community meeting in Kikambala, Coast Province.



Schoolchildren play football, Mathare slum, Nairobi.

There is a tremendous opportunity to address many of the grievances outlined in this study by exerting political pressure to encourage follow-through with planned constitutional reforms, the government decentralization (devolution) process, and multilayered security and justice system reforms. The Kenyan policymaking process has already reaped the benefits of a more community-oriented approach in the development and passage of its new counterterrorism legislation. Supporting Kenya's ongoing reform initiatives based on integrated, results-oriented approaches will be crucial in securing the country's future prosperity and curbing violent radicalization among marginalized and dissatisfied community members.

The ongoing momentum of stability operations in Somalia and the establishment of the posttransition federal government are extremely positive steps toward bringing safety and security to local populations. Although enormous hurdles remain for these developments to bear fruit, there are numerous opportunities for the international community to assist Somaliland in consolidating its relative political stability through appropriately tailored security and development programming. Going forward, it is vital that the international community reexamine and reinvigorate its as-

sistance to Somaliland, lest the region succumb to a range of unaddressed socioeconomic pressures.

Listening to individual and community voices offers practical and operational insights to the effective resolution of complex policy issues. Support for programming activities informed by local views and in collaboration with local communities is essential to addressing conditions conducive to violent extremism in fragile contexts in harmony with much-needed development and security assistance. Moreover, locally owned initiatives will have a greater potential for sustainability and overall impact. Although many of the perceptions gathered in Kenya and Somaliland may not be readily or uniformly applicable to other parts of these respective countries or the greater Horn of Africa subregion, some of the principles, policy guidance, and programming considerations from the sample matrix may be relevant and transferable to other contexts.

Based on the findings of this report, future research questions can be directed to measure the extent to which the perceptions raised in this study exist within the context of a larger sampling of communities. In light of survey responses in Somaliland, the connection between drug trafficking and youth violence warrants further investigation, as well as the extent of the connections between organized crime and extremist groups in the Horn of Africa. Further, as the media becomes awash with the political milestones of the new government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the extent to which these initiatives impact local communities in the south will be essential in formulating assistance packages to better the livelihoods of local people and to curb the appeal of violent radicalism to unemployed, conflict-weary youth.

Additionally, targeted surveys could be focused to gather governmental views, including those of law enforcement and intelligence officials. Information gathered through future qualitative and quantitative perception surveys may be used to inform further nuanced local entry points and better identify the needs of communities so as to choose effective regional partners



Graffiti in Mathare slum, Nairobi.

and design relevant programming initiatives. A scaled-up version of this pilot project, in cooperation with local communities, governments, and civil society, could offer a quantitative baseline for use in measuring the impact on intended beneficiaries in fragile environments of international programming related to countering violent extremism.

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