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Tuwe Tayari Kuilinda

Newsletter

NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE



INSIDE:

- **Nairobi hosts forum on taming terrorist media activities**
- **NCTC steps up community-led strategy against extremism**
- **NCTC trains 150 borderline chiefs and assistant chiefs**
- **State issues guidelines on terrorism financing cases**
- **Nairobi becomes first county to enact PCVE law**



FEATURED

Insights from Director NCTC on the resilient Kenyan spirit and collective action on defeating terrorism.

Editor's Note

Welcome to this inaugural edition of the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) Newsletter.

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep stakeholders and the general public abreast of progress in the Prevention and Countering of Terrorism and Violent Extremism (PCVE) space in Kenya.

One of the cardinal responsibilities of the State is to ensure the safety and security of its citizens from all threats, including violent extremism and terrorism. Kenya has a robust PCVE policy and legal framework anchored on the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE).

NCTC as the coordinating agency is committed to promoting a stakeholder-centric approach in tackling radicalization and the spread of violent extremism in Kenya. As highlighted in this newsletter, a whole-of-society approach, with active involvement of local communities, is necessary for PCVE strategies to succeed.

Rallying all sectors of Kenyan social, religious and economic spectrum to reject extremist ideologies so as to reduce the pool of individuals whom terrorist groups can radicalize and recruit is one of the most effective ways of winning this war.

In addition, we should borrow from the multi-agency approach which has borne fruit and serves as a model for collaborative strategies in combating terrorism.

NCTC takes this opportunity to thank our partners at international, national and local levels for their continued support in advancing the PCVE agenda in Kenya.

We hope you will find this newsletter informative as we work together to keep our country safe and secure for all.

NCTC Head of Communications



Nairobi hosts forum on taming terrorist media activities



Global counter-terrorism actors converged in Nairobi on October 19 at a forum to formulate ways of tackling propaganda activities of terror groups in media platforms.

The Nairobi Caucus on Countering Terrorism Media Strategies was organised by Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) and international partners, and attended by participants from fifteen countries. Experts from global think tanks as well as the United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism also participated.

The Caucus was also attended by the Jordanian Embassy (Jordan is the Convener of the Aqaba process), Martyn West, UK Representative, and the Communication Cell of Counter-Daesh Coalition.

The forum deliberated on ways of countering emerging threats from terrorism media strategies which are getting more sophisticated.

Media strategies have become a potent weapon in the jihadi arsenal. Terrorist propaganda targeting the region is sophisticated, highly

coordinated, disseminated using state of the art technology and curated to target specific audiences.

States need to establish mechanisms for neutralizing extremist propaganda especially on social media. This requires concerted bilateral and regional platforms to contest terrorism in all information spaces.

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We must be deliberate in the battle for hearts and minds because it is in the media theatre that the battle shall be won or lost.

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Effective counter and alternative messaging is seen as an effective countermeasure in denying extremists space in the public information domain and addressing the propaganda blind spot.

Delivering her key note address at the Caucus, National Security Advisor, Amb. Dr. Monica Juma noted that terrorist groups have increasingly resorted to using media technologies to gain the upper hand in propaganda targeting vulnerable groups in society. She singled out the internet as a popular platform with extremists.

“The internet has also provided an enabling and amplifying medium for the deployment of terrorist media strategies. We must be deliberate in the battle for hearts and minds because it is in the media theatre that the battle shall be won or lost. There is need for greater collaboration in strategic communications, counter narratives and alternative narratives,” noted Dr. Juma in her speech.

The Nairobi Caucus was one of the initiatives under the African High Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism.

Nairobi becomes first county to enact PCVE law

The coming into force of the Nairobi City County Prevention of Violent Extremism Act in June this year marked a significant milestone in county-led efforts to deal with the terrorism threat at the grassroots level.

Nairobi became the first county in Kenya to operationalize its County Action Plan (CAP) on preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) through law. This will pave way for county governments to assume full ownership of PCVE efforts through policy formulation and resource allocation.

The Nairobi County PCVE Act 2022 seeks to provide measures for prevention of radicalization, recruitment into violent and extremist groups and enhance participation of communities. The Act also establishes linkages between county institutions and national law enforcement agencies in the prevention of violent extremism in the City.

Former Nairobi Governor Ann Kananu hailed the new law as the first both locally and globally in creating the legal instruments for fighting violent extremism at the local level.

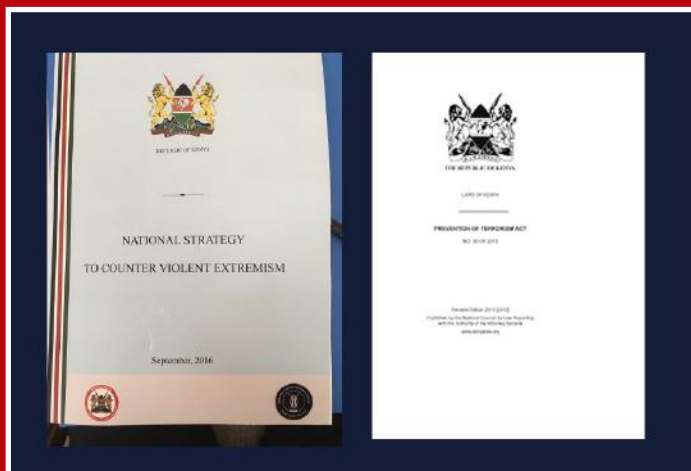


“The fact is there is no country in the world that has been able to domesticate prevention of violent extremism to the very grassroots level the way Nairobi County has done today. I know that the other 46 counties will use Nairobi County as model for their PCVE efforts,” Ms. Kananu said after assenting to the Bill in June.

Majority of counties have developed and are implementing robust policies and strategies to contain extremist groups seeking to radicalize and recruit residents. Essentially, CAPs aim to localize the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism by advocating for local and context-specific solutions.

NCTC has been working with counties to develop CAPs as part of a community-led approach to PCVE within the context of devolved government.

Understanding the mandate of NCTC



The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is established under Section 40 A of the Prevention of Terrorism Act as mechanism for coordinating counter-terrorism measures.

NCTC is an inter-agency body in which ten agencies are represented.

NCTC is responsible for the co-ordination of national counter-terrorism measures, geared to detection, prevention and disruption of terrorist acts. Its mandate also includes, but is not limited to, developing strategies, capacity building and establishment of a database to assist law enforcement agencies.

Section 40C of the Act further states that NCTC shall be an ‘approving and reporting institution for all civil society organisations and international non-governmental organisations engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization through counter-messaging or public outreach, and disengagement and reintegration of radicalized individuals’

Further, NCTC may request any person or government body for any information relating to terrorism. To this end, members of the public are obligated to furnish NCTC with any information relating to terrorism that is within their knowledge.

NCTC Partners

- Act Change Transform (Act!)
- Champion for Peace
- Coast Inter-Faith Council of Clerics
- Community Empowerment & Environmental Development (CEED)
- County Governance Watch
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Embassy of Denmark
- Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Embassy of the Netherlands
- European Union
- Foundation for Dialogue
- Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)
- Human Rights Agenda
- Institute for Strategic Dialogue
- International Organisation of Migration
- Isiolo Peace Link
- Kenya Community Support Center
- Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative
- Mercy Corps
- Midrift Human Rights Network
- Pamoja for Transformation Trust
- Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
- Search for Common Ground (SFCG)
- Sharp Development Solutions
- Tony Blair Institute for Global Change
- UK High Commission
- UN Women
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)
- United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Worthy Vision
- Womankind Kenya
- Yaden (Champions for Peace)
- Youth Development and Entrepreneurship Network

NCTC steps up community-led strategy against violent extremism

By NCTC team



Mobilizing the whole society is the first step towards taming violent extremism in Kenya and the world at large. That was the key message at a conference organised by the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) and partners in June in Nakuru City.

The event brought together key actors in the fight against violent extremism from the private sector, religious leaders, government, international partners and civil society groups.

There was consensus on the need to mainstream prevention and countering of violent extremism (PCVE) given the multi-faceted nature of terrorism.

The goals, motives and tactics of terrorism keep mutating as well.

Hence, the need to bring everyone on board. Violent extremism is not just a Kenyan

phenomenon but an international, regional and global concern.

The whole-of-society approach, also boosts community resilience by focusing on local drivers of violent extremism. Such localized efforts complement national efforts as they rally local players to take charge of their security.

NCTC Head of Prevention and Resilience Mr. Njenga Miiri rooted for broad-based approach arguing it had proved successful in the past. Speaking at the conference, Mr. Miiri reiterated that community engagements were a major factor in shrinking the pool of recruits for terrorists. "Active involvement of local communities, the private sector, media and other civic actors in society is necessary for Counter Violent Extremism strategies to succeed," he noted.

He further called for a PCVE approach similar to that deployed in tackling HIV/AIDS, Covid-19 and other global challenges, where private sector, religious bodies and even schools were used to mobilize the public to action.

The multi-agency approach to combating terrorism has borne fruit through efficient coordination of the various state security agencies. Grass roots organizations like Champions of Peace and YADEN East Africa, which were among those that participated in the conference, have a frontline role in rallying communities against elements bent on sowing violence especially among the youth.

The Tony Blair Institute, Mercy Corps, Act-Change-Transform (ACT) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) and SDS Consulting, also supported the conference.

NCTC trains 150 borderline chiefs and assistant chiefs



Participants at a special training forum to build capacities and skills of the grassroots leaders on prevention of radicalization and detection of early manifestation of radicalization.

NCTC in partnership with EU facilitated trainings in Garissa, Wajir and Mandera counties for Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs carefully selected from locations and sub locations along Kenya Somalia international border. The training program entailed building capacities and skills of the grassroots leaders on prevention of radicalization and detection of early manifestation of radicalization in their areas of jurisdiction. The training, conducted by CT experts and Islamic scholars, was aimed at enhancing the understanding of the local administrators on radical narratives and recruitment strategies of terrorist groups.

Victims of terrorism to continue receiving support

By NCTC team

Survivors of terror attacks have a crucial role in rallying the collective national psyche against terrorism. But their plight also highlights the need for sustained support to those who carry the physical, emotional and psychological scars of the inhumane and cowardly acts of violent extremists.

Providing assistance to victims and survivors of terrorism is an integral element of national recovery and healing from past attacks by terrorists.

“Kenya remains committed to providing support to the victims and survivors of terrorism both directly as survivors of an attack, or indirectly as persons who have lost a loved one or suffered the stigma associated with such attacks,” says The National Counter Terrorism Center.

The National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE) addresses the psychosocial needs not just of victims but also persons who have been radicalized and recruited into terror groups and their families. This includes counselling services to protect their mental health and psychological wellbeing.



In remembrance of the Garissa University attack, a woman turns on the torchlight on her smartphone.

Globally, victim support is now recognized as an important component in dealing with the negative effects of violent extremism. The International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism is celebrated every year on August 21st.

This day is set aside by the United Nations to create public awareness of the plight of victims and survivors of terrorism. In Kenya, this day is commemorated in honor of and to express solidarity with victims and survivors of past attacks.

State issues guidelines on terrorism financing cases



The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has partnered with other state institutions in developing and implementing guidelines for investigation and prosecution of cases involving terrorism and terrorism financing.

This comes as countries around the world step up measures to deal with terrorists and their financiers. Terrorism financing refers to methods and tactics used by terrorist and extremist groups to finance their operations.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) in April issued the Inter-Agency Guidelines on Cooperation & Collaboration in the Investigation and Prosecution of Terrorism and Terrorism Financing.

The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure effective coordination, collaboration and cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism and terrorism financing. They also provide an avenue for all law enforcement agencies to foster partnerships. The guidelines are anchored on a multi agency framework bringing together 10 public institutions. These are the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Office of Director of Public Prosecutions, National Police Service, Department of Immigration, Asset Recovery Agency, Central Bank of Kenya, Financial Reporting Center, Kenya Revenue Authority, Kenya Prisons Service and Probation and After Care Services.

NCTC will play an instrumental role as the primary state agency tasked with spearheading counter terrorism and fighting violent extremism in Kenya. Section 40B of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) mandates NCTC to coordinate measures to combat terrorism and terrorism financing including establishing and maintaining a database to assist other agencies. NCTC will also work closely with the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) and the DPP in investigations leading to arrest of suspects involving in terrorism financing, as well as provide psychosocial reports on suspects upon request by ODPP and DCI-ATPU.

In cases where director of public prosecutions feels the evidentiary threshold has not been met, a recommendation for disengagement shall be made to NCTC. ODPP shall refer such a person to NCTC for admission into the Disengagement, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) Program. The relevant agencies shall submit monthly reports to NCTC on the status and progress of persons under the program.

Under the guidelines, NCTC shall also lead community engagement and work with other agencies in enhancing the capacity of communities on counter-terrorism and counter-financing of terrorism. The International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism was adopted in 1999 to enhance global cooperation in devising effective measures against financing of terrorism. The UN Security Council via Resolution 2462 of 2019 expressed concern over the flow of funds to terrorists and the need to suppress all forms of terrorist financing.

Pictorials



Participants at a special training forum to enhance PCVE knowledge and skills of hawkers, private security firms and transport PSV Saccos under the ARIVE program. The forum was organised by NCTC in partnership with GCERF and Tendasasa.



High-level delegation at the close of the Nairobi Caucus on Countering Terrorism Media Strategies on October 19, 2022. National Security Advisor Dr. Monica Juma (seated fourth left) and NCTC Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira (seated next to Dr. Juma) delivered the key note speeches at the forum.



Prison officers from the Eastern Region were sensitized on emerging trends on radicalization at workshops organised by NCTC.



NCTC partnered with religious organisations to host an engagement forum with Christian and Muslim groups in Nakuru. Leveraging the influence of religious leaders is vital in resolving conflicts in the community.



NCTC Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira with Raffi Gregorian, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General, UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, on the sidelines of the 77th United Nations General Assembly in September 2022.



CTC in partnership with Western Kenya Consortium supported a workshop for Pillar Heads of County Engagement Forums (CEFs) of 10 counties in September 2022. The CEFs reported on progress with implementation of County Action Plans on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.



The resilient Kenyan spirit and collective action in defeating terrorism

By Dr. Rosalind Nyawira, Director NCTC

Our ability to endure trials as a Nation is what propels our marathon runners to endure the limits of human capabilities. Although it manifests itself differently in all Kenyans, the common denominator is the spirit of resilience, and the determination to break through barriers that look impossible.

With determined hearts and minds, Kenya remains victorious against terrorism and all its manifestations. We remind ourselves not to look at those who have perished in past terrorist attacks as statistics but as sons and daughters of Kenya who succumbed to the cruelty of an enemy that seeks to undermine Kenya's quest for a peaceful nation.

Although the physical acts of cowardice and ignominy are in the past, they ought to inspire us to remain united against a common enemy who can never break our resolve, determination and aspirations for a prosperous Kenya.

Triumph over terrorists is being achieved through holistic counterterrorism efforts that encompass a hybrid of soft and hard approaches. Countering terrorism begins with putting in place preventative measures. To this end, the Government has adopted a "whole of society" approach to counter radicalization and run programs on disengagement, de-radicalization and reintegration.

“Countering extremist propaganda narratives starves the sinister ideology of hate and violence of the ability to thrive in our communities.”

The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) is being implemented by various government agencies through the County Action Plans (CAPs). The CAPs model is an innovative measure seeking to involve participation of the citizenry at the devolved level in coming up with solutions that speak to the local nuances exploited by violent extremists.

The CAPs bring on board stakeholders drawn from the business community, academia, security sector and civil society. An example is the Mombasa County Action Plan, a truly localized approach against violent extremism that has received recognition from the Global Strong Cities network.

In addition, the State has adopted a multi-agency approach which has led to better sharing of actionable intelligence. In collaboration with international partners, the State has also intensified trainings meant to improve on the capacity of these stakeholders to counter terrorism.

For instance, over 2000 guards drawn from private security firms under the umbrella of Kenya Private Sector Alliance have been trained on hardening targets against potential terrorism threats, while guarding against stereotypical traps.

Mainstreaming of the media into the whole-of-society approach is crucial to defeating terror. Countering extremist propaganda narratives starves the sinister ideology of hate and violence of the ability to thrive in our communities.

From a legal standpoint, various security laws have been amended such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act to address terrorism related offences. Also, the enactment of legislation such as Proceeds of Crime and Anti Money Laundering Act, that criminalizes the financial networks created to sanitize proceeds of terrorism.

The Judiciary has also established special courts to fast-track cases related to radicalization and terrorism. These efforts have also been expanded to Kenya's correctional system.

The collective efforts from the citizenry and the State have made it harder for terrorist groups to carry out attacks within the urban areas. This has seen violent extremism significantly reduce within these localities. The situation has forced the enemy to shift most of his operations to the Kenyan border, targeting non-combatants and security personnel.

Hence the need for sustained vigilance both at the national and county levels. Community resilience against violent extremism has been ensured through heightened awareness about the tactics of the terrorists.

Kenyan security agencies have also intensified surveillance along the borders to prevent any infiltration of local communities by Al-Shabaab militants. A targeted military offensive is ongoing and surveillance, community policing and intelligence sharing have been strengthened to preempt future terror attacks.

The State has also deployed additional elite police units to terrorism hotspots to guard critical government installations and public property that have become main targets of terrorists.

These measures coupled with the resilient spirit of our people are turning the tide against violent extremism in Kenya.

NCTC to develop model county law on preventing extremism

Counties will play a frontline role in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) once a model law developed by the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is adopted.

Addressing participants at a conference in Nakuru bringing together stakeholders in counter-terrorism at the county level, NCTC said the proposed law is aimed at further strengthening mechanisms to tame radicalization and extremism.

The prevention and counter-terrorism model law will entrench PCVE in all the 47 counties. It will also provide a framework for stakeholder collaboration in building community resilience. The county governments are critical partners especially where residents are at heightened risk or vulnerable to recruitment and are targets for attack.

The model law will provide a framework for mainstreaming PCVE legislation at the devolved level while leaving a leeway for counties to customize their laws in accordance with their distinct circumstances.

The County Assemblies Forum (CAF), the Council of Governors Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, the Controller of Budget, the State Law Office, security agencies and representatives of civil society were among stakeholders who attended the conference.

Rift Valley Regional Commissioner, Maalim Mohammed, said the national government is keen on working together with various stakeholders supporting the fight against violent extremism and terrorism.

“The government cannot eliminate this menace alone. We need to bring everyone on board, including partners at the county level, to prevent attacks and secure the country,” said the Regional Commissioner.

Nakuru Deputy Governor, David Kones, says the county is keen on expanding employment and livelihood opportunities for youth to prevent them being lured into crime and violence.

Police officers trained on CT awareness

As part of capacity building among stakeholders in the security sector, senior police officers have received training in counter terrorism and violent extremism awareness. This is aimed at increasing their preparedness in protecting citizens and communities against the threat of terrorism-related offences. In addition, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) in partnership with the National Police Service, organised a training workshop for cadet station commanders at the Kenya Administration Police Training College in Embakasi early this year. This is part of NCTC's ongoing multi-stakeholder approach targeting state and non-state actors in preventing and disrupting violent extremism.

EU partners with NCTC to protect public spaces

Protecting public spaces is one of the critical mandates of anti-terrorism authorities. For this reason, the National Counter Terrorism Center has been involved in a skills enhancement program on public spaces protection.

NCTC has partnered with the European Union through its CT Public Spaces initiative implemented by the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Ibero-American Foundation For Administration and Public Policies.

Earlier this year, senior officials from NCTC and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations visited Spain to see first-hand how the Guardia Civil protects public infrastructure. They also toured the Centro de Inteligencia contra el Terrorismo y el Crimen Organizado (CITCO), the Spanish domestic intelligence agency responsible for prevention of terrorism.

Kenyan security personnel joined their counterparts from Ghana and Senegal in a training program focused on public spaces protection. This is aimed at creating a core team of experts in public space protection who will train others in their respective countries' security forces.

NGAO, Prisons trained on CVE awareness

The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has been facilitating training workshops for National Government Administrative Officers and the Kenya Prisons Service with a view to strengthen their skills and capabilities as security sector players in countering violent extremism.

This mirrors the whole-of-government approach adopted by NCTC in creating public awareness of the dangers posed by violent extremism. Apart from NGAO and prisons, NCTC has organised training for other law enforcement agencies like Kenya Wildlife Service and the National Police Service.

UNOCT opens regional office in Nairobi

The United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) in March opened a regional office in Nairobi to support countries in the region to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

The regional center will coordinate training and capacity-building of security agencies in modern counter-terrorism strategies. Former Interior Cabinet Secretary Dr. Fred Matiang'i, who presided over the official opening, hailed the decision to locate the office in Nairobi as a recognition of Kenya's history of fighting terror.

UNOCT Director, Dr. Jehangir Khan, had earlier visited NCTC and held discussions with senior officials led by the Director on how to strengthen cooperation on PCVE matters.