



Newsletter

NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE

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Pamojani Arts Group, a youth-based organisation in Kisumu, staged an exhibition dubbed #4:02 on April 2, 2023 to commemorate the terror attack at the then Garissa University College eight years ago.

Dusit, Garissa attacks made us stronger as a Nation, but our vigilance must not wear out

By Rosalind Nyawira

Four years ago on January 15, 2019, we were visited by anarchy at the Riverside area of Nairobi. Four years earlier, on April 2, 2015, mayhem had descended on the then Garissa University College.

We remember these terrorist attacks, and all others that we have suffered in this country, to honour the lives that were so senselessly lost, for every life is sacrosanct and must be accounted for.



Editor's Note

Welcome to the second edition of our Newsletter, published so as to keep you abreast with the activities and engagements of the National Counter Terrorism Center and its various partners and stakeholders.

In this edition, we highlight important milestones achieved in the first four months of the year. We started the year on a somber note with the commemoration of the terrorist attack four years ago in Nairobi's Riverside area. In April, we marked 8 years since the attack on Garissa University College.

We remember those who lost their lives and also the families of the departed. We also salute our gallant officers who continue to selflessly protect our Nation.

In this edition, we also bring you interviews with the Center for Strategic Conflict Resolution and the Tony Blair Institute, two of our partner organisations. Going forward, we will be featuring interviews with our partners to shed light on their contribution to the success of our work.

We also review the inaugural Annual Report published by the Center detailing the institution's achievements for the period under review January to December 2022. The Center was also involved in various activities to strengthen awareness and capabilities of various actors under the various pillars of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. Key among these were County Engagement Forums addressing the issue of radicalization of youth into violent extremism.

The Center wishes to express its sincere gratitude to all its partners and stakeholders who continue to walk this journey with us. We promise that we shall do our part in keeping you up-to-date with what we are doing through the various media platforms including this newsletter, the media and our social media handles.

Enjoy your read!

NCTC Editorial Team

Quote

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The rise of violent extremism is a challenge to the nation state and the global rule of law. The forces that contribute to it and the dangers that flow from it compel us to prepare, to plan, to unite, and to insist that our collective future will be uncompromised by the primitive and paranoid ideas of terrorists but instead it will be built by the universal values of decency, civility, knowledge, reason and law.

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John Kerry, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate & former Secretary of State



Dr. Rosalind Nyawira,
Director, National Counter Terrorism Center

Dusit, Garissa attacks made us stronger, but we must never forget

It is also a moment of introspection and stock-taking on the progress we have made on this journey, but also to remind ourselves of the potency and adaptability of the adversary we still face. Indeed, we have come a long way as a country and learnt tough lessons in the process.

A key lesson from the Dusit attack was that enlightened citizens and communities are at the heart of an effective strategy on preventing and countering violent extremism. The concerted efforts of the citizenry and the State have made it harder for terrorists to operate; we have responded accordingly, upping our kinetic capabilities in degrading the threat, protecting public spaces and arresting the criminals.

We have also invested heavily in community-led initiatives to drain the pool of would-be recruits, sensitized communities to watch out for the malevolent recruiters, and trained private security sector as partners in protection of public spaces.

We also learnt that to defeat the enemy, we must understand their thinking and method. The goal of the terrorist is to instill fear so as to force us to reject our time-tested social and democratic values, through intolerance and hatred directed at those we perceive to be different from us. This they do by presentation of macabre propaganda such as videos and threatening speeches.

Addressing technology as a driver of violent extremism especially social media as a tool for online recruitment and investment in technology that ensures that any signature of a would-be lone-wolf is detectable is core. At the same time, investment in strategic communication to provide counter and alternative messaging to the terrorist propaganda and win the battle for the hearts and minds while inoculating the wider society against the propaganda is a major priority.

This includes working with stakeholders such as the media and education sector to create awareness of the dangers of online extremism. Through an elaborate stakeholder-driven approach, religious leaders have been involved in developing counter narratives to distorted religious messages.

We have also enacted legislations and policies to mainstream prevention of terrorism in government operations, held intensive inter-faith dialogues, and created resilience within communities. As part of counter-radicalization, programs targeting youth-at-risk have been injected, thus depleting the terror organisations of membership.

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We have also invested heavily in community-led initiatives to drain the pool of would-be recruits, sensitized communities to watch out for the malevolent recruiters.

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From the Garissa University attack came the realisation that we must secure institutions of learning and also build resilience of communities against violent extremism. Notably, the Garissa attack drew attention to universities and institutions of higher learning as it emerged that the youth at universities were vulnerable

as targets and as executors. Indeed, two of the attackers, Abdirahim and Khalid had dropped out of other Kenyan universities to join Al Shabaab.

This realisation and subsequent efforts would come in handy in 2016 when Daesh in Syria and the Levant started to directly target university students in their online recruitment rhetoric. Luckily, because of the focus brought about by the Garissa University attack, security forces were not caught flat-footed, but swiftly disrupted the recruitment networks.

In addition, it became clear that a whole-of-society approach would be more effective in combating this insidious enemy, leading to the formulation and adoption of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) in 2016.

NSCVE, under the coordination of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), gives a clear vision of reducing and eliminating violent extremism by encouraging individuals and organizations to reject violent extremist ideology, in order to shrink the pool of radicalization and recruitment.

The strategy prioritises measures to counter and prevent violent extremism through ten thematic areas (pillars) for interventions. These are: the faith-based, security, education, psychosocial, media & online, gender, arts & culture, political, legal & policy and economic pillars.



To completely defeat this enemy, we need a fine balance between the imperatives of decisive security-driven responses that directly counter and nullify the threat of terrorism while addressing the social, political, economic, cultural and religious drivers of violent extremism.



In implementing our strategy to counter violent extremism, we have focused on every county through action plans that are alive to the existing realities. To cascade the strategy to the local level, each county has, again under the coordination of NCTC, generated a County Action Plan (CAP) aligned with their circumstances and their level of interaction with the threat of terrorism.

Counties are now playing an instrumental role in the prevention and countering of violent extremism. The ongoing review of CAPs is geared to making them more inclusive and responsive to dynamic realities of extremism.

Under the education pillar, NCTC has undertaken trainings on terrorism and resilience for most universities, for both staff and students. Indeed, every freshmen/women induction curriculum contains a section on security awareness and terrorism. Universities are assessed regularly for physical vulnerability to attacks. Measures to ensure sustainable physical security are being implemented and upgraded continually in conjunction with the universities' security departments.

Garissa university in particular is a beneficiary of these assessments every six months. The community's relations with the security actors are also the subject of ongoing engagements, with lots of gains in this area NCTC has also developed a policy, namely, the Child Safety and Security Against Violence Extremism (CSSAVE) for implementation by trained teachers in schools to 'immunize' children against violence extremism.

It behoves parents, guardians and communities to be vigilant and watch out for those tell-tale signs of a changing personality, such as change in dressing to the perceived 'pious' styles, change in language, demeanour, associates among others.

To completely defeat this enemy, we need a fine balance between the imperatives of decisive security-driven responses that directly counter and nullify the threat of terrorism, and measures aimed at addressing the social, political, economic, cultural and religious drivers of violent extremism.

Suffice it to say that lots of gains have been made under the existing multi-agency response framework, and the same are being subjected to measurement tools to empirically determine impact. Kenya is on the right track to defeating the enemy. We just need to remain united and focused on this collective goal. Fortunately, the resilient Kenyan spirit has time and again triumphed over the barbaric actions of terrorists.

We salute the courageous men and women who have sacrificed life and limb, both civilians and members of the security agencies, to keeping our motherland safe. That said, we must remember that it takes just one terrorist incident to reverse these efforts and as such we must not let our guard down.

All of us as Kenyans are jointly and severally responsible to uphold and guard these successes in our eternal spirit of cooperation, determination and resilience. Indeed, we are each other's keepers! We must never forget all the Kenyans who have paid the ultimate price, victims of attacks and security forces alike, who lost life and limb, and those who still suffer the effects of terrorism. Indeed, this commemoration is dedicated to them, lest we forget.



Pamojani Arts Group based in Kisumu organized an arts exhibition dubbed 4:02 to commemorate the lives of the 147 people who perished in the Garissa University College attack on April 2, 2015. The event was supported by the National Counter Terrorism Center.

‘I apologize for my son’s crimes’ – a perpetrator’s mother speaks

Sakina Mariam, mother to the late Ali Salim Gichunge, the alleged mastermind of the terrorist attack in Nairobi’s Riverside area in January 2019, cuts the image of a forlorn woman, when she recounts her tribulations following the events of that day.

In an interview with Citizen TV, Mama Sakina narrates how her son’s involvement with the heinous crime in which 21 lives were lost, brought misery to her and her family. Her prayer is to meet up with the families of the victims of the attack and apologize for her son’s actions.

“Uchungu ninalia mtoto ameuawa, mtoto ameuwa na jina yangu imeharibika na ninaumwa na zile familia zinalia saa hizi kama wale waliachwa walemavu mimi ninalia, wale walipoteza jamaa zao, mimi ninalia (I cry

in pain as my son was killed, yet he also killed and my family’s reputation was ruined, but I also feel the pain of the families that suffered, those who were left with scars), she says.

She says she was arrested and charged in connection with the attack only to be released later having spent seven months in jail. Her family was ostracized due to her son and although they have to come to terms with the fact that he was involved in the attack, it has not been an easy journey. Mama Sakina is grateful to the National Counter Terrorism Center for encouraging her to reach out to other mothers in her situation. To see the full interview on Citizen TV, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYBxXIXmecE>

Kisumu youth pay tribute to fallen GUC comrades with art festival



An artist performs at the recent festival in Kisumu to honor victims of the Garissa University attack

On April 2, 2023, a group of youth in Kisumu converged at a hotel in Kisumu. The somber occasion was to honour the lives of the 147 people, most of them students, who perished in the terrorist attack on the morning of April 2, 2015 at the then Garissa University College (GUC).

The youth, led by Pamojani Arts Group, chose to celebrate the lives of their fallen comrades in the GUC attack through art. They organised an arts exhibition dubbed 4:02 meaning April 2nd or 4:02 am, the precise time the terrorist attack started. The all-Black event was an ensemble of spoken word, music and art featuring 25 acts that were themed around prevention of violent extremism (PCVE). The unique event was staged under the auspices of YADEN, a youth-focused civil society organisation, and the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC).

Major Samson Mano, who represented the Director of NCTC at the event, urged youth to be vigilant against terrorists who were keen on recruiting young people. Various speakers at the event cautioned youth against falling prey to propaganda by violent extremists and to report suspicious activities to law enforcement officials.

UN Women, NCTC to strengthen gender in PCVE

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2242 of 2015 requires gender-responsive approaches to counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism (PCVE). It recognizes the role of women and women's rights in the global effort to combat extremism.

UN Women, the entity within the UN system that supports gender equality and empowerment of women, actively supports programs that protect women from the harms of violent extremism and mainstream women participation in PCVE.

The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has been working with women, especially those affected by terrorism, providing psychosocial support to those whose children have been radicalized or involved in violence extremism. In April, NCTC and UN Women in Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance gender responsiveness within PCEV programs in the country.

The MOU will focus on gender and women empowerment in the security space, evidence generation to inform programming targeting women and enhancing the capacity of security institutions by linking them with gender experts.



UN Women in Kenya Head of Programs, Dan Bazira and National Counter Terrorism Center Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira, after signing the Memorandum of Understanding to enhance gender responsiveness within PCVE.

Kenya has made remarkable strides in countering extremism



Winnie Mutua, PVE Analyst at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, discusses the progress made in tackling ideological narratives that fuel extremism in Kenya.

Briefly, who is Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI) and what do you do?

TBI is a governance organisation advising governments at the political level, specifically on Strategy, Policy and Delivery, with technology as an enabler.

What are the specific areas of collaboration with NCTC?

In 2020, the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) requested TBI's delivery expertise to support the implementation of County Action Plans (CAPs) to Prevent Violent Extremism (PCVE). TBI helped with strengthening the capacity of security stakeholders to integrate counter extremist narratives into county level activities.

What would you cite as achievements/milestones in this collaboration?

First, we jointly developed and rolled out a counter narrative course for government officers and teachers of the Islamic religion. We also developed a PCVE

course for the Kenya School of Government's Security Management Institute, launched a PCVE Delivery Exchange Platform, to shrink the pool of individuals that are vulnerable to radicalisation, and trained county officials on using the FUSION system to track and assess progress towards full implementation of CAPs.

How does PCVE tie in with your stated global goal of fostering open, inclusive and prosperous societies?

TBI fosters openness and inclusivity by increasing public awareness of the danger and illegitimacy of Salafi-Jihadist narratives. We advocate a 'Whole of Government and Whole of Society' approach to preventing and countering violent extremism.

What challenges have you encountered in the course of your work around PCVE in Kenya?

Duplication of Counterterrorism (CT) and PCVE efforts leading to gaps in capacity building and wastage of funds thus undermining progress. Also, PCVE has been taken as a programmatic issue. When the donor stops funding the program, PCVE activities come to an end. This results in persistence of extremism threats.

As an organisation, what do you see as areas of improvement in relation to PCVE in Kenya?

Development partners should align support to NCTC's efforts towards the preventive approach to violent extremism and terrorism. This includes supporting PCVE action in "non-traditional" hotspots and in day-to-day operations of communities and government actors alike.

What other areas

Dialogues and trainings to mainstream PCVE at the community level. It is critical to "drive defiance" towards the Al-Shabaab agenda. We also need to embrace and engage frontline actors including religious, community and youth leaders so as to build trust between them and state security institutions. Of great importance is reclaiming Islam from Al-Shabaab and terrorists in general.





Sheikh Ramadhan Aula, a Director at the Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR), a community-based organisation working to promote inter-faith dialogue.

Briefly tell us what your organisation does and the specific issues you deal with...

The Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR) was launched in 2015 just after the terrorist attack at the Garissa University College. As Muslims professionals, we came together to rally the Muslim clergy to speak louder against extremism.

What was the original goal in setting up CSCR?

Our original objective was to create public awareness that the jihad we hear about in Somalia is not a religious war but pure criminality. We realized many Muslims religious leaders were willing to speak against extremist violence but they did not know how to package this message. So we trained them on how to come up with messages countering extremist narratives.

What would you say is your greatest strength?

CSCR's greatest strength is in developing and communicating counter-narratives to extremist messaging through media interviews, newspaper articles, videos and infographics.

What are some of the key programs you are currently undertaking?

CSCR has a number of programs. These include 'Building Resilience against Violent Extremism' or BRAVE, an intra-faith Muslim initiative. There is also 'Community Resilience against Violent Extremism' or CRAVE which is an inter-faith program. Diminishing the Prevalence of Radicalization into Violent Extremism is a program about promoting harmony between security agencies and religious leaders.

You have also been working closely with the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC). How did it start and what benefits have you derived from this partnership?

Our relationship with NCTC started immediately we formed CSCR in 2015. We were involved in the

Our goal is to foster inter-faith harmony

development of the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE). NCTC has been a good partner. We have also conducted successful media campaigns with NCTC.

What is the key lesson in your seven-year journey as an organisation in the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism (PCVE) space?

One key lesson is that security is paramount in the development of any country.

Any challenges you have encountered along the way?

People who just don't want to listen or who deny that we have a problem called radicalization in this country. Also, there are people who are not happy with our work. We even receive threats.

What would you consider to be your greatest successes?

Perhaps, the biggest success to us is getting security people to sit at the same table with religious leaders and talk. Also, seeing previously radicalized individuals resume a normal life, by going back to school or starting businesses, is a great accomplishment to us.

Where would you say we are as a country with PCVE?

We still have a long way to go in terms of creating awareness about violent extremism. We must redouble our efforts in ensuring the message we are developing reaches everyone. The media is one of the most effective platforms. We also need to offer specialized training to security officers, particularly those on the ground, to understand how radicalization occurs but more importantly, to prevent profiling of people based on ignorance....

We are transitioning into PCVE, where the focus is on trying to understand what attracts people to violent and extremist ideologies. What progress are we making?

First, we have to understand we are dealing with two kinds of people. The first is the person who is out to kill. That is where counter-terrorism (CT) approach comes in. But there are people who are not violent yet but are radicalized. These are the people we need to engage through PCVE programs.

What should be done?

Focus more on what drives people into radicalization. We also need to step up awareness about violent extremism and train more security officers on PCVE.

What is the role of religious leaders and scholars in countering violent extremism?

They have a huge role. Extremists are using religious narratives. Who is fit to counter these narratives? It is the religious leaders and scholars. They are the most effective carriers of the message, so to speak, to the people who have been radicalized.

There is the issue of misinterpretation of religious texts as a factor in radicalization. What are you doing about that?

We work closely with religious scholars who analyze the narratives being peddled by the extremists and establish the sources (in the Islamic teachings) and their authenticity. In developing the counter-narratives, we have to use the same sources to develop counter-narratives using facts.

What is your view about the perception of Islam or the Muslim faith being violent and extremist?

The perception by whom?

Some of the perpetrators of terrorism claim to be adherents of the Muslim faith. To the ordinary mind, that linkage is very difficult to break....

Yes, the perception is there and it is an undeniable fact that Islam has been misused to an extent. That is why

religious leaders are important in terms of demystifying some of these misconceptions about Islam and reclaiming some of the terminologies from terrorists and violent extremists.

What are you doing to promote inter-religious dialogue in Kenya?

Programs like CRAVE and BRAVE have aspects of inter-faith relations. However, we first discuss among ourselves as Muslim religious leaders before we can reach out to others.

How about strengthening community resilience? And are you getting support from political leaders in the communities?

We work with community leaders who also include the religious leaders. By building the capacity of community leaders and influencers, that is how you build resilience.

At the level of counties do you think we are making progress?

The County Action Plans (CAPs) are working very well in some counties. But there are counties that do not know what to do with CAPs. It is an issue of local context. There are places where people have never experienced violent extremism. That said, fighting terrorism and violent extremism at the county level is good progress.

CT Public Spaces training hailed as a success



Officers from the Critical Infrastructure Policing Unit (CIPU) receive training on countering violent extremism. The training was organised by the National Counter Terrorism Center under the Security Pillar of the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism.

A comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism must include securing public spaces since they are vulnerable to attacks. To this end, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has been working with Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) and the Spanish Guardia Civil to roll out the CT Public Spaces training program for the National Police Service in Kenya.

The program is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Spanish Guardia Civil. Other countries in Africa where CT Public Spaces is being implemented are Ghana and Senegal.

The program aims to deter and minimize terrorist attacks and their impact in public spaces, by equipping law enforcement and public security personnel with

skills, techniques and equipment to enhance their citizen protection capabilities. It mainly involves specialized training of a core team of experts in public spaces protection who then train others in the security forces.

Among the skills imparted include high-risk and rapid response operations with tactical training covering areas like precision shooting, intervention dog handling, drone technology and explosives detection.

In February this year NCTC received training equipment handed over by Spain's ambassador to Kenya Her Excellency Ms. Christina Diaz Fernandez-Gil accompanied by representatives of the EU Delegation in Kenya for use in future training.

Between January and March this year, NCTC and the National Police Service working with Spanish Guardia Civil, were involved in a joint exercise to improve Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and Counter-Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (C-UAV) handling capabilities of Kenyan personnel drawn from various security agencies.

On March 30, FIIAPP Director Anna Terron, paid a courtesy call on NCTC Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira in the company of Lt. Col. Luis Guijarro Marquez from Guardia Civil, to review the achievements of the program and discuss future cooperation.

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The program aims to deter and minimize terrorist attacks and their impact in public spaces, by equipping law enforcement and public security personnel with skills, techniques and equipment to enhance their citizen protection capabilities.

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“The joint work in securing public spaces has been very successful, showing the country's commitment to protecting its public spaces,” remarked Ms. Terron.

Meanwhile, NCTC has been training officers from the Critical Infrastructure Police Unit (CIPU) on their role in detecting and preventing terrorist activities while undertaking their duties of guarding sensitive public buildings and installations. The Center organised a seminar for CIPU officers in March.

County forarally community actors to resist radicalization

The National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE) puts counties at the heart of counter-extremism and de-radicalisation. County Engagement Forums (CEFs) are the primary vehicles through which counties execute this mandate at the devolved level, and involving a spectrum of stakeholders.

The counties of Nyeri, Wajir and Mombasa held CEFs in March with the support of the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) aimed at mobilizing key local actors including youth, women, elders, community leaders and security officers, in discussing ways of improving community resilience against terrorism.

In Nyeri County, Foundation for Dialogue, an NGO working under Nyeri CEF Economic Pillar, hosted a youth mentorship workshop targeting young people in Majengo area, previously identified as a hotspot for radicalization. The project is geared to improving the socioeconomic well-being of youth by supporting them to start businesses, as part of addressing unemployment as a push factor.

Similarly, in a forum convened in Wajir County to update progress with the County Action Plan (CAP) participants deliberated on measures taken under the Education, Media, Security, Economic and Ideological Pillars to reduce vulnerability of youth to radicalization.

In Mombasa County, a CEF meeting in March brought together youth and elders, who were sensitized on violent extremism and terrorism. Elders were urged to play their role as parents in helping youth stay away from individuals or groups likely to lure them into violent extremism.

The same month in Garissa County, NCTC in partnership with Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and Ijara Women for Peace under the auspices of “Kwa Pamoja Tuzuie Bala” initiative, organised a one-day workshop in an effort to build trust and collaboration between local community members and security officers.

Among those who attended were community leaders, religious leaders, youth, women, media and representatives of local security agencies. Mr. John Marete, on behalf of the County Commissioner, said, “Building trust between security and law enforcement arms and the local community is crucial in disrupting the activities of armed extremist elements in our society.”

The town hall forum discussed barriers to collaboration between community and security actors and the role of various stakeholders in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE).

Somalia war on Al-Shabaab gets regional boost



From left: Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed, Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh, Somalia President Mohamud, and Kenya President Dr. William Ruto, at the Somalia Frontlines Summit on stabilization of Somalia and eradication of terrorism, in Mogadishu on February 1, 2023

Four countries in the East and Horn of Africa region in February have announced plans for military offensive to root out the Al-Shabaab extremist group in Somalia.

The declaration was made at a high-level summit in the Somali capital Mogadishu attended by leaders of the four countries – William Ruto of Kenya, Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia.

“The Summit agrees to make the final push for joint operations in the areas that remain under terrorists to completely liberate the whole of Somalia from Al-Shabaab,” a communique issued by the leaders said.

The multi-faceted onslaught entails disrupting and defeating the terrorist group militarily, financially and ideologically. Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia are set to launch joint operations in the areas still controlled by the militant group.

Since taking office in May 2022, Somalia’s President Mohamud has vowed to eradicate Al-Shabaab Islamist militants, referring to them as ‘Khawaarji’ a term used to describe people who have deviated from the path of Islam. Currently, a 20,000-strong African Union force is stationed in Somalia with troops drawn from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya.

We shall vanquish terrorists – Somalia President

In an opinion article published in Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper on 31st December 2022, H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, traced the long-drawn challenge of tackling the jihadist group, Al Shabaab, that has afflicted Somalia and the Horn of Africa region for close to fifteen years.

In particular, the president called for renewed international partnerships and firm commitment to defeat and root out terrorism from the society. He also highlighted strategies and military successes recently achieved against the jihadists, key among them the grassroots community-led uprising in support of the Somali security forces and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which has led to substantial degrading of the terror group.

The Somali leader further asserted that Al Shabaab was neither a Somali nor Muslim bona fide group but

a dangerous globally organised criminal terrorist entity that radicalizes and recruits in the region and the world. He therefore called for concerted efforts by the international community, more so the frontier states, in combating this enemy of humanity, reiterating that Al Shabaab’s annihilation was central to achieving long-term peace, security and prosperity in Somalia and the region.

He also highlighted the new approach by his government combining security efforts with a sustained assault on illicit financing of the group, as well as attacking its false ideology, terming these measures a “holistic approach to disable and dismantle the terror group operations”.

Mr. Mohamud also called on the frontier states to collaborate in information sharing, joint intelligence operations, de-radicalization and high-value targeted operations.

NCTC unveils inaugural Annual Report 2022

The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has unveiled its first Annual Report.

The report, unveiled in January 2023, highlights the Center's achievements during the year under review, January to December, 2022. Pursuant to its legal and institutional mandate, and guided by the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE), NCTC was at the forefront of forging an inclusive, stakeholder-driven approach, rallying all sectors of society to this important national process.

As the Report documents, the Center was able to engage its diverse array of stakeholders through various platforms including conferences, trainings and media campaigns. NCTC had a total of 504 engagements during the year clustered under the nine pillars of the NSCVE as follows:

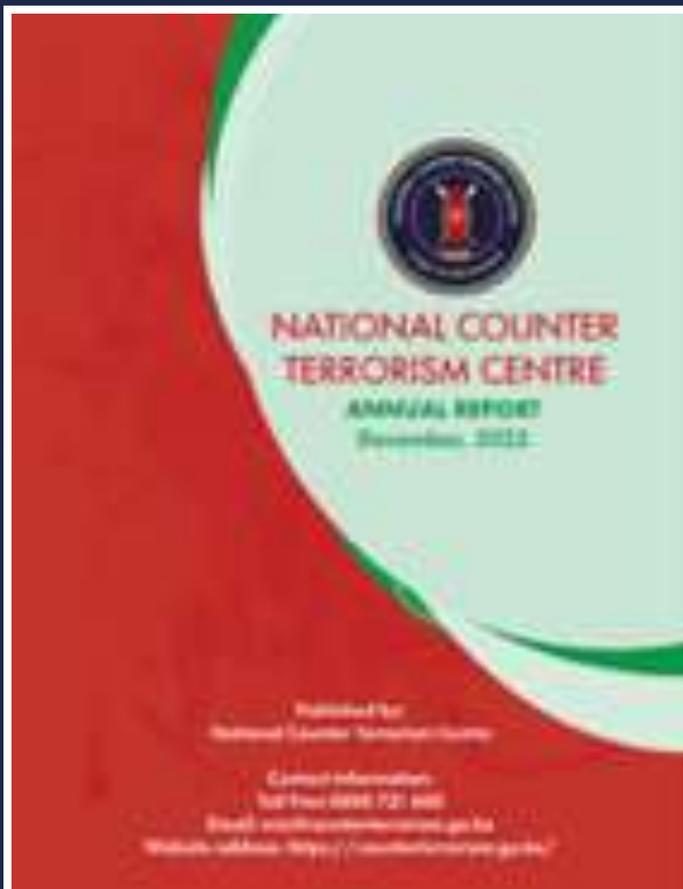
- **Research pillar (19)**
- **Training and capacity building pillar (185)**
- **Media and online pillar (38)**
- **Security and law-enforcement pillar (78)**
- **Faith and ideology pillar (18)**
- **Legal and policy pillar (65)**
- **Arts and culture pillar (7)**
- **Political pillar (50)**
- **Psychosocial pillar (40)**

The Centre also undertook 6 activities within the economic domain.

At the local/county level, among the main activities was establishment of the FUSION system for Monitoring and Evaluation of County Action Plans (CAPs) and training of County Engagement Forum members in ten counties. The Center also spearheaded the crafting of PCVE legislation in Nairobi and Laikipia counties.

Stakeholder groups that benefited from training and capacity-building include universities, youth groups, security and law enforcement personnel, religious leaders and media. Private sector was part of strengthening national counter terrorism through enhancing security in buildings and premises.

At the international level, the Center participated in various high-level engagements on global counter-terrorism including hosting a conference in countering terrorist media strategies organised by the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh. The Center also participated in the Aqaba process and the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition conference on ideology, communications and counterterrorism financing.



Key milestones 2022 - ANNUAL REPORT

- Hosted local and international conferences discussing PCVE strategies
- Enhanced strategic communications to counter extremist narratives
- Implemented monitoring and evaluation tools
- Trained key PCVE stakeholders – youth, media, women and religious leaders
- Established a call center with toll free numbers
- Developed innovative IT Tools (CSAVE & RADAR)
- Formulated model legislation to mainstream county PCVE activities in 2 counties
- Organised security-community dialogue in two counties



Youth admire works of art at an exhibition organised by the Western Kenya PCVE Consortium, to sensitize young people on the dangers of radicalization.

Youth in Western Kenya use art to highlight dangers of extremism

Young people have a vital role in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE). For this reason, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) working with the Western Kenya Consortium is empowering youth in Western Kenya to be at the forefront of preventing radicalization into violent extremism.

The Western Kenya Consortium brings together Champions of Peace, Sharp Development Solutions Consultancy and Youth Art Development Network. In January, the consortium organised an exhibition dubbed County Engagement Forum: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Western Kenya.

The exhibition showcased PCVE County Action Plans currently being implemented by Kisumu, Siaya and Kisii counties. Special focus was on the economic activities

aimed at empowering the community and bolstering its resilience against radicalization into violent extremism. It also underscored the important role of arts and culture in creating public awareness of the threat of violent extremism. The works displayed ranged from paintings to poetry and performing arts, all expressing feelings, emotions and opinions against violent extremism.

NCTC in partnership with the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been spearheading a PCVE program across 10 Western Kenya counties - Kisumu, Siaya, Homa Bay, Migori, Kisii, Nyamira, Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga. Meanwhile, in April, NCTC and the Western Kenya Consortium undertook several activities to review progress on implementation of County Action Plans and agree on sustainable ways of mainstreaming PCVE in local communities.

Top Islamic scholar urges youth to shun false narratives

One of the world's leading scholars on Islamic text interpretation, Sheikh Usama Hassan, under the joint invitation and sponsorship of the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) and the Tony Blair Institute visited the country in early March and gave a series of lectures in various universities organised by the Center for Strategic Conflict Resolution (CSCR).

The British-based cleric urged youth to be wary of false interpretations of the Quran used by extremists to justify terrorism and to seek the guide of religious leaders. He also called for inter-faith dialogue within higher institutions of learning through the students' associations in order to foster religious harmony within the student community.

"The ideological battle is crucial to success," he said, "the true meaning of Jihad is the struggle for goodness against evil."

He gave talks at the Technical University Mombasa, Garissa University and at the Jamia Mosque in Nairobi, where he spoke to students drawn from various universities within the city. Sheikh Usama also addressed a workshop in Nairobi attended by representatives of Muslim community-based organisations involved in preventing and countering violent extremism.

Young people are vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism. Hence the need to sensitize them on the dangers lurking in the world around them including propaganda peddled by extremists especially in the online spaces.

NCTC hosts Iftar dinner events for Garissa, Moi universities

The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) in April 21, hosted inter-faith dinner events for Garissa University and Moi University students as part of its mandate to promote religious tolerance in communities, including institutions of higher learning.

The Center used the dinner events to reiterate its commitment to helping the two universities in their journey of recovery from the impact of past incidences of terrorism that affected them.

Garissa University suffered heavily as a result of the infamous terrorist attack at the institution in 2015. On its part, Moi University was affected by the movement of some of its students to combat theatres in 2016.

Mr. Mohammed Noor, from the NCTC Communications Team, pledged the Center's support to the two institutions to instill public confidence as safe learning environments.

NCTC, ETIDAL agree to bolster cooperation

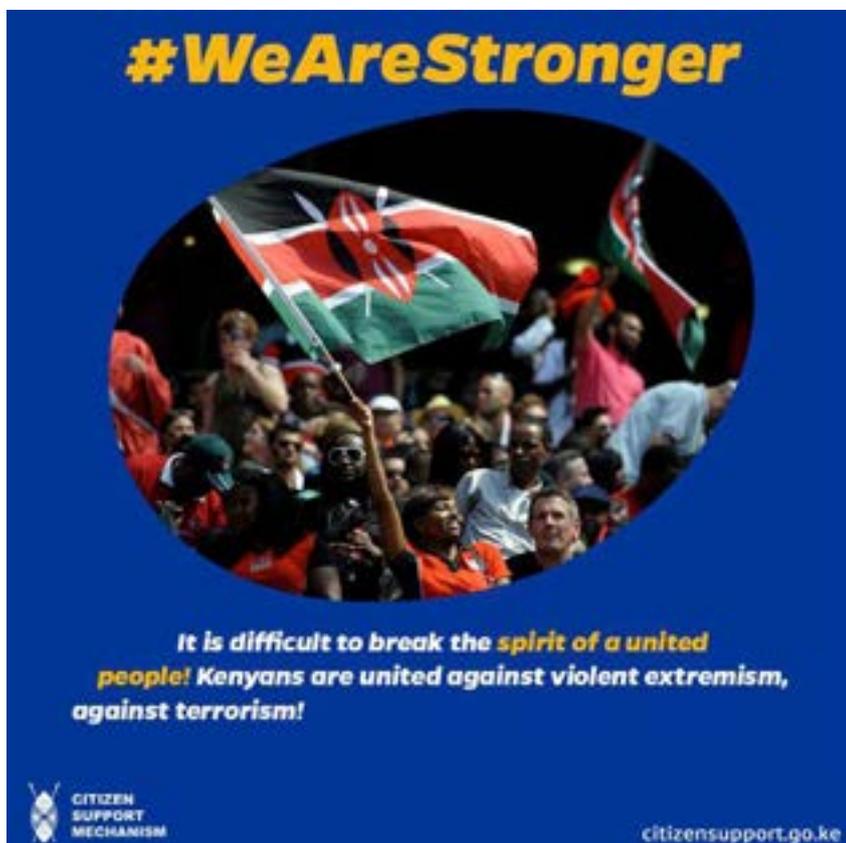
Kenya and Saudi Arabia counter terrorism authorities have stepped up their partnership in tackling violent extremism and especially in dealing with extremist ideology. This follows a visit by a delegation from Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) led by Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira to Saudi Arabia's Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (ETIDAL).

The team was received by the Secretary-General of ETIDAL, His Excellency Dr. Mansour Al-Shammari, with discussions mainly focused on joint approaches to combating extremist ideology and terrorism. Dr. Nyawira lauded ETIDAL as a global leader in fighting violent extremism.

"You (ETIDAL) are on a class of your own. We (NCTC) are very impressed with what we have seen here and have a lot to learn from you," said the NCTC boss.

During the visit to the Middle East nation, the team from NCTC also paid a courtesy call on Kenya's envoy to Riyadh, His Excellency Ambassador Peter Ogego, who hailed the ongoing collaboration between the two countries saying it is a reflection of the shared desire for a peaceful world anchored on co-existence. "Kenya values the long-standing close collaboration between the two countries in building resilience against extremist ideology," said H.E. Amb. Ogego.

ESAAMLG team visits Kenya



Kenya's leadership in the East and Southern African region in fighting terrorism and violent extremism has seen many delegations visit the country on learning tours. One such delegation comprising members of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) was in Kenya in February.

ESAAMLG comprises 20 member States working to combat money laundering and financing of terrorism. It was established in 1999 in Arusha, Tanzania. Since then, the regional body has been involved in implementing and monitoring programs targeting money laundering as a terrorism funding mechanism. Terrorism financing (TF) remains a major problem.

Pictorials



NCTC Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira pins a badge on H.E. Ambassador Peter Ogego, Kenya's envoy to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia when she paid him a courtesy call in Riyadh.



Kenyan security personnel received training on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by experts from the Spanish Guardia Civil as part of CT Public Spaces, an initiative supported by the European Union to build resilience of public spaces as part of counter terrorism.



A delegation from the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) visited Kenya as part of a knowledge sharing program with the National Counter Terrorism Center. Here, members of the ESAAMLG team are seen planting a commemorative tree at the Center.



Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to Kenya, Her Excellency Ms. Christina Diaz Fernandez-Gil (center) inspects special equipment on the last day of the Counter Terrorism Public Spaces training exercise during which Kenyan security personnel acquired skills in protection of public spaces under the auspices of the National Counter Terrorism Center.



National Counter Terrorism Center head of training Masisi Kiilu presents a certificate to one of the participants after the Center trained private security officers in response procedures in a terrorist.



Over 1,000 youth in Nakuru were trained by the National Counter Terrorism Center as part of building their resilience to violent extremism.

Pictorials



National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) Acting Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira (fourth left), Spain's Ambassador to Kenya Cristina Diaz Fernandez-Gil (in white), FIIAPP Director, Anna Terron (third left) and other officials during a visit to NCTC offices by the CT Public Spaces team



Community representatives at a meeting in Garissa County with security officers aimed at building trust and collaboration in tackling violent extremism. The forum was organised by the National Counter Terrorism Center in conjunction with Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and Ijara Women for Peace and Search for Common Ground. (See story page 6).



Proceedings at Wajir County Engagement Forum to discuss ways of reducing vulnerability of youth to violent extremism. Counties are instrumental in promoting dialogue on how to prevent the spread of extremist ideologies at community level especially among vulnerable groups like youth.



Journalists who were recognized for their work in supporting the Media and Online Pillar of the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism.



National Counter Terrorism Center in conjunction with Foundation for Dialogue organised a youth mentorship workshop in Nyeri County. The aim of the workshop was to educate young people in Nyeri's Majengo informal settlements on entrepreneurship opportunities as part of ongoing PCVE activities in the county.

NCTC holds a security briefing with KEPSA



A delegation from Kenya Private Sector Alliance after holding consultations with the National Counter Terrorism Center.

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) have agreed to deepen their collaboration in training and capacity building in counter terrorism (CT) targeting the private sector. This was one of the decisions arrived at when a delegation from KEPSA visited the NCTC headquarters on April 14.

The two parties also resolved to renew their Memorandum of Understanding after the previous one (2019-2022) lapsed. Among the areas to be covered include strengthening of CT capabilities among private sector entities. The meeting also provided a platform for exchanging ideas on areas of mutual interest.



World marks PCVE Day on February 12

The world commemorated the International Day of Prevention of Violent Extremism on February 12 with a call to all sectors of society to play an active role in dealing with radicalization to violence. The day provides an opportunity to spread awareness of the threat posed to society by violent extremism.

NCTC, GSU review progress with training on public spaces

NCTC Director Dr. Rosalind Nyawira met with Deputy Inspector General KPS (former General Service Unit Commandant) Douglas Kanja to discuss progress made with training of GSU personnel under the CT Public Spaces program. The two institutions also resolved to improve cooperation in the spirit of the multi-agency approach to combating terrorism in Kenya.

30,000 officers to be trained in tackling extremism in prisons

Phase 2 of the Countering Violent Extremism in Prison program has officially kicked off. In January, 122 officers from Kiambu and Ruiru prisons converged at Prisons Service Training College to be trained on ways to prevent extremism taking root in correctional institutions, which have been identified as a potential hotspot for radicalization. The first phase of the program successfully reached out to 19,000 prison officers across all ranks drawn from Coast, Nairobi, North Eastern and Rift Valley regions. The second phase is targeting 11,000 officers from the Kenya Prisons Service. The initiative is supported by the Global Center for Cooperative Security.

Private security officers trained on public space safety

Creating safe and secure public spaces is instrumental in enhancing a country's ability to deter and disrupt terrorists. Private security officers guarding many of our public spaces require the knowledge and skills to respond to active shooter situations among other measures to protect public spaces. The National Counter Terrorism Center acknowledges the private security sector as the first line of defence in most establishments hence the need to integrate them into national counter-terrorism strategies. The Center organised a three-day training for private guards on protective security awareness to sharpen their effectiveness in detecting non-routine behavior and unusual objects.

UNOCT pledges further support to Kenya

As part of the Kenya's efforts to deepen collaboration and support to national, regional and international counter-terrorism and PCVE efforts, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) has been working closely with the United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) regional office in Nairobi.

In February, this working relationship received a boost when UNOCT Director Dr. Jehangir Khan visited the Center. The meeting also reflected on the outcomes of the inaugural Africa High Level Regional Summit on Counter Terrorism held in Nairobi. It was resolved that there was greater need for collaboration through context specific solutions.

Nyeri County interns sensitized on radicalization

National Counter Terrorism Center in conjunction with the Nyeri County Government conducted a sensitization workshop for interns covering topical issues on terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. They were also inducted on how to effectively understand and counter terrorist narratives as well as basic safety skills like how to respond to a terrorist attack scenario. The participants will be expected to serve as positive influencers to their peers.



#WeAreStronger

If you

SEE
SOMETHING
SAY
SOMETHING

Let's expose terrorists in our midst for our security and safety. **See something, say something.**

Report it to NCTC at **0800721600 (toll free)**

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