

MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK IN NATIONAL SECURITY: A CASE OF SECURITY OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN KENYA

By

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Abstract

This research sought to examine the role of a multi-agency security approach in promoting national security, in the case of northern Kenya. Specifically, the study assessed the operational and structural framework of the multiagency security framework integrated in northern Kenya, and the effectiveness of the new security strategy. The findings of the research acknowledge that Kenya's security approach has over time transformed from a "single-handed" or single-agency approach to a multi-agency approach that involves the integration of diverse security actors who work as a team to enforce internal security and protection of the country from external aggression. Owing to the complexity of contemporary conflicts including terrorism and banditry and the rising role of human rights organizations, the traditional approach to securitization that involved the use of brute force and enhanced police presences as evidenced by the Wagalla Massacre has to some extent waned. Recent trends in the country's securitization as evidenced by the Lamu security response and Northern Kenya have involved the integration of Multi-Agency Teams as a response mechanism to addressing the region's insecurities.

While arguing in support of the integration of the multi-institutional security approach, the article highlights that this approach presents to enhances collaboration among security stakeholders, a condition which is very critical to addressing security issues. Through qualitative analysis premised on key informant interviews and reviews of secondary data, the essay paper also posits that the approach presents to intensify civil-military relations as it provides public-centered securitization and this may boost the country's public trust in security agencies hence easing intelligence gathering. The article also considers the approach as very critical because it brings together actors or stakeholders of diverse capabilities and expertise, an element that is central to harnessing security operations. This article concludes by reinforcing the need for the government of Kenya to fully support the integration of a multi-agency security approach in handling security matters not only in the northern frontier region but in Kenya at large. The findings of this essay

augment already existing pieces of literature that support and criticize the integration of a multi-institutional security approach in Kenya. The paper's findings can therefore serve as a tool for policy formulation and academic purposes.

Key Words: *Multi-Institutional; Multi-Agency; Single Agency; Northern Frontier District; Security Actors*

Introduction

Kenya's peaceful coexistence is largely threatened by multifaceted and complex security issues. Kenya continues to experience diverse security threats including cattle rustling, banditry, ethnic and religious radicalization, politically organized and orchestrated violence, arms smuggling, and small arms proliferation, among others. Since the 1998 United States of America embassy bombing, Kenya has witnessed high-profile insecurity incidents within its borders, such as the 2013/2014 Mandera clan conflicts, 2011 Baragoi cattle rustling, 2015 Nandemo cattle rustling, 2013 Westgate Mall attack, 2015 Garissa University College attack, 2012 /2013 clan conflicts in Mandera, 2002 Kikambala Hotel attacks and the recent increasing banditry cases in the northern part of Kenya. These attacks continue to put the country in a precarious situation as a result of massive losses of lives, destruction of properties, and curtailing Kenya's investment potential. The northern Kenya region also borders politically unstable countries including Somalia, and Ethiopia whose multiplier effects of political instability are felt in the northern parts of Kenya.

Northern Kenya is one of the regions in Kenya considered a security hotspot. For purposes of this study, northern Kenya constitutes the counties of Garissa, Isiolo, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, and Turkana counties. A study conducted by Chome (2021) identified northern Kenya counties including Garissa to be of serious security threat in Kenya. The study findings identified Marsabit County as one of the northern Kenya counties that continue to witness not only several instances of insecurity but also serve as a potential hotspot for radicalization and recruitment.

In Abdi's (2011) qualitative study of the Kenyan northern frontier region, he highlighted diverse reasons why Kenya's northern region is a security hotspot. He links the insurgencies, banditries, and other forms of crime to the existence of porous borders in the northern region that allow for ease in arms proliferation including small arms and light weapons. Secondly, the region is highly vulnerable to climate changes and environmental degradation hence not only enhancing their

and stiff competition over ownership and control of natural resources hence nurturing conflicts among the pastoralist communities.

Thirdly, the region is largely arid and semi-arid and experiences diverse droughts and famine that make the locals more susceptible to joining organized criminal groups as a means of survival. Noteworthy, the region has also suffered the grip of state marginalization and exclusion and this has bred diverse social cleavages. Terror groups and other organized criminals continue to exploit the economic and political exclusion in northern Kenya to win recruits. For instance, the northern counties of Garissa, Mandera, and Wajir which are dominated by Muslim Somalis are considered the biggest victims of underdevelopment and unequal development. Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera are considered among the seven poorest counties of Kenya with poverty levels estimated at 63%, 66%, and 78% respectively, as compared to the national poverty level of 36% (Abdille, 2019). A report by the International Crisis Group (2019) indicates that of the three counties, more than three-fifths of the population lives on less than \$1.90 daily. In terms of embracing education, the primary school enrolment rate is estimated at 37% against the national rate of 77% (International Crisis Group, 2019).

A study conducted by Osamba (2000) on the twin phenomena of security threats, including banditry and cattle rustling, finds that cattle rustling has in the recent past undergone a transformation from a cultural practice to an international commercial venture that is bankrolled by cattle warlords and political elites. The evidence points to the fact that state marginalization, state repression, economic vulnerabilities, and militarism in the region have eased the exploitation of the locals by the political elites and the warlords for engagement in banditry and cattle rustling. Osamba (2000) findings also reveal that the northern parts of Kenya are prone to violence because of their nomadic pastoralist economy that serves as potential grounds for conflicts over competition for natural resources such as water and pasture.

Based on this background, it is evident that the selection of northern Kenya was primarily informed by the propensity of violent incidents in the region. The paper avers that whereas diverse security strategies have been integrated into the region since independence, the security situation remains concerning, with several raids, lives lost, and properties destroyed reported. The research argues that most integrated security approaches have failed to achieve their full objectives and have only had short-term positive implications due to their lack of engagement with all security stakeholders.

This article applies qualitative data analysis and aims to discuss the opportunities and costs linked to the integration of a multi-agency security approach to national security. The article explores this topical issue through a case analysis of Kenya's security approach in the Northern parts of Kenya, including the counties of Mandera, Isiolo, Marsabit, Wajir, Turkana, and Garissa, among others.

Theoretical Framework

This research applied the system theory as propounded by Emile Durkheim, which explains how societies are organized to enhance stability and ease in operations. The theory assumes that the society (system) is made up of sub-systems interlinked to one another for the efficiency and effectiveness of the society. This implies that there must be a sense of harmony and synchronized operations among all subsystems for the whole system to work as anticipated. The theory concurs with the realist philosophy that assumes that the state is the leading actor in international relations and operates like a system. For the state to effectively perform its mandates, including development and survival, it is constituted of diverse parts or arms and sub-arms that support the general operations of the entire system. The system theory posits that the failure of either the sub-systems that constitute the whole system is most likely to jeopardize whole system operations leading to a lack of efficiency and effectiveness in conducting its mandates (Bertalanffy, 1972). This is based on the fact that each of the sub-systems has a role to play in society.

One of the sub-systems of the whole system (state) is the Department of Security whose overall mandate is to enhance peace and security or maintain internal and external order within the state. The Department of Security is constituted of diverse elements, including the National Police Service, the Kenya Defense Forces, the Anti-Stock Theft Unit, and the Immigration Department among others. The failure of any of the elements or components that constitute the Department of Security is likely to culminate in the failure of the entire security system.

Noteworthy, the operations and the constitution of the multi-agency security approach embody the basic tenets of the system theory as propounded by Emile Durkheim. This is because the multi-agency team is usually constituted of multiple parts/elements /components that have to work in synergy for the multi-agency team to achieve its overall objective, including neutralizing and dismantling the growing influence of terror groups and other activities considered existential threats to peaceful coexistence (Kimonye, 2022). For instance, Kenya's Security Multi-Agency team is composed of the National Intelligence Service, the National Police Service, Kenya's

Disciplined Forces, and officers from the Immigration Department and also incorporates the civil society and the locals. This team is expected to work collaboratively and in synergy despite having a diverse set of skills and abilities and specialization on matters of security. For instance, whereas the Kenya National Police Service specializes in the internal security of the country, the disciplined forces specialize in protecting the country from any form of external aggression while the National Intelligence investigates and reports any form of intelligence or information to be acted upon by either the National Police Service or the Kenya Defense Forces or both.

The failure of any of the components of the Multi-Agency Team to perform its work efficiently, effectively, and in goodwill results in the failure of the entire team unless necessary mitigation measures are put in place. Therefore, as guided by the system theory, every part of the system must work independently and interdependently to enhance the general functioning of the system. This implies that in case the National Intelligence Service fails to collaboratively and independently perform its mandate, there is a likelihood of the team experiencing a lack of necessary intelligence to enhance its security operations.

Overall, the multiagency security framework is akin to the system theory. Just like the system theory that acknowledges the existence of several sub-systems, the multi-agency security framework acknowledges the existence and roles of several security components or actors that must perform their roles for the purposes of restoring peace and stability in the country. As Kimonye, (2022) points out, the multiple organs of the security sector must work in synergy and build a sense of trust, functionality, and cooperation to achieve the overall security goals and objectives. The security agencies must work in synergy based on their strengths and mitigate their weaknesses for effective coordination and performance. Therefore, based on a multiagency security approach, security actors and institutions form parts within the security system with specific mandates or functions.

Methodology

The overall objective of the study was to examine the role of a multi-agency security approach in promoting national security in northern Kenya.

The research relied on key informant interviews whose findings were corroborated by a review of secondary literature. The study adopted a case study research design approach and involved interviewing security actors in Kenya including the Members of Parliament in the northern Kenya region, members of the National Assembly Committee on Security, officers of the National Counter-Terrorism Center, and religious faithful among others. The rationale for selecting the respondents was largely based on the respondents' experience and knowledge of security operations and strategies in northern Kenya. The interviews were conducted in Nairobi, Garissa, Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Isiolo, and Wajir counties. To augment the primary sources of data collection, this research also involved reviewing existing pieces of literature and scholarships from books, journals, and reports among others that assessed Kenya's security strategies to neutralize insecurity threats, with a primary focus on the Multi-Agency Security approach in the northern frontier Region. A total of 15 respondents were interviewed for this study, as shown in Figure 1 below. The respondents constituted security actors as well as religious faithful who have played a central role in multi-agency operations.

Figure 1

Agency	Level of Respondents	Number
National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC)	Field Officer	3
Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU)	Regional Commander	3
Office of the President	Intelligence Officer	3
Judiciary	Judge	1
Parliament	Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Security	1
County Government	County Security Team	2
Interdenominational Team	SUPKEM, NCKK	2

Source: Author, 2023

Data Analysis

This qualitative study applied the use of thematic analysis approach to analyze primary data obtained through key informant interviews. Key themes were derived from the key informants' responses which guided this study's findings.

Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in strict compliance with ethical standards to ensure high standards of reliability and validity to research findings. The study relied on very reliable and factual secondary sources. Key informants' consent was sought to take part in the research and their anonymity and confidentiality rights were preserved. Only respondents, above 18 years old and who have expert knowledge of the multi-agency security framework were interviewed for this study.

Limitations of the Study

Time and resource constraints are some of the limitations of the study. The study is also only limited to analysis of the status of the multi-agency security approach in northern Kenya consisting of the counties of Turkana, Isiolo, Marsabit, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera. Given the expertise of the researcher, he overcame these limitations by allocating enough time and resources for the study. He also ensured enough sample size was selected and adequate secondary literature reviewed to enhance the reliability and validity of research findings.

Analysis of Northern Kenya Security Outlook and Strategies

The northern parts of Kenya have had a troubled past since independence. Upon attaining independence, one of the security challenges that the Kenyatta regime experienced was the demand for self-determination and ultimate secession by the inhabitants of the northern frontier region, which constituted the modern-day Isiolo counties, Garissa, Marsabit, Mandera, and Wajir. The population of these counties had demanded secession from Kenya to Somalia. To make real their threat, the counties formed the Northern Frontier District Liberation Front with the sole objective of using both violent and non-violent approaches to ensure the Northern Frontier region seceded from Kenya (Alio, 2022) This movement was supported by the Somali government as the secession threat was viewed to conform with Pan -Somali nationalism goal. As observed by Khalif and Oba (2013), the secessionist move was not only fueled by the Pan-Somali nationalism goal

but also by emanating local grievances including regional discrimination and marginalization based on the individuals and religion as well as the imposition of government policies and administrative practices that conflicted their interests.

With Kenya considering the northern frontier regions' secessionist attempts as a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Kenya declared a state of emergency in the region, which permitted the security agencies to detain locals without trial, restrict the freedom of movement and assembly and confiscate properties (Anderson, 2017). This security strategy that involved the use of brute force by security agencies without the involvement of the locals enhanced the social cleavages of the population in the northern frontier region. Conflicts intensified in the region with the locals demanding the withdrawal of the security apparatus in their locality, claiming the security personnel were using brutal force against the unarmed civilians, and massive human rights violations were also reported. In 1967, with the security situation worsening in the northern Kenya region, then Zambian president, Kenneth Kaunda led mediated talks between President Jomo Kenyatta and Somali Prime Minister Mohammed Egal which led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to end the conflicts. Despite this resolution, the security situation remains precarious in northern Kenya, with the government relying upon the use of militant security strategies to address the menace. According to a multi-agency security officer,

In the past, before the integration of these new security strategy reforms, violence in the northern frontier region was believed to be sustainable through the excessive use of force. The security agencies adopted colonial tactics for conflict resolution. During demilitarization programs, the security agencies, without much consideration of the local's fundamental human rights as well as privacy would raid homes and villages and beat them up to force them into submission and even forcefully gather intelligence. This provided a short-term solution to the real problem as it reduced civilian-military relations.

Upon his assumption to office in 1978, one of the security challenges that the Moi regime experienced was the resurgence of the Shifta Wars of northern Kenya. The Northern Kenya population protested against the government of Kenya for development neglect, and excessive use of force against unarmed Somalis and rescinded their demand to secede from Kenya. As a strategy to contain the situation, the government of President Moi declared a state of emergency in the northern Kenya region and deployed security agencies in the region. Human rights groups reported

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A community leader interviewed for this study stated that President Kibaki seemed to have set the right trajectory of viewing security from a multifaceted approach. His regime was able to establish a direct linkage between security and human development. He initiated programs aimed at mitigating the development gaps in perceived marginalized regions. Essentially, his regime also to some extent enhanced community sensitization programs on security matters in most parts of the country.

Faced with the ever-increasing rates of insecurity and conflicts despite the integration of militant approaches to securitization, Kenya adopted a multi-agency security approach to help address the rising security issues. The rationale for this development was informed by the fact that the former approach largely lacked the necessary synergy and coordination among all security actors and hence failed to realize its intended objective including addressing the security situation in the Northern Frontier Region.

The rationale for the institutionalization of the multi-institutional agency is supported by responses from one of the government officials who acknowledged that, initially there existed a lot of institutional gaps in Kenya's security architecture. Most security interventions were less effective because of confusion in command and the high centralization of security operations. Most security operations never had definite missions and were less of local engagements and this led to resistance against security agencies and the difficulty in accessing necessary evidence and intelligence from the locals on security matters.

This implies that the adoption of the multi-institutional security approach was not only informed by the contemporary security dynamics but also aimed to address the existing security gaps that predominated the then security infrastructure.

Conceptualizing Multi-Agency Security Approach

The multi-agency security approach incorporates the process whereby institutions, entities, and agencies work together as a team in preventing, detecting, deterring, investigating, and prosecuting security threats within the country. This approach calls for inclusivity and enhanced coordination among all security actors and stakeholders in managing security threats in different parts of the country. As Schmid (2011) points out, this security approach calls for the working together of all core security agencies and supporting institutions in an integrated and coordinated manner to

improve information sharing and efficient response mechanisms to existing security threats. The approach not only appreciates the use of hard security strategies but also prioritizes the use of softer mechanisms that conform to human needs.

This security approach is considered very critical and necessary as it leverages the capabilities of different security agencies to handle security threats and this helps in both deterrence and prevention of crime. Rand (2016) holds the view that for a multi-agency security approach to be successful, the team's activities, roles, and responsibilities as well as expectations must be well-defined and synchronized to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and lack of duplication of roles during a crisis. The multi-agency security approach also calls for the formal security actors to work in close partnership with the non-state actors including the civilians in an organized and synchronized manner for purposes of intelligence gathering and sharing. It is assumed that through this cooperation, the lack of public trust in security agencies will be bridged.

In Kenya, the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Center embodies the tenets of the multi-agency security approach. This institution is tasked to coordinate and facilitate all counter-terrorism efforts. The institution brings together major security actors including representatives from the National Police Service, Kenya Defense Forces, the National Intelligence Service, and other state and non-state organs (Kivunzi & Nzau, 2018). The formation of this multi-agency task force was based on the assumption that this approach enhances the maximum utilization of resources and brings diverse capabilities of each security agency hence serving as a critical framework for coordinating and deterring terror-related activities. Rosenbaum (2002) opines that a multi-agency security approach is very effective in identifying and defining security threats as it accommodates diverse experts who may bring diverse approaches to handling security concerns.

The multi-agency security approach also calls for enhanced civil-military relations. Contrary to the traditional approach, it considers the civilians/locals as very important and pivotal security stakeholders whose interventions can help address existing security challenges. The approach considers civil-military synergies/fusion as central to gathering intelligence information on security threats among other considerations. The multi-agency security approach therefore holds the view that addressing security challenges calls for collaborative efforts from all security stakeholders including the police, military, locals, and other agencies including civil societies. This

approach considers addressing security issues such as banditry and terrorism as a collective action that brings together the police, the military, the locals, and other state and non-state actors.

The multi-agency security approach assumes that the different security agencies that constitute an established multi-agency team have diverse skill sets and capabilities and equipment that may be necessary for the detection, prevention, and response to security threats (Kibusia,2020). As Meteti (2022) observes, the multi-agency approach allows security actors from both the state and non-state sectors to share resources, expertise, objectives, and outcomes among others for purposes of effectiveness and efficiency of the multi-agency team. According to one of the officers of the National Counter Terrorism Center, Before the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Center that embodies the multi-agency security approach, each organ of security worked in isolation. They worked independently and not interdependently. The National Intelligence for instance conducted investigations and obtained very reliable intelligence on security threats. However, they did not care to share such information with necessary security agencies because such a framework was not defined. Everything appeared to be in a mess and perpetrators of insecurity took advantage of the situation. The security agencies seemed less coordinated and organized. This prompted the government to form the NCTC in 2014 to enhance collaboration and coordination among security agencies.

A study conducted by Mwangi (2017) aimed at assessing the effectiveness of Kenya's multi-agency initiatives finds that whereas these initiatives have been successful to some extent, full achievement of the multi-agency actors has been thwarted by the lack of synergy among security actors in handling security matters. He described the challenges to the effectiveness, success, and efficiency of multi-agency initiatives to constitute a lack of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among security actors and stakeholders. Using a case analysis of the Westgate attack and the irresponsiveness of Kenya's security actors to salvage the situation, Mwangi (2007) links the situation to a lack of cooperation, planning, collaboration, and coordination among security actors.

One of the key informants who serves as a *Nyumba Kumi* officer lays the fears with the impending challenges to the multi-agency security approach to revolve around inadequate funds. While acknowledging the fact that the approach is quite necessary, the respondent noted that as integral parts of the multi-institutional security team, they provide very credible information to the security

agencies, yet they are usually not motivated. The respondent while showing frustrations indicated that whereas security is a collective responsibility, they at times feel demotivated. The respondent however appreciated the inclusivity that defines the multi-agency team and reiterated the need to provide remunerations to all the members of the security team, including the Nyumba Kumi officers.

Effectiveness of Multi-Institutional Agency Approach in Northern Kenya

Considering that the security issues in Northern Kenya are multifaceted, complex, and transnational, joint actions from the citizens, the state, the non-state, and other stakeholders are needed to effectively fight against it. Kenya's government assumes that by integrating a multi-agency approach, terrorism and other forms of crime efforts in Northern Kenya are likely to be synergized, and this will possibly result in ease in information sharing, intelligence gathering, and maximization of resources. As observed by Mugwa'nga (2023), the multi-agency framework not only helps in breaking information sharing barriers but also limits toxic competition among security actors, resource constraints, overlapping roles and responsibilities, power struggles, bureaucracy issues, and mistrust in security practice.

Since 2014, in handling the region's terrorism threats and infiltration, the government of Kenya has integrated different multi-agency initiatives. One of the Initiatives has been the use of the National Counter-Terrorism Center to manage the terror-affiliated threats in northern parts of Kenya and other parts. The National Counter-Terrorism Center brings together different sector actors with diverse capabilities, including the National Police Service, the Disciplined Forces, the Office of the Director of Criminal Investigations, the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit, and the Department of Immigration Services. This multi-agency institution coordinates and spearheads both state and non-state actors involved in violent extremism prevention and deterrence, including instituting de-radicalization programs.

Subsequently, the government has also instituted the Border Control and Coordination Committee, which consists of several security stakeholders and ensures that Kenya's border points are safe by preventing the entry of illegal immigrants, contraband goods, and small arms. The government of Kenya also enforced the Nyumba Kumi Initiative and other community policing initiatives to facilitate security operations in the region and Kenya at large.

While raising optimism in the multi-agency security approach, a field officer from the national counter-terrorism center noted that the contemporary security approach in northern Kenya is quite inclusive and brings on board both disciplined forces and civilians. Civil-military relations have been enhanced. The respondent asserted that because of local engagements, they have been able to identify diverse security hotspots, and banditry routes, make diverse arrests, and neutralize impending attacks courtesy of tip-offs from the civilians. This modus operandi presents to better the security situation in the Northern Frontier Region.

The government of Kenya has also responded to the security situation in northern Kenya by imposing night-to-dawn curfews to enhance security agencies' patrols. Currently, the multi-security agencies operating in northern Kenya counties have imposed night-to-dawn curfews in major counties, including Turkana and some North Rift counties, that are considered hotbeds of insecurity. The government has redeployed additional security personnel with divergent capacities and capabilities to beef up security in the region. For instance, on April 13, 2023, the Ministry of Interior and National Coordination promised to deploy additional security personnel constituted of the Disciplined Forces, the National Police Service, and the National Intelligence Service among others in an attempt to thwart the growing banditry and terror infiltration activities within the region. The government also deployed an additional 2000 police reservists in Northern Kenya and North Rift to facilitate the process of restoration of peace and stability in conflict-prone areas. The government of Kenya, through legislative action in 2013 also deployed the army in the Turkana region, Samburu, Marsabit, and West Pokot in an attempt to address the rising clan rivalry in the region.

One of the multi-agency security approaches that have yielded positive efforts in the northern frontier region has been improved civilian-military/police relations through increased local involvement in security matters. The government of Kenya has in the recent past brought to the limelight major security stakeholders in the region in an attempt to address the security situation contrary to the 'single-handed' approach that it initially integrated. For instance, the clan elders, police and military reservists as well as leaders from faith-based organizations including the SUPKEM are currently involved in most security operations in the northern region. They have remained critical sources of security intelligence, implementing security policies and encouraging peaceful coexistence among people who live in the region. The implementation of the Nyumba

Kumi Initiative and other community policing programs in the region have helped in enhancing security to some extent.

This multi-agency security approach, as exemplified by community members' engagement in security matters has been very critical in intelligence gathering and information sharing. For instance, preliminary reports suggest that most arrests of accomplices of crime in the northern region and other parts of Kenya have been conducted through the sharing of very credible information by the locals. Civil -security relations have to some extent helped boost public trust in security agencies. Subsequently, as a result of community engagements, there have been several barazas and community engagement forums led by religious leaders and locals aimed at emancipating the locals on the centrality of living in a peaceful society that is free of conflicts and violence. The sensitization programs conducted by the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya as well as the human rights organization continue to serve a very critical role in so far as deterrence of banditry and terror activities is concerned within the region. The sensitization program also focused on reminding the locals of their constitutional responsibility to report suspected criminal practices or cases. The security approach has also involved organizing engagement forums by religious leaders and locals to emancipate the locals on the centrality of peaceful coexistence and living.

A religious faithful noted that the incorporation of the Nyumba Kumi Initiative and the members of the Inter-Religious Groups is one element that has boosted their security operations. The Nyumba Kumi has in the recent past served as their linkage to the community and a potential source of information on security threats. Religious players have done a splendid job, especially in reminding the locals about the need to embrace the religious virtues of peace, love, and diversity. As a result, both political and religious tolerance has improved within the locality.

The inter-agency security operation in northern Kenya has facilitated the establishment of an efficient security intelligence network which is very critical for security responses. For instance, due to security collaborations, the propensity of terror attacks has greatly reduced in northern Kenya when compared to earlier times. This is because the collaboration has been central to information sharing and intelligence processing which continue to inform prompt security responses. The multi-agency team in the northern frontier region has been quite good in conducting defensive operations aimed at curtailing the growing instances of existential threats in the Northern

Frontier region. For instance, the Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2023) reports that a total of 29 people were arrested in relation to terror activities, with 9 from Garissa County, and attributes these arrests to the ability of the local population to share actionable and reliable information to the multi-agency security team. The Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2023) report further acknowledged that in the period between January and December 2022, there was at least one terrorist arrest in the counties of Nairobi, Tana River, Kwale, Narok, Mandera, Nyeri, Laikipia, Kilifi, 3 unspecified county arrests were also made while both Mombasa and Lamu reported 4 and 5 cases respectively.

The multi-agency security framework should be fully embraced and integrated as it has aided to some extent in establishing collaborative efforts in the restoration of peace and stability in the northern Frontier region. As the former president Uhuru Kenyatta observes, this approach has helped address institutional gaps in security infrastructure, especially in terms of roles and responsibilities overlaps, resource utilization, and lack of public trust in security architecture hence serving an incredible role in enhancing the operational capacity of security infrastructures in the northern Frontier region. Further, the president indicated that most resources and human forces in the war against all forms of insecurity in the Northern Frontier region are now harnessed and coordinated through the multi-agency team that has a well-defined chain of command hence limiting instances of challenges such as doctrinal differences among security actors. This has helped in synchronizing security operations within the Northern Frontier Region.

In supporting the efficiency and effectiveness of the multi-agency security approach, one of the elected officials stated that, since the multi-agency framework was implemented in the Northern Frontier Region, insecurity-based fatalities have significantly reduced, and suspected arrests of criminals have heightened due to the presence of very active preventive and counter-preventive measures. The team despite diverse constraints has improved its operational capacities and developed a very coordinated chain of command and information sharing. The parliamentarian noted that the country stands a better chance of neutralizing the security threats in the northern region through the multi-agency security framework than the "single-handed" approach traditionally integrated.

As Kibusia (2020) study finds out, the multi-institutional security framework has created a sense of seamless coordination and collaboration among security actors hence making them much more

responsive to security threats. The synergy of security actors constituted of stakeholders with diverse abilities and capabilities are central for purposes of security planning, evacuation, investigations, and conducting raids and counter raids aimed at neutralizing the threats of insecurity. Civil-military synergies have led to the locals of Northern Kenya not viewing the security actors as accomplices of crime but rather law enforcers continue to support multi-agency security operations in the Northern Frontier region.

A field officer of the National Counter-terrorism while holding the view that the multi-agency security approach is ideal for addressing the security gaps in Northern Kenya provides necessary suggestions on how to enhance coherence during operations. The field officer noted that security teams that constitute a multi-agency team usually go through a different curriculum during training. As a result, they obtain new skills that are varied in the long run. They are also trained differently in the handling of security agencies. She observed that due to this diversity, there is need for a collaborative training of security agencies before conducting joint operations. This will lead to the coherence of security operations.”

Conclusion

This study examined the role of a multi-agency security approach in promoting national security through a case study analysis of northern Kenya. The research found that whereas multi-agency efforts in the northern frontier region of Kenya present positive opportunities for neutralizing security-related threats in the region, it is important to highlight that the multi-agency task forces have suffered some limitations that have curtailed their ability and capability to fully neutralize terror and banditry practices in the region. One of the setbacks has been inadequate funding which has made it quite complicated for the security agencies to roll out several actionable multi-agency security-affiliated practices including sensitization programs, support to the community as well and efficient and effective patrols. The other reported constraint associated with the multi-agency security approach is the lack of necessary equipment and facilities to support multi-agency activities. The study finds that owing to the dynamism and trends that define contemporary conflicts in the northern frontier region, a multi-institutional approach is central to dismantling and neutralizing insecurity threats as it provides a better opportunity for a collaborative security system that leverages the capacity and capabilities of every actor in the security sector and also builds

public trust on the security infrastructure hence facilitating information sharing and security response mechanism.

Recommendations

To boost the responsiveness and operational capacity of multi-institutional security agencies in the Northern Frontier Region, both the state and the non-state actors should;

The national government in collaboration with county governments, should develop efficient and effective standard operating procedures that guide multi-agency initiatives to mitigate the challenges associated with multi-agency teams including bureaucratic politics and duplicity of roles and responsibilities. The standard operating procedures should clearly outline the chain of command and control mechanisms to enhance operational efficiency.

The security actors should conduct joint training and seminars for enhanced cohesion and understanding among security stakeholders. This will also help in establishing the synergy of operations among the security stakeholders.

The national government should establish an independent institution to mobilize multi-agency and institutional resources and synchronization of resources.

The national government and county government should increase and enhance the timely allocation of resources to support multi-agency operations and activities, especially in terms of sensitization programs and remunerating the community security leaders.

Embracing good governance practices including fairness and transparency in the constitution of multi-agency strategies.

The non-state actors, the national government, and the county government should pursue investment opportunities that harbor employment creation and improved livelihoods hence eliminating/ reducing the locals' vulnerabilities to engaging in crime.

The national government and county government should collaborate with neighboring nations and embrace a region-based multi-institutional security framework in handling transnational crime.

E-policing and enhance rapport between the community and the security agencies should be enhanced to facilitate information sharing and gathering. This can be achieved through active

security agencies' engagements in local initiatives as well as enhancing professionalism in their mandates.

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